

Study Guide

for

Philemon




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Bible Translations and Abbreviations

Translations

NET Bible - default translation used

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Good News Bible

Scripture marked GNB

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Abbreviations for books of the Bible.

Old Testament		New Testament	
Gen - Genesis	Ecc - Ecclesiastes	Mat - Matthew	1Pe - 1 Peter
Exo - Exodus	SoS - Song of Solomon	Mar - Mark	2Pe - 2 Peter
Lev - Leviticus	Isa - Isaiah	Luk - Luke	1Jo - 1 John
Num - Numbers	Jer - Jeremiah	Joh - John	2Jo - 2 John
Deu - Deuteronomy	Lam - Lamentations	Act - Acts	3Jo - 3 John
Jos - Joshua	Eze - Ezekiel	Rom - Romans	Jud - Jude
Jdg - Judges	Dan - Daniel	1Co - 1 Corinthians	Rev - Revelation
Rut - Ruth	Hos - Hosea	2Co - 2 Corinthians	
1Sa - 1 Samuel	Joe - Joel	Gal - Galatians	
2Sa - 2 Samuel	Amo - Amos	Eph - Ephesians	
1Ki - 1 Kings	Oba - Obadiah	Php - Philippians	
2Ki - 2 Kings	Jon - Jonah	Col - Colossians	
1Ch - 1 Chronicles	Mic - Micah	1Th - 1 Thessalonians	
2Ch - 2 Chronicles	Nah - Nahum	2Th - 2 Thessalonians	
Ezr - Ezra	Hab - Habakkuk	1Ti - 1 Timothy	
Neh - Nehemiah	Zep - Zephaniah	2Ti - 2 Timothy	
Est - Esther	Hag - Haggai	Tit - Titus	
Job - Job	Zec - Zechariah	Phm - Philemon	
Psa - Psalms	Mal - Malachi	Heb - Hebrews	
Pro - Proverbs		Jas - James	

Outline

Outline

<i>Section</i>	<i>Description</i>
1:1-3	Salutation
1:4-7	Thanks for Philemon's Love and Faith
1:8-22	Paul's Request for Onesimus
1:23-25	Concluding Greetings

Chapter 1

Salutation

1 From Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon, our dear friend and colaborer, 2 to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church that meets in your house. 3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

1. Who is writing the letter? v1

2. To whom was he writing? v1-2

Person / Group	Description

3. What blessing does Paul bestow upon his readers? v3

Thanks for Philemon's Love and Faith

4 I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, 5 because I hear of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. 6 I pray that the faith you share with us may deepen your understanding of every blessing that belongs to you in Christ. 7 I have had great joy and encouragement because of your love, for the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.

4. What do we learn about Paul's prayer life? v4

5. What reason does Paul state for giving thanks for Philemon? v5

6. What is the next thing that Paul prays for Philemon? v6

7. Paul now gives a little clearer reasons for having the feelings that he does for Philemon. What are they? v7

Paul's Request for Onesimus

8 So, although I have quite a lot of confidence in Christ and could command you to do what is proper, 9 I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love – I, Paul, an old man and even now a prisoner for the sake of Christ Jesus – 10 I am appealing to you concerning my child, whose spiritual father I have become during my imprisonment, that is, Onesimus, 11 who was formerly useless to you, but is now useful to you and me. 12 I have sent him (who is my very heart) back to you. 13 I wanted to keep him so that he could serve me in your place during my imprisonment for the sake of the gospel. 14 However, without your consent I did not want to do anything, so that your good deed would not be out of compulsion, but from your own willingness. 15 For perhaps it was for this reason that he was separated from you for a little while, so that you would have him back eternally, 16 no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, as a dear brother. He is especially so to me, and even more so to you now, both humanly speaking and in the Lord. 17 Therefore if you regard me as a partner, accept him as you would me. 18 Now if he has defrauded you of anything or owes you anything, charge what he owes to me. 19 I, Paul, have written this letter with my own hand: I will repay it. I could also mention that you owe me your very self. 20 Yes, brother, let me have some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ. 21 Since I was confident that you would obey, I wrote to you, because I knew that you would do even more than what I am asking you to do. 22 At the same time also, prepare a place for me to stay, for I hope that through your prayers I will be given back to you.

