

Philippians 1:3-11 “*Praying for the Discernment: Paul’s Prayer for the Philippians*”\*\*

Main Idea: As we examine Paul’s prayer for the church in Philippi as recorded in Philippians 1:3-11, we discover two guidelines for how to pray.

I. Pray with a gospel-centered perspective (3-8).

A. Paul prayed with thanksgiving (3).

B. Paul prayed with joy (4-6).

1. He had it because of what the Philippians had done and were still doing (5).
2. He had it because of what God had done and would certainly do to the end (6).

C. Paul prayed with affection (7-8).

1. Paul was a person who thought carefully and felt deeply.
2. By his example Paul points us to Christ.

II. Pray with gospel-centered petitions (9-11).

A. May God give you a growing love (9).

1. God-pleasing love requires knowledge.
2. God-pleasing love requires insight.

B. May God give you greater discernment (10a).

1. Life is full of choices between legitimate options.
2. In every decision we should choose what is best.

C. May God give you a blameless reputation (10b).

1. What’s needed isn’t our perfection.
2. What’s needed is that we deal with every sin God’s way.

D. May God give you the fruit of righteousness (11).

1. It comes through Jesus Christ.
2. It results in glory to God.

Make it personal: Ask yourself these questions...

1. Am I living in light of the gospel?
2. Am I praying in light of the gospel?

Dr. Adam Clarke, in his autobiography, tells the following story about John Wesley. Mr. Wesley was returning to England by ship. Contrary winds hit the sea vessel. Wesley was reading at the time. When he realized the confusion on board, he asked what the problem was. When he was informed that the wind was not cooperating, he simply

replied, “Then let us go to prayer.”

Here's what Wesley prayed, “Almighty and everlasting God, Thou hast sway everywhere, and all things serve the purpose of Thy will; Thou holdest the winds in Thy fists and sittest upon the water floods, and reignest a King forever. Command these winds and these waves that they obey Thee, and take us speedily and safely to the haven whither we would go.”

Do you know what happened? Wesley simply got up from his knees, said nothing more, but took his book, and continued reading. Dr. Clarke went on deck, and to his surprise, found the ship under sail. The wind had changed, suddenly and favorably, to Clarke's surprise. Wesley made no remark. It was as if he expected to be heard and took it for granted that he was heard!<sup>[1]</sup>

Henry Martyn, missionary to India in the early 1800s, said, “Let me burn out for God. After all, whatever God may appoint, prayer is the great thing. Oh, that I may be a man of prayer.”<sup>[2]</sup>

That's our goal this summer in our current series. We're studying the prayers of the apostle Paul, one per week, so that we might better say with Henry Martyn, “Oh, that I may be a man of prayer, a woman of prayer, a church of prayer!”

Thus far we've examined in chronological order Paul's prayers, first for the church in Thessalonica (which he prayed and wrote in AD 51 or 52), then the church in Corinth (AD 55), then the church in Rome (AD 57), and for the last two weeks his two prayers for the church in Ephesus (written from prison in AD 60). This morning we'll be probing another prison epistle and pondering what the apostle Paul prayed for the church at Philippi .

Paul penned the words before us while imprisoned in Rome awaiting trial before Caesar (check out Acts 28 for further details). It was around the year AD 61. We need to go back a dozen or so years to see the beginning of Paul's relationship with the Philippians. It was during Paul's second missionary journey (recorded in Acts 16) that the apostle, responding to a vision in which he saw a man from Macedonia pleading for him to come, sailed for the European continent and ended up at Philippi . Philippi was a Roman colony named after King Philip II, father of Alexander the Great. Being a Roman colony meant its citizens were also citizens of the city of Rome itself, a fact in which the Philippians took great pride.

Since there wasn't a synagogue in Philippi , Paul went to the river to find a place of prayer. He met a businesswoman named Lydia there, and “the Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message” (as Acts 16:14 states). Lydia opened her home to Paul and his team and in time a church began.

