

Week of Sept 9-15

LOVE'S I.Q.

Scripture Reading: Read Philippians chapter 1

What is your love I.Q? How smart is it? “Huh? How smart is my love? What kind of question is that?” It’s a question that comes to mind in light of Paul’s prayer for the Philippian church in today’s chapter reading. Take a look for yourself: *“And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ--to the glory and praise of God.”* See? Paul prayed for the Philippians to have smart love. He wanted their love to abound more and more *“in knowledge and depth of insight.”* So, what’s your love I.Q.? Do you have smart love?

This question needs to be asked because, sometimes, our love isn’t very bright. For example, when a child acts up and a parent gives in to keep the peace rather than instructing and training their child, their love isn’t very smart. When a person enables someone going through an addiction because they can’t stand to see them in pain rather than allowing the pain to teach the addict of the need to change, they reveal a low love I.Q.

Biblical love, on the other hand, has a high I.Q. It doesn’t allow itself to be swayed away from the truth. It bases its decisions on the Word of God and always acts in the highest interest of the one loved. It doesn’t cave or enable. It lovingly challenges and empowers the one loved to grow and mature.

Notice, love doesn’t increase its I.Q. for its own sake. Not at all! As Paul makes clear in his prayer, the purpose of love growing smarter is so that we may be able to do three things. First, an increase in love’s I.Q. will empower us to discern what is best. Life is filled with hundreds, if not thousands, of choices each day. Discernment to know what is best is essential if we are to make the right choices. Second, making the right choice will allow us to grow in purity and live blameless lives on this earth while we wait for the return of Christ. In other words, an increase in love’s I.Q will lead to greater holiness in our lives. Finally, the increase in holiness will lead to a fullness in our lives of the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ.

What a progression! God gives us smarter love. We get a clearer picture of the choices that lie before so we can choose wisely. The wise choices lead to purity and ever-increasing holiness which manifests itself in a fruit-filled life of righteousness. Such a life will, ultimately, bring glory and praise to God according to Paul.

Action Step: How smart is your love? Take a “Love I.Q. Test” today by examining how you show love in your relationships. Some questions to consider: Do you enable or empower, coddle or coach? Do you try to keep the peace at all costs or are you willing to sacrifice a temporary truce to gain real peace? Are you acting in the highest interest of the one loved? If you find that your love isn’t very bright, it’s time to go to the school of the Holy Spirit and increase the knowledge of your lover.

Prayer Focus: Pray Paul’s prayer in Philippians 1:9-11 over yourself and your family.

Take-a-way: *Biblical love has a high I.Q leading to our holiness and God’s glory!*