SERMON DISCUSSION STARTERS

Gospel relationships grow in a context of partnership or fellowship. That is simply a self-sacrificing commitment to a shared vision, namely the gospel. How would you describe the depth of your gospel fellowship?

- *How do you sacrifice for the cause of the gospel?*
- *How are you supporting the work of the gospel with your resources?*
- *What are some ways that you are in community partnering for the gospel? Do you serve in groups? Do you go out and proclaim the gospel with a friend?*
- *If your relationships aren't centered on the gospel, what are they centered on?*

Paul encouraged us to pray for the gospel fruit of love informed by knowledge (Phil. 1:9). Will knowledge of God really enhance our love for him? Frank Sheed wrote, "A virtuous man may be ignorant, but ignorance is not a virtue. It would be a strange God who could be loved better by being known less. Love of God is not the same thing as knowledge of God; love of God is immeasurably more important than knowledge of God; but if a man loves God knowing little about Him, he should love God more from knowing more about Him: For every new thing known about God is a new reason for loving Him."

- *Look up the following verses in the other three prison epistles and notice what repetitive theme comes up in each of Paul's prayers (Eph. 1:17; Col. 1:9-10; Philemon 6).*
- *What are two ways you can enhance your knowledge of God this week, such that you love him more?*
- *Is there someone in your life that you know God wants you to love, but it's hard? Why don't you take a first step toward love by simply beginning to pray for that person? Take some time right now to pray with good will for that person you struggle loving.*

One of the fruits of the gospel that we are encouraged to pray for has to do with our conduct (Phil. 1:10-11). Words like "pure," or "blameless" speak to this fruit of righteousness.

- *Is there any impurity in your life that needs to be purged? Is there a mixture of good with some bad in your life? Purity demands the removal of the bad.*
- *Blameless means "without stumbling" or "without causing offense." Are you blameless? If not, what needs to change by God's grace?*
- *Call out to God and ask him to forgive you (1John 1:9) if you've been impure or blame worthy.*

TODAY'S NOTES