One day Paul exorcised a demon from a possessed slave girl, but his actions prompted the slave's owner to have Paul and Silas beaten and thrown in prison. That night while fastened in stocks, the two missionaries were singing praises to God when God sent an earthquake that broke their chains and opened the prison door. The jailor thought they escaped and was about to kill himself, when Paul stopped him and moments later led that man and his family to put their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. That same night they were baptized, and on the next day Paul left Philippi . He later returned during his third missionary journey, according to Acts 20:6 (which took place during the years AD 53-57).

So that's Paul's connection with Philippi . This was a special church to him, not only because of its God-exalting beginning, but also because of its partnership with Paul, as we'll see in a moment.

Now let's investigate his prayer. Since it was the gospel that took Paul to Philippi in the first place, it ought not surprise us that this is a gospel-centered prayer. Prayer is a vital part of gospel ministry. Many have heard of William Carey, the father of modern missions. Few have heard of his sister who, although bedridden for years, spent hours each day calling on God in behalf of her brother and other preachers of the gospel.<sup>[3]</sup> As a prisoner Paul couldn't preach in Philippi , but he could pray, and he did. As we examine his prayer for the Philippian church as recorded in Philippians 1:3-11, we'll discover from his example two guidelines for how to pray.

## I. Pray with a gospel-centered perspective (3-8).

Three words characterized Paul's perspective as he prayed for the Philippians.

**A. Paul prayed with thanksgiving (3).** "I thank my God every time I remember you." Paul *thanked* God every time this church came to his mind. It wasn't because they'd arrived and were problem-free, and he will challenge them with some needed changes later in the letter, for instance, urging a couple of ladies to put a disagreement behind them (4:2). Nonetheless Paul continually expressed gratitude to God for this church, indeed *every time* he prayed.

**B. Paul prayed with joy (4-6).** Verse 4—"In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy." There's a word you don't expect to hear from the lips of a man in prison—*joy*—and you hear it a lot in this letter (the words "joy" and "rejoice" appear in every chapter, some thirteen times).

What caused Paul to pray for the Philippian church with such joy? He tells us. In fact, he puts the record of his prayer on hold until verse 9 and begins to share the reason for his joy. In other words he wants the Philippians to know, not only *what* he prayed for them, but also his heart's *perspective* as he prayed.

What brought his joy in prayer? Two things...

1. *He had it because of what the Philippians had done and were still doing (5).* Verse 4—"I always pray with joy." Why? Verse 5—"because of your partnership [Greek *koinonia*] in the gospel from the first day until now." These folks were *partners* with Paul in the gospel ministry, and they'd been so for nearly a dozen years, from the *first* day until *now*.

Why did they participate? Because of the *gospel*, the message of the person and work of Jesus Christ. They knew what a difference the gospel had made in their lives, and they wanted the same to happen in others' lives. So they got involved. How? Paul mentions two ways in this letter. They sent him money for ministry and personal needs and they sent him personnel, as he explains at the end of the letter in Philippians 4:14-19:

"Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."

The letter of Philippians is actually a "thank you" letter. Paul is saying "thank you" for the gifts of money and "thank you" for sending Epaphroditus who not only delivered the latest gift of money, but also (according to 2:25) cared for Paul's personal needs while imprisoned.

But there was a second reason Paul prayed with joy, first because of what the Philippians had done and were still doing, but also...

2. *He had it because of what God had done and would certainly do to the end (6).*

Verse 6—"being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

When Paul prayed for the Philippian church, he did so with confidence, and his confidence was rooted in God. God has begun a good work in them, and Paul saw it firsthand. He saw God open Lydia's heart to the gospel message (Acts 16:15 is very specific, stating, "The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message"). And God did the same with the jailor and the rest of his household. *God* began a good work in Philippi. And what God begins, God finishes. The God who began a good work in you *will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus*.

Beloved, salvation begins with God and it ends with God. When I was eleven years old God began a good work in me (actually He began that work before creation, according to Ephesians 1:4, but I recognized it at age eleven). He convicted me of my sin and opened my heart to the wonderful, liberating news that Jesus Christ His Son had died in my place and for my sin, that Christ had conquered death, and that through Christ I could be made right with God and live with God forever. Has God begun a good work in your life? If He has, you can be sure He will finish it.

