



Building Wholehearted Disciples of Jesus

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Series: Philippians

The Joy Leverage: Study of Philippians
February 11, 2018

The Leverage of Joy: A Study of Philippians

Introduction:

- We are in a study on, what I am calling, **The Leverage of Joy**.
- We are studying through the “manifesto of joy”, the book of Philippians.
- It’s like Paul’s personal journal on how to have a life of joy.
 - **Leverage Point 1: Love Relationship with Christ.**
 - **Leverage Point 2: Heart to Heart Connection with People.**

Philippians 1:9-11

⁹And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, ¹¹being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Leverage Point #3: Dynamic Love

- Paul is praying for the Philippians.
- There is no truer an indicator of the spiritual maturity of the Christian than his or her prayer life.
- Paul had a vibrant prayer life. We see Paul’s recorded prayers in Ephesians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, Philemon and now in Philippians.
- The greatest discovery of one’s life is the power of prayer.
- Indeed, the New Testament indicates that the Apostles felt that the two most important things they did as leaders were prayer and the teaching of God’s Word.

- How one prays indicates much about one’s spiritual maturity. It is interesting just what Paul prays for in the Philippians.
 - Paul prayed constantly, not because of a legalistic sense of duty, but because of a genuine and deep love for the Lord and for people.
 - It was this dynamic love that drove Paul to pray.
 - In our passage we see just how much abounding love has the potential to bring us joy and to grow us into maturity as wholehearted disciples.
 - At the heart of our faith as Christians and wholehearted disciples is love—love for God and people.

1 John 4:8-11

⁸ He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

- The greatest commandment of the wholehearted disciple is one of love.
- It is the foremost and first of the fruit of the Holy Spirit, followed by joy: “love, joy...”
- Joy is the result of an abounding life of love. Loving people are the most joyful people in the world.
- Love is at the core of joy. Paul calls it an “abounding love.”

Philippians 1:9

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

- This is not a mere emotion or feeling, but a conviction that grows in us. Abound is from the word *perisseuo*, which is the idea of overflowing in great abundance. In this case, in the present tense, means continual progress.
- This is dynamic love—love that is growing and abounding.
- It is the same word used in the parable of the sower, explaining that ***“to you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom...for whoever has, to him more will be given, he shall have an abundance, but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away”*** (Matt. 13:11-12)
- Dynamic love comes from God and it is through His power that we can fulfill the Great Commandment in our life.

Mark 12:29-31

29 Jesus said...³⁰ And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. ³¹ And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Five Aspects of Abounding Dynamic Love:

- 1) This dynamic, abounding love leads us into more and more knowledge.**
 - Knowledge comes from God’s Word. When we are falling in love with Jesus, growing in our love for others, we have desire for God’s Word.
 - **1 Peter 1:22** ***“Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the people of God, fervently love one another from the heart.”***
 - God’s love will always lead us into obedience of God’s Word. “If you love Me,’ Jesus said, “you will keep my commandments...if anyone loves me, he will keep my word; and my father will love him...if you keep my word you will abide in my love.”

2) This dynamic, abounding love leads us into more and more discernment.

- When we spend time in God's Word, become familiar with God's Word, reading it, studying it, then we start to have "all discernment."
- Do we ever need discernment today!! Put aside personal taste and views and let the Holy Spirit give you real practical wisdom between competing points of view.
- Holy Spirit given love is discerning—not just a sappy compassion based in our feelings, but rather having practical wisdom based in scripture.
- This is a discernment based in love—what is best for that person. Sometimes just giving money is not what true love does. Sometimes true love is waiting to help, not readily picking someone up but getting wisdom from God for that person's true needs.
- Discerning Love takes prayer, wisdom and sometimes advice from others. When we are trying to discern a situation, we have to dive into God's Word and worship in dynamic love!

Philippians 1:10

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

3) This dynamic, abounding love leads us into greater Excellence.

- Knowledge and discernment will lead you into excellence. This is partly why we started Outlier University. OU is providing knowledge, discernment and excellence.
- Obedience motivated by dynamic love will always grow and abound into excellence.
 - This happens because of the motivation—the motivation isn't duty but devotion.

- The motivation is an ever abounding love for Jesus.
- The word “approve” is used and has the meaning of “examine, prove.”
- In classical greek it had the meaning of assaying metals for genuineness; to analyze.
- Jesus used the word in talking about predicting the weather, **“You hypocrites, you know how to analyze the weather but you do not analyze the present time?” (Luke 12:56)**
- Paul means that we should analyze through study, investigation and determine what is right—what is the best possible way to obey the Lord.

NIV: “¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,

And later in Philippians 4:8

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

- Do we ever need discerning Christians who will approve things that are excellent.
- This is precisely why we talk about having “hearts on fire (passionate love) and heads on fire (passionate discernment.)”
 - We must have discernment through the power of the Holy Spirit and His Word.
 - **“Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the**

will of God is, that which is good, acceptable and perfect.” (Rom 12:2)

- Paul reminds the Colossians ***“We proclaim Christ admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ (1:28)***

- To the Thessalonians ***“Examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good”*** (1 Thessalonians 5:21)

- For example, when John Wesley went away to Oxford, his godly mother Susanna wisely wrote in one of her many letters to him, “Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the delight for spiritual things, whatever increases authority of your body over your mind, that thing is sin.”

- The wholehearted disciple must make his or her character her highest goal and this comes through dynamic love—ever increasing love for God and his people.

4) This dynamic, abounding love leads us into greater Authenticity.

- The word used here is “sincere”. The modern word that is way overused and not understood is “integrity.” The word means true, sincere, strong from the inside out. Integrity has the meaning “solidarity within and without.”

- Authenticity is more accurate to the meaning. Not being a phony, fake or pretender. Society is full of fakers. Phonies inhabit our political offices, our pulpits and our schools.

- For example, in ancient times there were two kinds of pottery, the cheap, Walmart version that was thick and almost unbreakable and then there was the expensive thin and fragile type. But the fine

pottery, because it was thin, would sometimes crack while being fired. Unscrupulous shops learned to use wax to fill in the cracks and it was difficult to see any difference in the natural light. The only way to discern the cracks was to hold it up to the sunlight, then it was clearly exposed. They would often stamp their pottery with ***sine cera***, meaning without wax.

- The believer who is growing in love can allow his light to be exposed to God's light, from the Word, and allowing the revealing of defects, cracks and shame.
- **Hebrew 4:12** *"The Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edge sword, and piercing the division of soul and spirit and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."*
- God is looking for authentic disciples—being who you say you are. This is truly what it means to be wholehearted!
 - It is letting the light of God shine on your shame, your weaknesses, your hidden sin.
 - It is getting all out there and facing our problems that we become truly wholehearted men and women.
 - The more we live with authenticity, the more joy we will experience!

Philippians 1:11

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

5) This dynamic, abounding love leads us into greater fruitfulness.

- This is not talking just about internal fruit—love, joy, peace, patience...

- But also outward righteousness. It refers to what is seen in our lives outwardly—service for others, acts of love and kindness with our lifestyle.
- **John 15:4-13**

4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

5 “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will^[b] ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

9 “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.

11 “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. 12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.