

PHILEMON



Philemon

- Author
 - Apostle Paul
- Location and Time of Writing
 - Written while Paul was in prison (vs 1).
 - This would have been Paul's first imprisonment in Rome and was written in AD 62-63.
- Paul's shortest work
 - Only 335 words in Greek
 - Last in the order of Paul's letters because of its brevity

Philemon

- What is Paul's purpose in writing Philemon?
 - Personal letter to a friend for a specific purpose.
 - Paul is asking for Philemon to accept back a runaway slave named Onesimus.
 - Arranges a place for him to stay when he is released from prison
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Philemon

- What are some things we can learn about Philemon from this short letter?
 - He was a faithful brother in Christ (4-6)
 - His faithfulness and love brought much joy to Paul (7)
 - Paul had converted him to Christ (19)
 - Perhaps a wealthy man
 - The church met in his home (2)
 - He owned at least 1 slave
 - Had the means to provide lodging to Paul when he was planning to visit (22)

Philemon

- What are some things we can learn about Onesimus from this short letter?
 - He was a slave of Philemon's who had run away.
 - His name means *useful* or *beneficial*
 - Paul seems to be using a play on words in vs 11 with his name.
 - He was *useless* to you, but now he is *useful* to both you and to me.
 - He had become a Christian some time after running away from Philemon (10), and had become very useful to him. (11-13)
 - He demonstrated great faith in Paul- and therefore God- by going back to Philemon.
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Philemon

- What tone does Paul use in writing this letter? Why do you think he chose to write the letter in this way?
 - Flattery- but honest flattery (4-7)
 - Persuasive, yet authoritative (8-16)
 - Paul does not outright *command* Philemon to accept Onesimus back, yet it's hard to imagine Philemon anything else by the end of letter.
 - Writing the letter in this way...
 - Alleviated tension
 - Encouraged Philemon to do the right thing.
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Philemon

- What are some lessons we can learn today about how Paul handled this situation?
- Handling authority with wisdom
 - Paul does not use his God-given authority as the means to convince Philemon to do the right thing
 - He does use his apostleship elsewhere to show the authority he had from Jesus. (Galatians 1:1,11)
 - We should be wise in how we handle authority.

Philemon

- What are some modern applications for the new relationship between Onesimus and Philemon?
 - Accepting those who have may have wronged us as brothers in Christ (15-17)
 - Where true “equality” lies
 - There has been a lot of talk the last year on the topic of equality.
 - Paul encourages Philemon to no longer treat Onesimus as a slave, but as a brother.
 - Galatians 3:28- all are one in Christ Jesus
 - Millions are looking for equality from governments and human systems, but true equality will only come from One place.
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