

issues as expressions of a deep abiding spiritual work of God. May the Lord be pleased to give us that sort of response to His Word and will. Amen.

TOTAL COMMITMENT MONTH

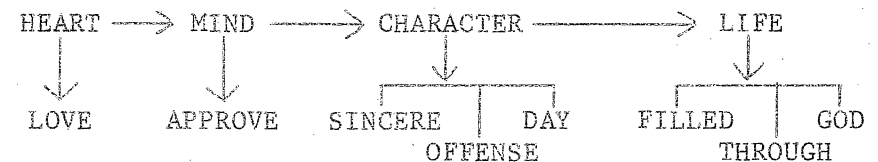
The Book of Philippians

"The Christ-Life"

Philippians 1:11

Introduction

1. It is necessary to pray to the Father through the Son in the Spirit (Eph. 2:18). This way of access has been made for us through the work of our Lord at the Cross. We can now come with boldness (freedom) through the blood and the body of Christ (Heb. 10:19, 20).
2. Paul exercised his privilege to pray for many of the believers of his day. One such example is given in Philippians 1:8-11. This was an earnest prayer (v. 8). There is an intensity about it which is not easily equalled.
3. Elements in the prayer may be diagrammed:



4. The progress of the prayer is significant. God moves from the inside to the outside. From specific love to demonstrated life. Between these two doctrines is a transforming understanding of issues which are the bottom line of discerning Christianity. Now, what about that life activity prayed for here? Study it:

1. FULFILLMENT

a. Explained

The perfect passive verb is used with an intent of looking back from the judgment seat of Christ. Paul views the believer as he will be. It is as if he prays that the believers might be found filled at that day (cf. v. 10). What a concern! He trusts that while they are

here on earth they may be filled with righteous fruit and at the seat of judgment to look back and view it all.

b. Expressed

The word "fruit" is the key here. It is accusative, anarthrous, and singular. All of these elements are important. The accusative is the "whither-case." This is the object towards which and along which the action tended. It is the area in which the fulness was evinced. God is concerned about fruit! Being anarthrous (without an article) emphasizes the quality of the fruit. It is of a certain sort. Not just any fruit, but the proper kind! Finally, the singular shows that while the results of grace are manifold, it is a harmonious whole. All aspects are necessary to the fulness of the rest. It is like the singular of Galatians 5:22 (fruit of the Spirit).

c. Experienced

The fruit is described as "righteous." This is not properly justification, but sanctification. It is the righteousness which is experienced in good works (Eph. 2:10; James 3:18). Here is a moral habit (Rom. 6:13, 22). This provides the death knell from a biblical viewpoint to the view that reports, "I am saved and that is all that counts." The prayer of Paul puts that sort of thinking to bed forever! It is God's expressed will here through Paul that a life of righteous fruit will be looked for at the judgment seat (1 Cor. 3:12-15). In effect, the future affects the present. That is God's way of evaluation.

2. ENDUEMENT

a. Mediated

The righteous fruit is not the product of personal initiative. Indeed, too often the good works of Christians are the effort of the old nature. That nature can produce nothing of value before God. It is only when God's people discover that fruit is mediated that they begin to understand the biblical modus of life. The truth of the matter is that spiritual fruit is the work of God (Phil. 2:13).

b. Communicated

There is no verb in the original. This does not detract from the fact that it is Christ through whom the fruit comes. Here is the complement to John 15:4, 5. It is not the teachings of Christ which bring the fruit, but the communicated life of Christ. It is Christ risen and exalted which is brought to the child of God by the Holy Spirit (that is why it is called the "fruit of the Spirit" in Gal. 5:22). The "fruit of righteousness" is the evidence of His life being lived in us and out through us. It is in a sense a proof of justification, but more it is a proof of our life with HIM! Fruit is only possible and solely through Christ. All other activity is fleshly and unrelated to spiritual values.

3. PROCUREMENT

The end of such a life is the glory and praise of God. The former word (glory) speaks of the character of God displayed in His own. The latter (praise) concerns an expressed appreciation on the part of redeemed sinners for His triumph over sin as seen in the reproduction of His holiness in their lives. Hence, God's character is displayed and His victory given expression. This is the single goal of the entire prayer, not only of the items of this verse. It is the consistent intent of the Scriptures that God be exalted (John 14:13; 15:8; 1 Pet. 4:11).

Conclusion Total commitment is not an isolated abstract concept. It is a spiritual experience. When the truths of this prayer of Paul are taken seriously, then and only then is there some sort of understanding of what it means to be totally committed. One's love will be right. His knowledge will be full. Sensitivity to perception will be evident. Things that are the best will be approved. Sincerity personally, lack of offense toward others, and a behavior regulated by His return will be experienced. Upon arrival in heaven, one will look back and be aware that his life has been filled with righteous fruit through the living Christ in him. These are essentials to total commitment. There is nothing loose or shallow about this whole matter. While some would consider the idea based on giving of funds or involvement, God sees these baser