

TOTAL COMMITMENT MONTH

The Book of Philippians

"Practical Christianity"

Philippians 1:10

Introduction

1. The death of our Lord Jesus has opened the way to pray to the Father with boldness (freedom). This is the firm teaching of Hebrews (10:19, 20).
2. Paul's many personal prayers in the Word are evidence of his unceasing concern for the believers. Certainly this is keenly observed here (vv. 8-11). The intensity of his prayer concern is noted (v. 8) and also his desire to see love, knowledge, and discernment in the lives of the believers (v. 9).
3. But there is much more for which Paul prayed. Two more petitions are given in our text:
 1. Request for DISCRIMINATING APPROVAL v. 10a.

a. Its goal

The grammatical construction here ("that") may either express purpose or result. Whichever, the idea of a goal is in view. Therefore, the items of v. 9: love (the denial of self interest), knowledge (the full understanding of God's will/works), and discernment (sensitiveness to Biblical standards) are to lead to other issues, including those things which please God. Truth as described (v. 9) is not an end in itself. It moves toward a positive goal set by God.

b. Its gain

The thought here is that the verb means to approve. It means to test something and come up with an approval. It was used of assaying metals. One is to have certain doctrines (v. 9) in order that or for the result of coming up with approval of that which pleases God. Acceptance comes only after a test (1 Thess. 2:4 where the verb is rendered "allowed" and "try"). Satan did not seek in his test of Christ to approve Him, hence another Greek verb is used (Matt. 4).

c. Its ground

"Things that are excellent" means "things that differ or transcend" (Rom. 7:18). The basic thought in this phrase is that Paul prayed they might get to that which is

real, what was good, best, and better. He hoped they would come to that which really was worthwhile. All of this is not alone in the religio-ethical realm, but also in the daily routine of life and the evaluation of things such as choice of friends, books, amusements, employment, or ambitions. What will really please HIM! Will He be hurt (Prov. 1:7)? The very best--that is it.

2. Request for DIFFERENTIATING CHARACTER v. 10b.

a. Personally--relating to self

While the word used here is of uncertain origin, it is a compound from two words and seems to indicate: "sunlight" and "judge" with the resultant meaning: to be judged by the sunlight. This connotes purity, truth, unadulterated, unmixed, wholesome, wholly devoid of any mixture of inconsistency. Obviously everything is to be tested by the Word of God. Pure and unsullied are terms which find propriety here. The man God is looking for in a sincere person is not the man whom the world sees, whom our friends see, whom we ourselves see, but the man whom God sees. He is the sincere man. Paul prayed for that in these believers. The same root here is found elsewhere (1 Cor. 5:8; 2 Cor. 1:12; 2:17; 2 Pet. 3:1). How deeply such men are needed today.

b. Externally--relating to others.

This word may be either active (Acts 24:16) or passive (1 Cor. 10:32). Perhaps both ideas are present, although the bulk of exegetes favor the latter. Paul's deep concern for these believers was that they might so live as to be mindful of others (Heb. 12:13). Happy is that child of God who so lives as to withhold abuse from the Lord, His work, and the Gospel.

c. Heavenly--relating to God

The preposition "until" means "with a view to." It is not a limit on time nor something about continuance, but rather relates to prospect. It is His coming which regulates behavior! One must keep his eye on the coming of Christ. That is the issue (2 Cor. 5:10, 11, 14; Tit. 2:11-13; 1 John 2:28). Because He is coming, what sort of men ought we to be? Seeing that issue, the life is arranged properly.

Conclusion It is indeed important to watch our beliefs. Nothing should minimize that factor. However, what is worn as shoe leather in the daily movements of life--that is of utmost importance. If we are not what our doctrine is, then the doctrine is of little value. May Paul's prayer for Philippi be effective in our lives. Amen.