

Philippians 1:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;

Analysis

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment (καὶ τοῦτο προσεύχομαι, ήντα ἡ ἀγάπη ὑμῶν ἔτι μᾶλλον καὶ μᾶλλον περισσεύη ἐν ἐπιγνώσει καὶ πάσῃ αἰσθήσει, kai touto proseuchomai, hina hē agapē hymōn eti mallon kai mallon perisseuē en epignōsei kai pasē aisthēsei)—Paul prays for superabundant love (perisseuē, "overflow, abound"), but qualified love: in (or "by means of") epignōsis ("full knowledge, discernment") and aisthēsis ("perception, moral insight").

This checks sentimental love divorced from truth. **Knowledge** (epignōsis, intensified form of gnōsis) implies experiential, relational knowing, not mere information. **Judgment** (aisthēsis) means moral discernment—the ability to distinguish good from evil, wise from foolish. Paul's prayer balances heart and head: love must be informed (knowledge) and discerning (judgment), not naive or doctrinally indifferent.

Historical Context

First-century philosophical schools debated the relationship between virtue and knowledge. Stoics emphasized rational knowledge; mystery religions stressed ecstatic experience. Paul's prayer synthesizes: love (Christian distinctiveness) must overflow in knowledge and discernment (avoiding gnostic error or sentimental Christianity). The Philippian church faced false teachers (3:2), making discerning love essential.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How can your love 'abound more and more' without becoming undiscerning or doctrinally indifferent?
2. What is the difference between knowledge (epignōsis) that informs love versus knowledge that puffs up (1 Cor 8:1)?
3. In what areas do you need greater 'perception' (aisthēsis) to distinguish between good and excellent?

Interlinear Text

καὶ τοῦτο προσεύχομαι ήντα ἡ ἀγάπη ὑμῶν ἔτι
And this I pray that G3588 love your yet
G2532 G5124 G4336 G2443 G26 G5216 G2089

μᾶλλον καὶ μᾶλλον περισσεύῃ ἐν ἐπιγνώσει καὶ πάσῃ
more And more may abound in knowledge And in all
G3123 G2532 G3123 G4052 G1722 G1922 G2532 G3956

αἰσθήσει

judgment

G144

Additional Cross-References

1 Thessalonians 3:12 (Love): And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:

Colossians 1:9 (Prayer): For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

Philemon 1:6 (Parallel theme): That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 3:10 (Parallel theme): And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

2 Corinthians 8:7 (Love): Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

1 Peter 1:22 (Love): Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

1 Corinthians 14:20 (Parallel theme): Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

2 Thessalonians 1:3 (Love): We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

2 Peter 3:18 (Parallel theme): But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Hebrews 5:14 (Parallel theme): But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.