8. Paul now begins his request that he has of Philemon. What method does Paul choose to use and why? v8-9a

9. What insight does Paul give as to why he chooses the method that he does to make his request of Philemon? v9

10. Who is it that Paul is making this appeal for and what is the nature of the relationship that he has with them? v10

11. How does Paul describe the history of the relationship of Onesimus to Philemon and himself? v11

The name Onesimus means *useful* or *profitable*. Paul plays on that meaning and makes a point about the power of Christ to make that which is useless useful.¹

12. What does Paul do regarding Onesimus? v12

13. How does Paul describe Onesimus here? v12

That is, "who means a great deal to me"; *Grk* "whom I have sent to you, him, this one is my heart."²

14. What did Paul want to do with Onesimus? v13

15. What reason does Paul give for returning Onesimus to Philemon? v14

16. Paul then shares his thoughts on how Onesimus came to be with Paul in the first place. What are they? v15-16a

¹ *The Preacher's Commentary* - Notes on Phm 1:8-16 - e-sword.net software.

² *NET Bible* - Notes on Phm 1:12.

Chapter 1

17. Paul then gives another description of how he feels regarding Onesimus. What does he say about him? v16

18. What does Paul ask Philemon to do regarding Onesimus? v17

19. What else does Paul ask Philemon to do regarding what Onesimus might owe to Philemon and what will Paul do regarding what is owed? v18-19

20. What additional reason does Paul give for Philemon abiding by this agreement? v19

The statement *you owe me your very self* means that Paul was responsible for some sort of blessing in the life of Philemon; though a monetary idea may be in mind, it is perhaps better to understand Paul as referring to the spiritual truth (i.e., the gospel) he had taught Philemon.³

21. Paul then makes an appeal to Philemon. What is it? v20

Alternate Translation - So, my brother, please do me this favor for the Lord's sake; as a brother in Christ, cheer me up! (GNB)

The idea here is, that Paul had such a tender affection for Onesimus as to give him great concern and uneasiness. The word rendered "refresh" - [ανάπαυσόν](#) anapauson - means "to give rest to, to give repose, to free from sorrow or care;" and the sense is, that by receiving Onesimus, Philemon would cause the deep and anxious feelings of Paul to cease, and he would be calm and happy.⁴

³ *NET Bible* - Notes on Phm 1:19.

⁴ Albert Barnes Notes on the Bible - Phm 1:20 - e-sword.net software.

Chapter 1

Paul cannot resist putting the two facts together—what he has done for Philemon and what he requests Philemon do for Onesimus. Paul can do this, not coercively or in an unjustly demanding way, but because he is asking no more than the discharge of Christian duty. He is not seeking any selfish thing for himself, only something for the sake of Christ. Paul is persuading Philemon to be obedient not to Paul, but to the gospel of love. That must be the end to which we seek to persuade all persons.⁵

22. Paul once again gives a reason for why he wrote of Philemon. What is it? v21

23. Paul makes a final request of Philemon. What is it? v22

Concluding Greetings

23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you. 24 Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my colaborers, greet you too. 25 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

24. Paul gives a series of greetings from some of the other people who are with him. Who are they and how does he describe them? v23-24

25. What is the final blessing that Paul bestows on Philemon? v25

⁵ *The Preacher's Commentary* - Notes on Phm 1:17-20 - e-sword.net software.

Practical Application

26. Here are some other passages on forgiveness and restoration. Summarize what each selection of verses teaches us.⁶

Mat 6:14-15

Mat 18:23-25

Eph 4:31-32

1Co 13:5

Gal 6:1

Gen 50:19-21 (review the whole story of Joseph - Gen 45-50)

2Co 2:5-11

⁶ Kruis, John G., *Quick Scripture Reference for Counseling*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1988, 1994, 2000.

Practical Application

1Pe 4:8

Luke 15:20-24

Isa 44:22-23

Psa 25:7

Psa 130

Neh 1:4-9

27. What does this letter and the additional verses tell us about restoring a fellow Christian to fellowship?

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