Philippians 1:7-18

“Excellence”

**Scripture:** Philippians 1:7-18

**Memory Verse:** *“...that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere*

 *and without offense till the day of Christ.”* Philippians 1:10

**Lesson Focus:** We need to have God’s overflowing love in our lives and live with knowledge and discernment of making life choices that are excellent.

**Activities and Craft:** **1st & 2nd**: Coloring Sheet and Craft: “Mother’s Day Cards”

**3rd – 5th**: Student work sheet to be done after the lesson back in the classroom. (Go through all of the questions together and have group prayer at the end of class.)

Mother’s Day Cards will be in the classroom for the kids to decorate before the Bible Lesson.

**Introduction:** “The Most Excellent Jelly Bean Game” (This is for the Large group teaching time….we will provide these in each class of the Large group teacher.)

 Tell the kids that you have a bag of jelly beans. They are all flavors. Some are excellent and some are really bad. They have to volunteer to come up and reach in the bag (without) looking and choose one jelly bean to eat. They will then tell us if they are excellent or bad.

Tell the kids just like the jelly beans the excellent choices that we make in life taste good and feel right in our hearts. But the bad choices feel bad and give us a bad taste in our lives. We need to choose the excellent way!

**Bible Study:**

 **Philippians 1:7:**

√ Where is Paul? (in prison)

√ What does Paul have in common with the Philippians believers?

1. Paul has the Philippians in his heart (he cares deeply for them)

This is how your RMC teachers feel about all of you.

(Note to teachers) Take the time to tell the kids why you serve in Children’s ministry. How you love and care for them and pray for them during the week.

Tell them that we don’t do this because we have to – but because we want to. We want to see them love Jesus. We want to see them love God’s Word. One of the most wonderful joys of teaching kids is seeing them grow up and love Jesus. We hold you all in our hearts because we see what God is doing and can do through you.

1. They are both partakers of God’s Grace

What does that mean?

1. They are both defending the Gospel?

What does that mean?

What is the Gospel? (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

How would you defend the Gospel?

 **Philippians 1:8:**

 √ How does Paul feel about the Philippian believers?

1. He longs for them…he wants to see them again.)
2. He has great feelings (affection) for them. He loves them!

The word “affection” literally is “the inward parts” which means that Paul felt this in his soul.

√ Have you ever missed someone terribly? Explain.

**Philippians 1:9-11; *“Paul’s Prayer!”***

√ What does Paul pray for them?

1. That their love may abound (grow) in love with knowledge and discernment.

Paul does not say what kind of love. He leaves it open and just wants their love to grow and grow. Jesus told us that the most important thing is to love God and love others.

* “Knowledge”: Paul also tells them that their love would be with discernment (knowledge). I can tell you the truth; the more you know of God the more you will love Him. This love with knowledge grows by a personal relationship with God, an intimate relationship. This kind of love isn’t “mushy” love. It comes by knowing God and allowing the Holy Spirit to grown our knowledge of God through His word and prayer.
* “Discernment” or insight: This Greek word is only used here in the New Testament but is used about 22 times in the book of Proverbs.

Paul wants our love to be lived out in insightful ways in our everyday life. If we love we will serve others and be kind.

√ Can you ever have too much love?

* If you only love God a “little” maybe you need to know God more and read His word more.
* Every new thing you learn about God will cause you to love God more and more.
1. That they may approve things that are excellent
* To test situations to make sure that you choose the “best” way.
* Every day we make choices and these choices will shape the rest of our lives.

**Illustration: “Choices” a game of “Would you Rather”**

…would you rather eat a Brussel sprout or a grasshopper?

 …would you rather study for a test or just take your chances?

 …would you rather go to church or go to the park?

 …would you rather brush your teeth or just go to bed?

 …would you rather obey your parents or do what you want to do?

 …would you rather be kind to your little sister or brother or tell them to

 “bug off”?

* It’s our little choices that affect us making wiser bigger choices

√ Do you think you should pay more attention to the choices that you make?

1. That they may be sincere and without offense in their daily life
* When you live life with “excellence” then you don’t offend others
* you don’t give them a reason to speak bad of you
1. That they would be filled with the fruits of the Spirit
* We need to live our lives with the Holy Spirit’s power
* We need to live our lives like Jesus

√ Do we pray like this for people? Do we pray with our whole heart thinking about others and their needs and spiritual condition? We need to pray like this for others and we need to live like this ourselves.

**Philippians 1:12-14**

 √ What does Paul want the Philippian believers to know?

1. Being in jail has been a good thing.
2. The Gospel has gone out to the whole palace guard and all of the other prisoners.
3. The other believers have gotten confidence from Paul being in jail and are more bold to speak out for Christ

**Philippians 1:15-18:**

 √ In verse 18 what does Paul rejoice in? (Look back up at verses 15-18)

1. In whatever way people preach Christ, Paul Rejoices
2. Some preach Christ with the wrong motives (envy, strife, selfish ambition and not sincerely)
3. Some preach Christ thinking that the will make Paul feel bad that he is in jail.
4. But some preach Christ from goodwill and love
* The “Gospel – always comes first. It doesn’t matter that Paul is in prison. It doesn’t matter that some preach Jesus with the wrong motives. The Gospel is the only thing that matters.

**Conclusion:** On Facebook the other day was a video of a young boy about 10 years old who was completely color blind. He could not see any colors at all. So for his birthday they show him opening up a package. In the package was a very expensive pair of sun glasses. When he put them on he saw colors for the first time in his life. He just started crying and looking around at the grass and the sky and his parents. It was very touching to watch him see colors for the first time. He got to see what he was missing, and he was overwhelmed.

We need to stop and see what we are missing. When we live our lives with Gods love overflowing through us we live God’s best life for us. When we choose to make life choices with knowledge and insight we live God’s best life for us. When we choose only things that are excellent we are living God’s best life for us.