

The Test for Choosing God's Best

Philippians 1:9-11

Paul's prayers inform our praying, so that we can pray more effectively for other believers

But these are priorities for us ourselves as well

What?

Choosing God's best requires the "glory and praise" test

Choosing excellence—

Where we want to wind up is with pure and blameless lives, standing before the Lord at the end, directing praise and glory to Him

First then, Paul prays for overflowing love that's conditioned by knowledge and discernment

The Jesus Connection—

Mark 12:30-31, ESV—“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these”

These are the things we know—knowing God personally through worship, prayer and serving Him

We discern right and wrong by searching the Scriptures

This lays the foundation for the second part of the prayer request—choosing what is excellent

The outcome of excellence, whatever that is, is a pure heart and blameless conduct

Purity means having a heart whose devotion to God isn't mixed with devotion to any other object of worship

Outwardly this results in blameless conduct, walking a smooth path without stumbling or offending others

The fruit of righteousness is the positive side of blamelessness—worshipping God, respecting the dignity of life,

honouring marriage and family, being truthful, extending mercy to others (see Exodus 20 and Matthew 5-7)

All of this is with a view to the return of Jesus

The Big Question—What does it mean to “approve what is excellent?”

Paul is referring to the daily decisions we make about the use of our time, what we read, what forms of entertainment we choose, what relationships we make a priority, how we use money, how we divide our time to make room for prayer and Scripture reading

These decisions are guided by the underlying love we have for God and others as we grow closer to God and His word

These decisions result in unmixed motives, avoidance of sin and conduct that pleases God

In the end it leads to lives that make God's greatness evident, so that others praise Him

So What?

First, we make the daily decisions about what is excellent by examining the choices and testing them for their potential in glorifying God

The second part of the application is to pray these things for others

The final say—Paul

Titus 3:8, ESV—The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people

Now What?

Make the testing and choosing of God's best your own

Pray for others, that they will also be able to test and choose what is excellent