

Life Group Notes 9/17/2023
Pastor Mark Warren Philippians Week 2

[No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 9/17. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On Philippians 1:10 and Paul's vocabulary.](#)
2. [On love covering a multitude of sins.](#)

*****Important:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week. ***

Mark begins by asking, "Is 'unconditional love' Christian?"

1. What are your thoughts?
2. What are your thoughts on tolerance?
3. What have you been taught?
4. Is Jesus' love unconditional?
5. Is it inconsequential?

Look up Matthew 24: [10](#)At that time many will fall away and will betray and hate one another, [11](#)and many false prophets will arise and mislead many. [12](#)Because of the multiplication of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold. [13](#)But the one who perseveres to the end will be saved.

1. What happens to love when it's constantly battered by wickedness?
2. Do you know what wickedness is?
3. How do you define it?
4. Is wickedness multiplying? How do you know? Where do you see it most?
5. Pastor Mark described mud fights in a little pond they created, and he got stuck in the mud. How does that describe the nature of our struggle with wickedness today?
6. How is the church getting stuck in wrong thinking and wrong attitudes toward wickedness?

Look at Philippians 1: [8](#)For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. [9](#)And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with

knowledge and all discernment, [10](#)so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, [11](#)filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

1. Look at Paul's prayer. What do you see?
2. What inspires Paul's prayer? (v. 8) Why does Paul love the Philippians so? How do you know his love is abounding?
3. How does love abounding more and more counter the prophecy Jesus made above in Matthew?
4. Why "in knowledge?" Why "in discernment?" What is the difference? What is the role of each?
5. The words Paul uses are examined in [footnote 1](#) below. Paraphrase what Paul is praying into our lives.
6. Look up Isaiah 5: [20](#)Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who turn darkness to light and light to darkness, who replace bitter with sweet and sweet with bitter. [21](#)Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight. Why is discernment an essential tool today? How does knowledge strengthen discernment?
7. The word "pure" means "transparent like glass, all imperfections removed," and "blameless" means "not causing to stumble, not causing offense." Why are these traits of character important for introducing the Kingdom of God into your circle?
8. Pastor Mark mentions the idea of a "lineup" where the victim is asked to identify the perp, or in this case, the Christian, out of a group of strangers lined up in a row. Would there be evidence to convict you of active Christianity?
9. Where does 21st century "tolerance" that is being enforced in schools and in the media, come into this discussion? What do we tolerate? Of what must we be intolerant? Why? How does compromise impact the fabric of our own righteousness?
10. Why does Pastor Mark not tolerate his puppy's using the house as a bathroom and his best shoes as chew toys? What does this illustrate, in terms of tolerance?
11. What does Pastor Mark tolerate? Who defines what is tolerable and what is intolerable in his house? Who defines that in your life?
12. Ultimately, Who is the judge of what is tolerable? Is He ever wrong? How do we know His mind?
13. Look at what Paul tells the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 5: [9](#)I wrote you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people. [10](#)I was not including the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. [11](#)But now I am writing you not to associate with anyone who claims to be a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a verbal abuser, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. [12](#)What business of mine is it to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? [13](#)God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you." Define tolerance as Paul describes it here. Are there "...two sets of justice" in the church? Clarify and explain.
14. Now look at 1 Corinthians 5: [6](#)Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven works through the whole batch of dough?[7](#)Get rid of the old leaven, that you may be a new unleavened batch, as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has

been sacrificed. [8](#)Therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old bread, leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and of truth. How is tolerance of sin in the church like leaven? How is malice and wickedness like leaven? What did Jesus say will happen to love when malice and wickedness abound (see above)?

Pastor Mark asks, "When did we lose the moral authority to make a stand, and to say, 'That's wrong?' Have we begun to believe what the world teaches concerning sin?"

1. Why is it hard to speak up today?
2. Are you being judgmental when you speak up?
3. Are you being a hypocrite when you speak, because you do the same thing?
4. Look up Matthew 5: [3](#)*Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but fail to notice the beam in your own eye?* [4](#)*How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' while there is still a beam in your own eye?* [5](#)*You hypocrite! First take the beam out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.* Are you to leave the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye? Are we supposed to tolerate specks of sawdust? What is your first step toward sawdust removal in your neighbor's eye?
5. How does Paul's prayer for "knowledge and all discernment" help here? Why do we "always start with ourselves," as Mark points out?
6. Look closely at Proverbs 29: [17](#)Discipline your son, and he will give you rest; he will bring delight to your soul. [18](#)[Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the Law.](#) How does verse 17 buttress Mark's point about disciplining his puppy? If shoes are threatened can puppies bring rest?
7. Where does *vision* come from? Vision of what, exactly? Mark suggests it's of the holiness of God. What does this suggest? Where do we best discern this holiness?
8. Think of a highway and speed limits. What do people do when the Law is ignored? Why is the fear of the Lord the "beginning of wisdom?"
9. Think of the woman caught in the act of adultery in John 8. How does she resemble Mark and his brothers stuck in the mud, needing someone to get her out? To what degree did Jesus tolerate the mud?
10. Look at what He said to her, *"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Now go and sin no more."* If he was not tolerant, characterize His response to her "mud." Is it possible to wash up while you're stuck in the mud? What are the steps to washing up, once you are out of the mud? What if she had gone back to adultery? (Have you ever had to forgive someone twice? Have you ever had to receive forgiveness twice? Three times?)
11. Look up 2 Peter 2: [21](#)It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than to have known it and then to turn away from the holy commandment passed on to them. [22](#)[Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."](#) Where does tolerance fit here with mud? Where does "vision" come from according to Peter? What happens when restraint is cast off?
12. Pastor Mark says, "It's not about warning others that they are going to hell... (and btw I'm doing the same thing.) It's about throwing lifelines to each other to help each other climb out." Explain. Do you have a testimony? Are you aware when you are covered with mud?

