
THE BOOK OF

PHILEMON

TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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PHIL. 1:1-25

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Philemon 1:1-25 (NIV)

1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker, 2 to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church that meets in your home: 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Thanksgiving and Prayer 4 I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, 5 because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. 6 I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. 7 Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints. Paul's Plea for Onesimus 8 Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, 9 yet I appeal to you on the basis of love. I then, as Paul—an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus— 10 I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. 11 Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me. 12 I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

““Your love has given me great joy...”

13 I would have liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. 14 But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced. 15 Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good— 16 no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord. 17 So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. 18 If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. 19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self. 20 I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. 21 Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask. 22 And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers. 23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. 24 And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers. 25 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

BY DAVID HEWETT

This week pray that God will allow you to partner with others in the ministry of His gospel. Ask God to allow you to be encouraged by the ministry of another whom you have worked with in the past.

MESSAGE

Paul continues to show us the need for close friendship. The book of Philemon is one that show us a friendship that is old and established, and one that is new and refreshing. In both relationships, the new and the old, Paul wants us to see each as important as the other.

This week we will focus on the old and established relationship. Paul is writing to his dear friend, Philemon. What made Philemon and Paul so close? First they were fellow workers in the ministry.

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MESSAGE

They had spent time ministering together. Paul refers to Philemon as his “partner” as they had worked very closely in establishing the church that now met in Philemon’s home. This relationship was firmly established by Paul and Philemon co-laboring for the work of Christ. This has created a strong and lasting bond. What has caused this bond to grow even though they are separated by distance? The answer is Philemon’s reputation. Paul acknowledges not only the reputation Philemon has, but how that reputation is a great encouragement to Paul.

Paul says in verse seven, “Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints.” This is true of us today as well. We are encouraged when others continue to carry the ministry forward even when we are not there in person. This week focus on how you can mentor or encourage someone in their ministry to help them continue to see God’s plan.

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PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

BY DAVID HEWETT

This week pray for those who are traveling, that God will show them His love and mercy directly, as well as to those around them.

MESSAGE

This week we focus on the new relationship that has been established by Paul, and how it has changed many other relationships at the same time. Paul is writing to Philemon to ask Philemon to not punish Onesimus, his slave.

He asks him, in fact, to welcome his former slave back home as a fellow brother in Christ. Apparently Onesimus had run away from Philemon and had joined Paul in prison to help and serve Paul. During his time with Paul, Onesimus has become a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

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MESSAGE

Paul understands the need to send Onesimus home to Philemon, but wants to show Philemon not only how Onesimus has changed, but how his (Philemon's) relationship with Onesimus should change as well. In verse 17, Paul pleads with Philemon to "...welcome him as you would welcome me." A mighty big change, especially given the cultural environment of the day. I believe Paul is pointing far beyond the earthly slave-master issue to help us realize that all men are created by and loved by God, and we need to view them all as servants of God Almighty and not as inferior or superior to ourselves.

In God's eyes we are all the same and need His love and salvation no matter what rung on the social ladder we have here in this fallen world. How do you view those around you? As slaves not worthy of your time and effort? Or as created in God's image, loved and cared for by God with the same amount and type of love He has for you?