



## Psalm 131: Meditation and Prayer affects the Soul

*Gathering all generations  
to pray for all nations  
ASKing God to do what only He can do  
and doing whatever He ASKs of us.*

*How to find rest and contentment  
in God*

**If you have not already worked through the Basic Lessons, also found under Teaching Resources, it is recommended you do so, in order to get the most out of this and the other teaching lessons.**

Philippians 1, Overflowing Love

**Context:** Paul is in prison in Rome writing to the believers in Philippi sharing his great love for them and how he continues to think of them and prays for them. A church grew out of these first home meetings of Lydia, the seller of purple and the jailer and both their households. What common memories they shared of God's miracles and love!

At the writing of this letter, the church has grown to the point that there are bishops (overseers) and deacons, v5). This church has supported and encouraged Paul more than any other.

**Response:** Can you identify with this? Do you remember those who first ministered to you, brought you to salvation and encouraged you? Do you not feel God's love for them as you remember them?

**This is Paul's prayer for believers, the Church –**

**Response:** Read through this prayer first to understand it, then meditate on the parts God brings to your mind.

Remember Paul is in prison in Rome writing back to a church he started. At the very least this great outpouring of love must have witnessed to those in prison and to the Roman soldiers who were his guards.

**Philippians 1:3-10**

**v3 "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,  
v4 always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy,  
(Both **prayer** and **request** are supplication meaning ongoing prayer.)**

**v5 for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now,  
v6 being confident of this very thing that He who begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;**

**v7 just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace."** (what is in your heart will be in your thoughts)

**v8 “For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.”** (If you do not have this love, ask for it.)

**v9 “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,**

**v10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,**

**v11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”**

**Cultivate love** through meditation and prayer from God’s Word. Let God change your heart and your life as He did Paul’s. Remember Paul was hunting down believers having them thrown in jail before his dramatic encounter with Jesus in Acts 9.

### **Assurance of God’s love brings security.**

Meditate slowly through Paul’s prayer in segments and respond to the Word.

**v9 “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,”**

**Response: Knowledge** here is experiential love, not just hearing of other’s experiences, but knowing God’s loves you personally. **Discernment** is to know what God’s love is and use that as a measure for other kinds of love. Verse 16 mentions selfish ambition flowing from the wrong kind of love.

### **1 John 4:19 Experiencing God’s love changes a person.**

**“We love Him, because He first loved us.”**

God’s love experienced reveals the counterfeit and enables believers to give that kind of love, agape love that does not need a response from others.

One of the first things that happens as we are born again is a spiritual awareness, eyes to see and a spirit to give understanding. God’s love is healing. That is why Paul prays that your love may grow more and more.

**1John 4:16 “And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.”**

**Known and believed God’s love** — Value and appreciate your experiences, being aware that your part is to maintain your relationship with God, not just expect it to develop by itself. Spend time in God’s presence especially in worship and the Word, feel and receive His love and learn to give His love to others. Pray for others through this love.

**Paul’s prayer v10. “that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,”**

**Approve** — Paul is saying their love will help them to know and sense what is morally best for them.

**Sincere**, our word hypocrite comes from this word. It describes actors who used masks to show the different roles they were playing. Being secure in God’s love will help you deal with feelings of inferiority and insecurity. You will not need to wear a mask. God’s love will establish your sense of worth.

**v11 “being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”** **Fruits of righteousness**, fruits of love, fruits of the Holy Spirit are to the glory and praise of God because they are fruit out of season, not flowing naturally from man’s heart. This brings praise and glorifies God.

**As we saw in verse 6, Paul is confident of the power of God’s love, “being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”**

**Context is always important and should be included in the meditation. Verses 12-14 of Philippians 1** can refer back to being grounded in God’s love so that when “bad” things happen, or things you do not understand, it does not put you in confusion or cause you to stumble.

**v12 “But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,**

**v13 so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;”**

**v14 and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.”** It would not necessarily be considered God’s love to find yourself in prison; but Paul recognized this was God’s plan to reach those in Nero’s palace in Rome with the gospel. In the midst of prison hardship, Paul sees the gospel spread plus he experiences and writes about this overflowing love he feels for the believers. **Love gives a security to face down fear. God can be trusted and praised in all things.**

Earlier in Philippi, after this church was first formed, those Roman soldiers guarding Paul and Silas saw their faith and the miraculous release of the prisoners, chains falling off all and doors opening.

After they were released, Paul declared their Roman citizenship and the magistrates became afraid for it was unlawful to beat a Roman citizen. **This made their testimony even greater** that Paul and Silas were willing to suffer injustice (a beating and prison) to preach the gospel. Acts 16:37,38; Acts 22:25,26

**Application:** Meditate and pray through these verses; pray out your insight for the Church, the worldwide Body of Christ.