

PHILIPPIANS

Rejoice In
The Lord!

A Prayer For Maturity

Lesson Five

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Lesson Goal: To teach students that they can pray for other Christians to grow up.

Scriptures: Philippians 1:8-11; John 15:4, 5

For Memory: “And this is my prayer, that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight.” Philippians 1:9

A Prayer For Maturity

Mary had a very good friend, Aisha. They lived on the same block and had played together since they were three years old. They started school at the same time and, though they attended different churches, they asked Jesus to be their Savior just a few weeks apart. Aisha had told Mary that she had prayed and that she was now a Christian. Mary said that she had been thinking about that for quite a while. So, the very next day, Mary prayed with her dad and mom and gave her life to Jesus, asking Him to be her Lord. For several years after that, Aisha and Mary met each Friday morning to read the Bible and pray together.

Then, Aisha’s dad was transferred, and the family had to move to Spain. It was awful for a while. Mary missed her friend so much. But, they continued to meet. Mary in Dallas and Aisha in Barcelona. Their agreement was that at the same time on Fridays, they would meet on line and share the Scripture they had chosen for the day, and pray together.**

Paul, in the first chapter of Philippians reminded the Philippians of their separation...he missed them, his brothers and sisters in Christ, with a love like that of Jesus Himself. (Verse 8) And, he told them that even though they were separated by many miles, he prayed for them. They were together in prayer, just like Mary and Aisha.*

His prayer was very specific. He was praying that they would continue to grow up as followers of Christ. What does growing up mean? It means the same thing whether you are talking about a kid growing up to be a strong adult, or a new Christians growing up to be a strong Christian. Paul gave a kind of step by step guide in his prayer.

First, he prayed that they would **love** like they should. (Verse 9) Actually, he prayed that their love would abound. He was asking God to give them more and more love for one another and for their world. You can’t have enough love...either getting it or giving it. And, he prayed that their love would be with real knowledge and depth of insight. Contrary to popular belief, love is not blind. True love requires knowing someone and being able to understand what you know. It is the difference in knowing that someone is sick and knowing exactly what disease they have. It is the difference between knowing that someone can sing and knowing what they sound like,

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how high and low they can sing and how loudly they can sing.

Next, Paul tells his dear friends in Philippi that he prays for their behavior. (Verse 10) He prays that they will be able to know what is best for their life and how to be pure and blameless. The word pure means that a person doesn't sin, ever. The word blameless means that your life can stand the test. They can shine the brightest light on you and not find any bad behavior. Now, that is pretty difficult to imagine. Can a person live a life like that? Well, not in your own power. That's why Paul was praying that God would give the Philippians wisdom and discernment to know what is best. We can live a good life with God's help.

The final thing Paul prays here is that his friends in Philippi would be fruitful. That means that he asked God to give them strength and ability, by the power of Jesus in their lives, to do good things. He was asking God to lead them to help those who needed help. He was asking God to guide them in being available to follow the example of Jesus who was always concerned for and available to help people who could not help themselves.

So, part of our responsibility as Christians is talking to God about our friends, like Paul did, and asking Him to help them grow up, just as He is helping us grow up.

*Underlined statements in this Teacher's Guide appear in the Student Worksheet with blanks to be filled in by the student during the lesson. Words in the Student Worksheet may not appear exactly as printed in the Teacher's Guide.

**Stories in these lessons are original with the author. The teacher should feel free to enlarge or change the story to be more appropriate to his or her purposes.



Teaching Tips:

1. There are several good subjects in this short scripture text. You may want to emphasize one or more that suit your class better. For instance: the full understanding of what Christian love really is or that growing up means that we serve others better.
2. Songs that emphasize God's love, Christian service, Christian growth and avoiding sinful things will be appropriate.
3. Pray with your students about being concerned for our friends and the importance of praying for them.
4. Scriptures related to bearing fruit: John 15: 4, 5; Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 1:6b.
5. The Greek word translated pure can mean tested by sunlight or whirled around in a sieve to remove that which is not wanted.
6. This passage is very good in *The Message* translation

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Student Worksheet

For Memory: “God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.” Philippians 1:8

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=Paul told them that even though they were separated by many _____, he prayed for them. They were _____ in prayer.

=First, he prayed that they would _____ like they should.

=He was asking God to give them more and more _____ for one another and for their _____.

=True love requires knowing someone and being able to _____ what you know.

=Paul tells his dear friends in Philippi that he prays for their _____.

=Paul was praying that God would give the Philippians _____ and discernment to know what is best. We can live a good life with God’s _____.

=Paul prays here that his friends in Philippi would be _____.

=He asked God to give them strength and ability, by the _____ of Jesus in their lives, to do _____ things.

=He was asking God to guide them in being available to follow the example of _____ who was always concerned for and available to _____ people.

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that there is a God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God’s Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus’ name. Jesus’ death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.

Fifth, believe that He has answered your prayer and be ready to live for him all the rest of your