13. Look up Hebrews 10: *23Let us hold resolutely to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. 24And let us consider how to spur one another on to love and good deeds. 25Let us not neglect meeting together, as some have made a habit, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.* What do you see? What steps toward holiness are in these verses? Why are we together? What is the strength in that?
14. Look up 2 Timothy 3 *1But understand this: In the last days terrible times will come. 2For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3unloving, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, without love of good, 4traitorous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5having a form of godliness but denying its power. Turn away from such as these!* How much of this are we being taught to tolerate? What is happening to love in these days? Warmer or colder? How much of this *should* be tolerated? What happens to love when this behavior is tolerated?
15. Why does Paul say to turn away from such as these? (What did he exhort the Corinthians to do above (1 Cor 5)? How does leaven work?)
16. Which do you love more? Pleasure? Or God? Can you prove it? Could it be proven in a court of law?
17. Mark says, "It's a trick of the enemy to get us stuck." Why do we have to watch the friends we're keeping? Are we "fishers of men?" Or are we the ones getting fished?
18. Are you more attractive to people in the world? Or are you still attracted by them?

Mark raises the principle that "tolerance is not love." He says, "Tolerance turns away. Love says, 'I see you and I want to show you a different way.' Love is when you have a brother or sister and say, 'I see where you are. Can I walk beside you?' You don't point a finger and say, 'It's sin. Good luck.' Instead, you say, 'I'm here to help.' You acknowledge it's wrong, and you offer your hand. Where tolerance is all relative, our love has grown in knowledge and all discernment to see right and wrong, and we can offer a lifeline."

1. What is your response?
2. Would you rather be tolerated? Or offered a lifeline? Do you have a testimony?
3. Can you add to what Mark says here?
4. Why is it so important to be in the scripture? Is God's Law tolerant of debate? Why not?
5. Is the Law of Gravity tolerant of debate? What happens to the one who disagrees with the Law of Gravity and jumps out of a window? Does the Law of Gravity change to honor free thought? How is God's Law like the Law of Gravity and unlike speed limit laws on a highway?
6. Are we to love without conditions? How does love respond to sin? How does love cover a multitude of sin? ([See footnote 2.](#))

Pastor Mark points out that we're not about exposing sin by blasting ideas in all capital letters on social media. "That's not where it's done. It's not done by standing on a platform or yelling from a rooftop. We know that without love we're just a noisy gong." Review what love is again, 1 Corinthians 13: *4Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no account of wrongs. 6Love takes no pleasure in evil, but rejoices in the truth. 7It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8Love never fails.*

1. Why is "tolerant" not on the list?
2. Go through the list. Do you see a strategy for friendship and lifelines? Explain.

3. When does love give up? How often does love fail? When will God give up on you? How do you know?
4. What are love's limits? Speak in practical terms. How often should you review this list?
5. Look at verse 6. Comment in the context of Mark's point on blasting truth on social media. Pastor Mark closes saying, "Love starts to grow cold when people cast off restraint. When people begin to call evil good and good evil." Look back at the verses from Matthew in the beginning of these notes.