During the early days of the Salvation Army, William Booth and his associates were bitterly attacked in the press by religious leaders and government leaders alike. Whenever his son, Bramwell, showed Booth a newspaper attack, the General would reply, "Bramwell, fifty years hence it will matter very little indeed how these people treated us; it will matter a great deal how we dealt with the work of God."<sup>14</sup>

More than a decade later, Paul probably had ugly scars on his back from the beating he received in Philippi, but that's not what came to mind when he thought of that city. He thought of a group of people that God used him to reach with the gospel, a people that reciprocated his love by meeting his needs, and that caused him to pray as he did, first with thanksgiving, next with joy, and thirdly...

**C. Paul prayed with affection (7-8).** "It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus."

Sometimes we think of Paul as being a great *thinker*, and indeed he was that. But he was also a great *feeler*. Notice his language here. "It is right for me *to feel this way about you*. I have you *in my heart*. I *long for you* with the *affection* of Christ Jesus."

1. *Paul was a person who thought carefully and felt deeply.* And oh how we need both qualities in their proper balance. He *thought carefully*, meaning he filled his mind with the Scriptures and used his mind to wrestle with the implications of the truths contained therein. But he also *felt deeply* with feelings that were firmly anchored in the truths of God's Word.

2. *By his example Paul points us to Christ.* "I long for you with the affection of Christ Jesus," Paul says in verse 8. Now that's affection! Christ so loved us that He left heaven, let soldiers nail Him to a cross, and endured hell for us.

My friend, how can we say we believe that and *not* be moved by it? We ought to *feel deeply* the staggering implications of those words! Why then, so often, don't we? It's because in order to *feel deeply* we must first *think carefully*, not superficially but think *carefully*. It's true. We were heading for eternal torment, that's what we deserved, but Christ took our place. On the cross God's own Son took the judgment we deserved, so that on the basis of His Son's substitutionary work God might pardon and adopt us as His sons and daughters. *Think carefully* about that, and then in response *feel deeply*.

Paul prayed with a gospel-centered perspective, and so should we. Have you been gripped by the gospel and have you repented and placed your faith in Christ alone? Furthermore, are you living in the grip of the gospel? Are you thinking carefully about the cross on a daily basis so that you're feeling deeply its implications? If we're going to pray as Paul did, we must learn to pray with a gospel-centered perspective.

## II. Pray with gospel-centered petitions (9-11).

In verses 9-11 Paul reveals what he was praying for his dear friends in Philippi. He mentions four petitions that function like stair-steps, each one leading to the next.

**A. May God give you a growing love (9).** "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight..."

Please don't get the idea Paul has in mind merely some gushy, emotional feeling. The Greek word for love here is *agape*. Agape love is that which originates from a person's will, and then involves every part of the person as he chooses to do good towards another.

Please observe that Paul doesn't pray that they would *begin* to love, but that their love would *abound*. He is not suggesting by his prayer that the Philippians had a glaring problem. But even successful Christians have not arrived.

The term 'abound' means "to be over and above." Picture an empty cup. When you take the pitcher and start pouring, the level rises from 1/4 to 1/2 to 3/4 and finally, it's full. What happens if you keep pouring? The cup overflows. It can't contain the contents.

That's the kind of love Paul prayed to see in his friends' lives. An abounding love. An overflowing love. Love is like a muscle. Use it and its capacity for greater use grows and expands. Stop using it and it shrivels up.

In order for love to grow, there are two requirements that must be met.

