

ABOUND

-Ryan Parsons-

Philippians 1:8-11

8 For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. 9 And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Paul loves the church in Philippi. In his love for them, he offers a beautiful prayer of blessing. He hopes to challenge and prepare them for the return of Christ. What he utters to God on their behalf is deep and profound.

While they are already a loving bunch, Paul prays that Philippi's love will increase. The love he speaks of is agape or "God love." He says this love will lead to the knowledge and discernment they need to make good choices. These good "God" choices will lead their preparation. The hope in all of this is that they would be fruitful so that it brings praise and glory to God.

How does one come about this type of wisdom and fruitfulness? The answer is God's love. How do we get more and more of it? This only comes through encountering Christ. It doesn't come by our initiative (1 Thessalonians 3:12).

One of the ways scripture teaches us to encounter God is through fasting. As we empty ourselves, we make room for his Spirit. As we hunger, we learn to desire him earnestly. As we pray and meditate, we yearn for righteous discernment. As we abide in him, we yield ourselves to his fruit-producing power. As we practice withholding our pleasure, we seek his exaltation rather than our own.

Oh Lord, fill us with your Spirit, and may your love abound in us more and more!

May God bless us as we seek to encounter him this week.

To God be the Glory!

Ryan