1. What does it take to "persevere to the end?"
2. What do you need to help you persevere?
3. How are you doing? Is your love warm, cold or lukewarm?
4. What does cold love look like? Look at what Jesus told the Laodicean church in Revelation 3: **15**I know your deeds; you are neither cold nor hot. How I wish you were one or the other! **16**So because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to vomit you out of My mouth! Is Jesus tolerant of lukewarm love?
5. Do you tolerate cold love in yourself? What excuses have you heard for lukewarm love?
6. Look up 1 Peter 1: **13**Therefore prepare your minds for action. Be sober-minded. Set your hope fully on the grace to be given you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. **14**As obedient children, do not conform to the passions of your former ignorance. **15**But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all your conduct, **16**for it is written: "You shall be holy, because I am holy." Count the steps Peter outlines to fan love to flame.
7. Scribe's note: "You shall be holy" in Peter's Greek is not a command, but the indicative future tense, "You will be holy because I am." How does turning this daunting, unworkable commandment into a promise garner hope for you to become holy?
8. Can love fail when the promise is so clear?
9. Look at the rest of this passage: **17**Since you call on a Father who judges each one's work impartially, conduct yourselves in reverent fear during your stay as foreigners. **18**For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life you inherited from your forefathers, **19**but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or spot. **20**He was known before the foundation of the world, but was revealed in the last times for your sake. Explain. Why "fear?" What does "perfect love" drive out? (1 John 4:18)
10. Look up 1 Thessalonians 5: **14**And we urge you, brothers, to admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, and be patient with everyone. **15**Make sure that no one repays evil for evil. Always pursue what is good for one another and for all people. **16**Rejoice at all times. **17**Pray without ceasing. **18**Give thanks in every circumstance, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. **19**Do not extinguish the Spirit. **20**Do not treat prophecies with contempt, **21**but test all things. Hold fast to what is good. **22**Abstain from every form of evil. **23**Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your entire spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **24**The One who calls you is faithful, and He will do it. How is Paul's instruction to the Thessalonians the fulfillment of Paul's prayer for the Philippians? How is Paul doing what we just read in Hebrews 10 above?
11. Where is tolerance of evil in any of these instructions?
12. What's the difference between "being patient with everyone" and "being tolerant?"
13. Look at verse 20. How do you "test all things?" Do you have a testimony?
14. Describe the promise in verse 24. What hope does that inspire in you?

The Follow-up Application

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Pray the Philippians 1:8-11 prayer over yourself and your family, the church and the people at work every day this week. Write down any results you see.
3. Look for evidence that might be used to convict you of practicing Christianity this week.
4. Think in terms of “washing up” from the mud that you have been stuck in. Write down the steps you took to get out, or the steps you are taking. Is it working? Where do you find encouragement?

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's Notes:

1. **On Philippians 1:10 and Paul's vocabulary and the Amplified Bible.** Sometimes the Greek language can be so rich that a precise rendering is difficult. To illustrate this, an *Amplified Version* was produced in the sixties, and improved recently, to render the nuances that a single word translation can miss. Wikipedia says, “The Amplified Bible largely offers a word-for-word ([formal equivalence](#)) translation, in contrast to thought-for-thought (dynamic equivalence) translations at the opposite end of the Bible translation spectrum. Amplification is indicated by parentheses, brackets, italicized conjunctions, and bold or italicized text. Each form provides different kinds of information to the individual reader.” Looking at verse ten above, “**10**so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,” the Amplified puts it this way, “**10**so that you may learn to recognize and treasure what is excellent [*identifying the best, and distinguishing moral differences*], and that you may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ [*actually living lives that lead others away from sin*]; **11**filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God [*so that His glory may be both revealed and recognized*]. “Recognizing and treasuring” is the Greek word **δοκιμάζω** (*dokimazo*) means “to test, examine, prove and scrutinize. To recognize as genuine after close examination.” “What is excellent,” is **διαφέρω**, (*diaphero*), implies “...things that carry through, that make a difference, that will go all the way to the end.” Paul is talking about a careful, attentive walk that sustains the growth in knowledge and depth of insight that he's praying into us. If a footnote like this sparks excitement in you, and investment in the Amplified Bible is a good idea, especially if you recognize that even this attempt is not a perfect solution to translation, but another aid in your own meditation.
2. **On love covering a multitude of sins.** One of the frequently recurring themes in the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is the concept of love “covering” sins. It is not my intention here to interpret this theme, but to point out the frequency of its recurrence, so you can begin to discern what the Spirit is teaching. Jesus Himself said the “son of Man (Adam) has the authority to forgive sins,” making this one of the many powers, indeed obligations, delegated to man at creation. I

want to list the number of times this is mentioned so that you can begin your study.

- a. [Proverbs 10:12](#) Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers all transgressions.
- b. [Proverbs 17:9](#) Whoever conceals an offense promotes love, but he who brings it up separates friends.
- c. [James 5:20](#) consider this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and cover over a multitude of sins.
- d. [1 Peter 4:7-8](#) ⁷The end of all things is near. Therefore, be clear-minded and sober, so that you can pray. ⁸[Above all, love one another deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.](#)

Can you begin to understand steps you can take to love more deeply and to cover your neighbors' sins, without tolerating their behavior? Where is the balance?

For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP**... (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) ...method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Matthew 24:10-13
Tuesday: Isaiah 5:20-21
Wednesday: Philippians 1:15-18
Thursday: Philippians 1:21-26
Friday: 1 Corinthians 5:9-13
Saturday: 1 Corinthians 5:6-8
Sunday: Matthew 5:3-5

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.