1. *God-pleasing love requires knowledge.* "May your love abound more and more *in knowledge.*" Husbands, you have learned by now that it takes knowledge to love your wife. Peter put it this way in 1 Peter 3:7 (KJV), "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife..." Men, we can do what we *think* is an expression of love and fail to show true love, right? Just because the gift you buy her is something *you* like doesn't mean it'll be something *she* likes. So Peter says, "Study her. Dwell with her according to *knowledge.*"

Later in this letter Paul is going to share about what made him tick. He writes in Philippians 3:10, "I want to *know Christ.*" You can't love someone you don't know. That was Paul's consuming desire, to know and be like Christ. And he saw this pursuit as an ongoing process, as he clarifies in the following verses (Phil 3:12-14), "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

2. *God-pleasing love requires insight.* "In *knowledge and depth of insight,*" prays Paul. Before you can show love you must first *see* the opportunity. Since we're self-focused sinners by nature, we don't naturally see the needs of others. Paul prayed, "Lord, give them eyes to see. Give them *insight* so their love will abound."

So love, if it's to be biblical, must be based upon *knowledge* and *insight*. Those are the boundaries in which God-pleasing love is exercised. If we go beyond the boundaries, it's no longer true love. In fact, when love is not based upon knowledge and insight, you can actually do more harm than good to the cause of Christ.

Suppose I'm watching television, and hear a plea for help for starving children in Ethiopia. I'm moved. And so I should be. I see the 800 number on the screen. I get out my visa card, and wire them \$50. Did I do the right thing? Did I check out the organization that's handling the money? Does it operate by integrity? Is it a cult? Sincerity is not enough. Love must be checked by *knowledge* and *insight*.

There's Paul's first petition for the Philippians. May God give you a growing love. Notice the next two words in the text, "so that." Those words indicate that a growing love is not an end, but a means to something. A means to what? Verse 10—"so that you may be able to discern what is best..." Which brings us to the second step on the staircase...

**B. May God give you greater discernment (10a).** The fact of the matter is this...

1. *Life is full of choices between legitimate options.* My grandparents on my mother's side were married sixty-two years when the Lord took my grandfather home to heaven. After being a widow for three years, my grandmother remarried a widower. Both were in their eighties, and they enjoyed fifteen years together. I still chuckle when I think of a statement they made. "We don't buy any green bananas." In other words, when you realize your ticker is failing

and you could be taking your final breath today, what's the sense of buying a banana you have to wait two days to eat?

Every day we make choices, and hundreds and hundreds of them. What time should I get up? What should I wear? Should I eat breakfast, and if so, what?

In all our decisions, what should we choose? Here's what Paul prayed his friends would choose: "That you may be able to discern *what is best*" ["things that are excellent" says the KJV]. The term "best" ["excellent"] means "to make a difference."

It's sad, yet true. Many times in our lives we get distracted, even sidetracked. We're prone to set our sights on things which may not be bad, but are not the best.

Paul is not praying that they'll choose the good over the bad. That's a given. You don't even need to pray about whether to sin. Should I lie on my income tax? Should I deceive my parents? Should I look at a little pornography? The answer is always *no*.

This prayer is about choices between legitimate options. Paul is burdened that the Philippians *not* do what we're all so prone to do, and that is, settle for the *good* when we could experience the *best*.

Men, fall is coming. That means it's almost time for the pigskin to start flying. We need Paul's reminder, don't we? Is there anything wrong with football and watching a game? No. But does it really matter in the light of eternity whether the Browns beat the Steelers? Seriously now, is it the best use of our time to spend two hours devouring *Sports Illustrated* when we can't seem to find ten minutes to read our Bibles?

2. *In every decision we should choose what is best.* Henry Kissinger, in his book *The Whitehouse Years*, tells of a Harvard professor who had given an assignment and now was collecting the papers. He handed them back the next day and at the bottom of one was written, "Is this the best you can do?" The student thought, "no," and redid the paper. It was handed in again, and received the same comment. This went on ten times, till finally the student said, "Yes, this is the best I can do." The professor replied, "Fine, now I'll read it."<sup>[5]</sup>

D. A. Carson observes, "Paul's prayer spells the death of entrenched mediocrity, of smug self-satisfaction, of contentment with our own excuses. Paul prays for what is excellent."<sup>[6]</sup>

Are we choosing the best over the good when we miss a church worship service to take our family on a picnic? How about when we buy a new car yet can't afford to give to missions? Or when we enroll our children in every activity coming down the pike, yet fail to take time to read the Scriptures and pray with them?

