

THE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Php 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,

Php 1:10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,

Php 1:11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

This is a short but powerful prayer of Paul. In it we can glean great truths. Paul's prayer is centered on love. He did not pray for God to give them love. All Christians already have love in their hearts. God placed it there by the new birth. [**Romans 5:5**] He prayed for their love to **abound** to others in a greater degree. Paul reveals how this would take place. Love will abound in knowledge and discernment. Knowledge comes by from the Word of God and discernment comes from the Holy Spirit. These two are the two banks for love to flow in. When our love is directed by the Word and by the Holy Spirit then it will abound. For example if a brother who refuses to work asks for support you might give him the money because you love him. But if you know the Word then you know that **2 Thess. 3:10** says that one who refuses to work should not eat. Love does what is best for someone. Giving such a brother support in this situation is not really loving him. It is hindering him. In another example if a beggar asks for money from you and you give him the money and he goes down and gets liquor and gets drunk you have not helped him. If you were sensitive to the Spirit you could have picked up the leading not give him the money but take him somewhere for a meal or that this person really was a crook and not someone in need. By knowledge of the Word and the leading of the Spirit you will be able to really love others as God desires for you to. When our love is guided by the Word and Spirit then we will be able to approve the things that are excellent. The phrase "approve the things that are excellent" means to choose the best choice out different options. What Paul is saying is that when the Word and Spirit direct your love you will be able to pick the best option out of many that face you. In dealing with people and responding to them we have many options that lay before us. When someone treats us badly we have different options in responding to

them. Option 1 is to bless and pray for them. Option 2 is to slap the fire out of them. Option 3 is to talk about them behind their back. Option 4 is to ignore the whole thing and stuff your anger, etc... Which is the best option to take? Your knowledge of the Word and leading of the Spirit will allow you and empower you to pick and follow the best option (by the way option 1 is best!). When we consistently pick the best option in each situation then Paul says we will be sincere and without offence. The word sincere comes from a Greek word that means to be "judged by the light". Our lives should be pure enough to stand up to the scrutiny of the light. We should not have dark and secret parts of our lives. We also are not to cause others to stumble and sin. We are to be without offence. How are we to live in purity and not offend other people? Paul reveals this in the last part of his prayer. He says it is by "being filled with the fruits of righteousness which is by Jesus Christ". What are the fruits of righteousness? It is abounding love and purity. What leads you to express love and live in purity? It is a revelation of righteousness. When you understand that you were declared by God to be as you ought to be through the blood of Jesus Christ then you will accept the love of God towards you. If you believe you are unrighteous then it makes it hard to accept God's love because you believe you are not right with Him. If you believe someone has something against you then it is hard to accept their love for you. However, if you believe you have been made totally right with God then you can accept His love. When you accept His love then you will express love. You cannot give out what you have not accepted. Spending time meditating in the New Testament scriptures will lead you to believe you are righteous. Once you believe you are righteous then you will live a pure life in the light. You will live righteous. Righteous living does not make you righteous. Being righteous leads to righteous living. Abounding love, making the right choices, and walking in purity are the fruits of righteousness!

Lord I pray over my fellow believer who is reading this. I pray that the love you put within them will abound being directed by their knowledge of your Word and leading of the Holy Spirit. I pray that you give them a deeper revelation of righteousness in Jesus Christ so that they will believe, accept, and walk in the love you have for them which empowers them to live in purity and without offending others. I thank you for the

fruits of righteousness in their lives which comes from the root of righteousness you planted within them. In Jesus name, Amen.