



CONNECTIONS THAT TRANSFORM US

Theme: God spiritually connects us to each other in Christ so we might bear fruit.

I. Love _____ (Phil. 1:9)

A. Purpose to _____ your love

Abounding love _____, spreading out to fellow believers and the lost.

B. Prepare to _____ your love

Paul wrote that love should be guided by knowledge and _____.

II. Love _____ (Phil. 1:10)

Things that are "excellent" are those things in life that _____.

Paul prayed believers would have the discernment to _____ what is excellent by choosing what is _____.

III. Love _____ (Phil. 1:10)

A. Inwardly _____

Paul prayed the Philippians' character would be _____—not put on or patched to appear _____.

B. Outwardly _____

Paul wanted the Philippians to live like Christ so their _____ would not cause believers to _____ or unbelievers to _____ Christ.

C. Upwardly _____

Believers must live with an eye on _____, knowing they will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to give an _____ of their _____.

IV. Love _____ (Phil. 1:11)

A. _____ glorious _____

Jesus, our _____, provides the "_____ " to produce righteous, glorious fruit in our lives.

B. _____ glorious _____

The ultimate purpose of righteous fruit is "the _____ and praise of _____."



Time with God

Read each passage and answer the questions to spend personal time with God.

MONDAY

Read Philippians 1:9.

What are three differences between Christlike love and a selfish love?

How might you show Christ's love to a friend who revealed his or her plans to make a sinful choice?

THURSDAY

Read Philippians 1:10.

What does it mean to live a sincere, pure life?

How might you and your Christian friends help each other live a blameless life?

TUESDAY

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4–7.

How does your treatment of others stack up against these descriptions of love?

How is it possible to show this kind of love to others?

FRIDAY

Read Philippians 1:11.

What are some fruits of righteousness?

What is the ultimate purpose of these fruits?

WEDNESDAY

Read Philippians 1:10.

Choosing things that are excellent means making the best choices. What excellent choices have you made in your life?

What choices will you be making this week? Pray that you will make excellent ones.

SATURDAY

Read John 15:4, 5.

Why is abiding in Christ necessary?

What will you do to make sure you are abiding in Him this coming week?

Tough Questions Answered



How are we to judge others?



Jesus said we should not judge others lest we be judged (Matt. 7:1). Have you ever heard someone quote that verse to excuse another person's behavior? Did Jesus mean we should accept others' sins? Should we say nothing, or even condone others' behavior, for fear of judging them sinfully?

Jesus' command to not judge others is often misunderstood. What He said doesn't contradict Paul's prayer that the Philippians would love others with discernment, or judgment. Neither did Jesus contradict Himself when He taught that we should judge righteously, or with right judgment (John 7:24). So if we are supposed to judge, then what is the right way to judge?

Before we decide to confront other believers with their sin, we must evaluate our own lives.

Some people forget to read the rest of what Jesus said in Matthew 7:1–5. Jesus was talking about hypocrisy. He did not say that we should never judge; He said that we should not attempt to remove a speck from someone else's eye before taking the beam out of our own eye. Paul reflected this teaching in Romans. You're only condemning yourself when you judge others this way, he wrote, because you're doing the very same things (Rom. 2:1).

Before we decide to confront other believers with their sin, we must evaluate our own lives. First, we judge ourselves and go to God for cleansing—we get the beam out. Then we may approach another believer, not with a sense of pride, but in humility and love. Jesus even gave specific instructions on how to approach another believer and confront that person (Matt. 18:15–17).

We cannot judge another person's heart. Only God is qualified to judge a person's motives and intentions (1 Cor. 4:5). But through the wisdom of His Word, He enables us to discern right and wrong behavior. In practicing right judgment, we do not judge the person; we judge the sinful behavior in order to bring that person back to God.

Bumper Crops



The oldest grapevine in America is on North Carolina's Roanoke Island. Before it was cut back to clear space for a house in 1957, the sprawling vine covered two acres. Even now it covers an area measuring 30 feet by 120 feet. Historical records concerning the "Mother Vine" date back to the 1700s. Researchers estimate the vine to be at least 400 years old and speculate it may have provided food for members of the famous Lost Colony of Roanoke. Today the vine still produces plenty of its sweet muscadine grapes. In 2021, it produced a bumper crop, from which the caretaker made jelly for friends.



Paul said that fruits of righteousness come through Jesus. Jesus declared, "I am the vine." What a perfect picture of Jesus as our source of life and the source of our fruit! Connected to Him, we'll be empowered to produce "bumper crops" till Christ comes.

Memory Verse Review



Memory Verse—Philippians 1:9, 11

Paul's desire for the Philippian believers—and for us—was that they would love God and others abundantly and in accordance with God's will in His Word. As they did, they would bear righteous fruit of Christlike character. Paul noted that true spiritual fruit comes only through a right relationship with Jesus Christ and dependence on the Holy Spirit. As believers grow in Him, His power and character work to produce righteous actions and attitudes that will bring glory to God.

1. What is the source of the fruits of righteousness?
2. What happens when we try to produce these fruits through our own strength?
3. How will bearing these fruits affect your life and the lives of others?

Measuring Growth



Paul's prayer for the Philippian believers reflected his desire for their Christian lives. He prayed that their love would overflow, but that it would be guided by the boundaries of knowledge and discernment. He asked God to help them choose what is best over what is merely good enough. And he prayed that their lives would be pure and blameless. He desired that the believers would be filled with righteous fruits so that as they lived, their actions and attitudes would bring glory and praise to God. Paul's appeal for the Philippian believers echoes down to us today. As believers in our church interact in these ways, God is glorified by our fruit.

Look for the following indicators that you are bearing fruit for Christ.

1. I practice Christlike love toward others by wanting what is best for them.
2. I ask for God's help to make wise choices each day.
3. I consistently seek to live more like Christ through sincere and blameless conduct.

Additional Memory Verses—Galatians 5:22, 23.