Carson asks an important question, "What have you read in the past six months? If you have found time for newspapers or news magazines, a couple of whodunits, a novel or two or perhaps a trade journal, have you also found time for reading a commentary or some other Christian literature that will help you better understand the Bible or improve your spiritual discipline or broaden your horizons? Are you committed, in your reading habits, to what is best?"<sup>[7]</sup>

Think about what this prayer reveals to us about Paul the man. Paul wasn't interested in maintaining status quo. Because he knew where he was heading—to see Christ and be clothed in His spotless righteousness—because he knew that was coming, he revolved to press toward that mark in the present. As Carson reminds us, "The more fruitful and the more holy he becomes, the more he perceives how much farther he has to go."<sup>[8]</sup>

Now notice the relationship between these first two petitions. May God give you a growing love, *so that* you may have a greater discernment. There's a vital truth here. If our love isn't growing, then we will not be able to choose what is best. If we're living in the vacuum of self-focused-ness, we will lack the ability to discern the *best* from the good.

As you well know we have two senators running for president this year. I urge to exercise discernment as you engage in your privilege to vote in this year's election. One of the candidates wrote the following in a letter to Alice

Toklas of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Club on March 24, 2008:

“As the \_\_\_\_\_ nominee for President, I am proud to join with and support the LGBT community in an effort to set our nation on a course that recognizes LGBT Americans with full equality under the law. That is why I support extending fully equal rights and benefits to same sex couples under both state and federal law. That is why I support repealing the Defense of Marriage Act and the "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy, and the passage of laws to protect LGBT Americans from hate crimes and employment discrimination. And that is why I oppose the divisive and discriminatory efforts to amend the California Constitution, and similar efforts to amend the U.S. Constitution or those of other states.”

Then the senator concluded his letter with this commendation, “Finally, I want to congratulate all of you who have shown your love for each other by getting married these last few weeks. My thanks again to the Alice B. Toklas LGBT \_\_\_\_\_ Club for allowing me to be a part of today's celebration. I look forward to working with you in the coming months and years, and I wish you all continued success.”

As you prepare to vote this year, I hope you're investigating what the issues are. Remember, choosing to do what is right (which is what love is) requires *knowledge* and *insight*. As Christians we ought not pick a candidate just because they belong to the party our parents voted for, or even because they say they'll do things that are good *for me*. What's our basis for making choices? Choosing that which is *best*, that's the goal.

Which raises this question, “How can I know what *the best* is?” That's a good question, and Paul gives us a helpful suggestion in his third request. Verse 10 again, “So that you may be able to discern what is best *and may be pure and blameless* until the day of Christ...” Notice that Paul's second and third requests are bound together by the word “and.” I'm praying that you will discern what is best *and* be pure and blameless.” That indicates that choosing what is *best* always goes hand in hand with this petition...

**C. May God give you a blameless reputation (10b).** *Pure and blameless*. The term “pure” [KJV "sincere"] means “to be clear when examined in the sunlight.” How do you check to see if your sunglasses are clean? You hold them up to the light. The light reveals the spots.

Paul prayed that the reputation of the Philippians would be clear and clean when held up to *the* Light. There's no place for sin spots in the Christian's life.<sup>[9]</sup>

1. *What's needed isn't our perfection.*

2. *What's needed is that we deal with every sin God's way.* “Until the day of Christ,” says Paul. That is, until the day Christ returns. The word “until” in this phrase carries the sense of “with a view towards.”<sup>[10]</sup> Folks who live with a view towards the day when Christ will return are the folks who will make wise decisions in the daily present. We need to live, as Carson puts it, with a “forward-looking dimension.”

