

**1. Prayer is vital for growth**

- Paul's confidence in God's 'finishing touches' (v6) doesn't mean he sits back
- Confident of their progress, he prays for their growth

**2. Prayer should be governed by gospel priorities**

- God shows us that he is more interested in what is happening *in us* than in what is happening *to us*
- Our prayers should be governed by God's priorities – Our sanctification
- Encouragements to pray this way:
  - We know we are praying God's will planne
  - We can see answers easier, and progress can be measured

**3. Six priorities to pray for other Christians**

- No sudden secret route to growth
  - a) Pray that they would grow in love**
    - No object specified – God, Christians, the world? All of it!!
    - If we lack love we will not grow in other areas – eg. joy, understanding, godliness, peace
  - b) Pray that they would grow in knowledge**
    - Not a sentimental love – but directed and honed by knowledge
    - 'Knowledge' = knowledge of God and his ways and word
    - The more we know, the more we can grow
    - The deeper we know, the stronger our roots (faith) will be
  - c) Pray that they will grow in wisdom**
    - "so that you may be able to discern what is best"
    - Wisdom is how to apply God's unchanging word to an always changing world
    - Not simply right and wrong, but subtle choices that come from our deepest values
    - Knowing what is best for me as a Christian, so that I can grow and serve others
  - d) Pray that they would grow in Godliness**
    - Knowledge must work itself out in transformation, otherwise it goes stale
    - 'Pure' – Our inner conduct: not mixed, not reflecting some values of the world, some of Christ
    - 'Blameless' – Our outer conduct: the absence of wrong,

nothing to cause a non-Christian to stumble

- 'Filled with the fruit of righteousness' – The presence of good, godliness growing at every level
- Ready for Christ's return – remembering that this is what we live for!
- e) Pray that they would bring glory to God**
  - That our lives, struggles, suffering, will all act as signposts to the great God who rescued us
  - A key line to pray for Christians who are facing sickness or death
  - A key line to pray for Christians who are facing success
- f) Pray that they would abide in Christ, so that his power can do all this**
  - "that comes through Christ Jesus"
  - The Christian isn't left to do all this growing, there is the ceaseless work of the Father (v6) and the enabling of the Son (v11).
  - If we abide in him we will bear much fruit - John 15:5