

Praying for our Brethren

As the apostle Paul opens his letter of encouragement to the Christians in Philippi, he writes: "And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which *are* by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God." (Philippians 1:9-11, NKJV)

Think about four things Paul says are included in his prayers to God for the Philippians:

- 1) He prays that love may abound in knowledge and discernment. The love he is discussing is their love for God. Our love for God grows when we know more about him and better understand his commands
- 2) He prays that they will approve things that are excellent. He wants them to stand for what is right. Not just by standing against that which is wrong, but by positively approving the excellent things of God.
- 3) He prays they will be sincere and without offense. Sincerity is important, but of equal importance is choosing those things which will allow us to stand before God without offense.
- 4) He prays they will be filled with the fruits of righteousness. For the fruits of righteousness to fill us, room must be made by removing the fruits of darkness. Only then can righteousness have its completed work in us.

All four of these things are necessary for Christian growth and development. They are the things we should be wanting to see in our own lives and the lives of others. We often pray for our brethren when they are physically ill and struggling, are we also praying for their spiritual health and growth? ~~ *Adam Cozort*