Carson offers this helpful word picture. “The church is to see itself as an outpost of heaven. It is a microcosm of the new heaven and the new earth, brought back, as it were, into our temporal sphere. We are still contaminated by failures, sin, relapses, rebellion, self-centeredness; we are not yet what we ought to be. But by the grace of God, we are not what we were. For as long as we are left here, we are to struggle against sin, and anticipate, so far as we are able, what it will be like to live in the untarnished bliss of perfect righteousness. We are to live with a view to the day of Christ.”<sup>[11]</sup>

There's what we are. We are an outpost of heaven. We are citizens of another kingdom, living in foreign and at times hostile territory. We won't be here forever, but while we are here we are to represent the agenda of our Master and Savior.

**D. May God give you the fruit of righteousness (11).** “Filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.” Fruit, as you know, is the visible produce of the tree. The fruit of righteousness is the visible produce that ought to be seen in our lives, the right kind of living. And what's true of this fruit of righteousness? Two things...

1. *It comes through Jesus Christ.* And when present...

2. *It results in glory to God.* “To the glory and praise of God.”

Do you know how to tell the difference between religious activity and fruit? Religious activity is something we do in our own strength. Genuine fruit must be produced in us by Christ. Religious activity impresses men. Genuine fruit results in praise to God.

Now take a look back at Paul’s petitions. He prayed that God would grant the Philippian Christians a *growing love*, which would make possible *greater discernment* as well as a *blameless reputation* and the *fruit of righteousness*. Those are gospel-centered requests because nothing other than the gospel of Jesus Christ can make them possible.

Now here’s where the rubber meets the road. Are these the kind of requests that you’ve been asking God to grant, for yourself and for others you care about? Is this what you’re praying for?

“How much have we prayed for what is best,” asks D. A. Carson, “for a spiritual harvest, for conversions, for demonstrations of the fruit of the Spirit? Could it be that we have experienced little because we have asked for little? Is our unfruitfulness proportionate to our prayerlessness? Paul’s prayer knives through so many of our excuses.”[\[12\]](#)

David Livingstone was one of the great missionaries of all time. He was also a great man of prayer. It was his habit every birthday to write a prayer. On his next to last birthday, this was his prayer: 'O Divine One, I have not loved Thee earnestly, deeply, sincerely enough. Grant, I pray Thee, that before this year is ended I may have finished my task.' One day the following year, Dr. Livingstone's faithful men checked in on him. As they looked in his African hut at Ilala, while the rain dripped from the eaves, they saw their master on his knees beside his bed. He had died on his knees in prayer.[\[13\]](#)

In 1898 Johnson Oatman penned the following...

I'm pressing on the upward way,  
New heights I'm gaining every day;  
Still praying as I'm onward bound,  
“Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.”

My heart has no desire to stay  
Where doubts arise and fears dismay;  
Though some may dwell where those abound,  
My prayer, my aim, is higher ground.

I want to live above the world,  
Though Satan's darts at me are hurled;  
For faith has caught the joyful sound,  
The song of saints on higher ground.

I want to scale the utmost height  
And catch a gleam of glory bright;  
But still I'll pray till Heav'n I've found,  
“Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.”



*Refrain*

*Lord, lift me up and let me stand,  
By faith, on Heaven's table land,  
A higher plane than I have found;  
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.*

Make it personal: Ask yourself these questions...

1. *Am I living in light of the gospel? And...*
2. *Am I praying in light of the gospel?*

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**\*\*Note:** This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church . It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

[1] Taken from E. M. Bounds, *Purpose in Prayer*, pp. 29-30

[2] Taken from E. M. Bounds, *Purpose in Prayer*, p. 38.

[3] Observation by D. A. Carson, p. 123.

[4] W. Wiersbe , *The Wycliffe Handbook of Preaching & Preachers*, p. 185.

[5] From Henry Kissinger's *The Whitehouse Years*.

[6] D. A. Carson, p. 125.

[7] D. A. Carson, pp. 128-9.

[8] Carson , p. 131.

[9] What Paul prayed for the Philippians was the standard he held for himself. For example, when he stood before Felix he shared his ambition in Acts 24:16, "And in this do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and men."

[10] Observation by Carson , p. 135.

[11] Carson , pp. 135-6.

[12] Carson , p. 132.

[13] Bounds, *Purpose in Prayer*, p. 35.