



Big Idea: Concern yourself completely with Christlike love.

1.) Christlike *Love* is God's desire for us.

-- v. 9a – "...that your love..."

-- In Paul's Spirit-inspired prayer, we hear God's heart for our lives. He wants His love to grow in us.

-- This love in which God wants us to grow is love for Him and for each other (Matthew 22:36-40).

2.) Christlike love grows in us by God's *Truth*(v.9).

-- What many call "love" lacks both knowledge of God's truth and discernment as to right and wrong.

-- If what we call "love" doesn't glorify God through Jesus Christ, then it isn't love that will make any ultimate difference.

-- "...that your love will abound..." – God desires in us a love that is fully equipped with every element of Christ's love.

-- "...more and more..." – God intends our capacity to love like Christ to increase over time (2 Thessalonians 1:3).

-- "...in knowledge..."

-- Biblical love involves actions and attitudes based upon true knowledge of and **Obedience** to God's Word.

-- To love Christ fully, then, involves fully understanding His commands and thereby obeying them fully (John 14:15).

-- “...and depth of insight...” – By growth in God’s love, God means to teach us what really matters and what doesn’t.

3.) Knowing Christlike love inspires *Excellence*.

-- Excellent living is about knowing and living out God’s love.

-- Paul prays for a love that abounds more and more in knowledge. The rest of his prayer identifies the outcomes of such a love.

-- **Christlike love inspires excellent *Choices*.**

-- Paul’s prayers are routinely replete with superlatives and high expectations.

-- v. 10a – Literally = “...so that you may approve what is excellent...” – Understanding God’s love equips us to live life with joyful purpose.

-- v. 10b – “...and may be pure and blameless...” – It is in obeying the Great Commandment that we can make godly choices.

-- v. 10c – “...until the day of Christ.” – Knowing Christ’s love leads to a lifestyle of holiness.

-- **Christlike love inspires excellent *Living*.**

-- v. 11 – “...filled with the fruit of righteousness...” – The better we understand the Gospel, the holier our lives will be.

-- The best way to guard our hearts is to train ourselves in God’s love.

-- **Only in *Christ* can we know and grow in God’s love.**

-- v. 11 – “...that comes through Jesus Christ...” – Our capacity to love like Christ comes only through our union with Him.

-- God’s love is most perfectly revealed in the Person and work of Jesus Christ (1 John 3:16).

-- One of the surest keys to joyful, righteous living is to know Christ (John 17:3).

Application

1.) **Pray** for growth in Christlike love—both in your life and in the lives of others.

2.) Make it your ambition to fully understand God’s love.

3.) Make it your ambition to love like Christ.