

PHILEMON

Phi. 1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus [not Nero], and Timothy [amanuensis], *our* brother, to Philemon, our beloved and fellow-worker,

Phi. 2 And to Apphia [his wife], *our* sister [in Christ], and to Archippus [their son], our fellow soldier [seasoned veteran in the ministry], and to the [local] assembly [at Colossia] which *meets* at your home:

Phi. 3 Grace [experiential sanctification] to you and prosperity [super-abounding grace blessings] from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Phi. 4 I keep thanking my God always [on a continual basis], making mention of you [remembering Philemon] during the time of my prayers,

Phi. 5 (because from time-to-time [recurring reports] I hear about your [Philemon's] virtue love [as fruit of the Spirit] and the doctrine which you have [in your soul] by way of application face-to-face with the Lord Jesus [in spiritual self-esteem] and toward all the saints [in spiritual autonomy]),

Phi. 6 In order that our association [fellowship], with reference to your doctrine [fruits of your Bible study], might be operational [produce continual spiritual momentum] towards Christ [category 1 love in spiritual self-esteem] by means of the full knowledge of every good of intrinsic value thing [divine good] in you;

Phi. 7 For I have come to have great inner happiness and encouragement due to your virtue love [category 3 friendship], because the deep and tender affections [emotional response] of the saints [royal family] have been repeatedly refreshed through you [blessing by association], *my* brother [Philemon].

Phi. 8 Therefore, though I have maximum authority [as an apostle] by means of Christ to command you to do what is fitting and proper under the given circumstances [apply virtue love as a problem-solving device],

Phi. 9 *Instead*, because of your virtue love [category 3 friendship], I encourage *you* [grace orientation] even more [allowing him to make his own decision], being such a person as Paul, an ambassador and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus.

Phi. 10 I am appealing to you [to be grace oriented] on behalf of my student, Onesimus, whom I have fathered [spiritually] while in chains [to a Roman Praetorian Guard],

Phi. 11 The one formerly useless [in spite of his name which means "useful"] to you [as a runaway slave], but now [after regeneration] highly useful both to you [as an improved slave] and to me [as a friend and ambassador for Christ],

Phi. 12 Whom I am sending back [to resume his duties] to you [along with Tychicus], that same one who has my very own deep and tender affections [Paul loves Onesimus as if he were his own son],

Phi. 13 Whom I wish [would have liked] to detain for myself [I've procrastinated in returning him to you], so that on your behalf [instead of you being here in person], he might keep on ministering to me in my chains [imprisonment] for the sake of the gospel.

Phi. 14 However, I did not want to do anything without your consent, in order that your intrinsic good [produced by doctrine in your soul] should not have to manifest itself by means of compulsion [not through Paul's compelling arguments or legal action regarding runaway slaves], but rather voluntarily.

Phi. 15 Perhaps for this purpose [by divine design] he was separated *from you* [by God] for an hour [short vacation], in order that you might have him [Onesimus] back forever [lifelong service],

Phi. 16 No longer as a mere slave, but more than a slave, a beloved [exhibiting spiritual momentum] brother [Christian], most of all to me, but now much more to you, both in the flesh [Onesimus continues to be a slave of Philemon in the human realm] and in the Lord [Onesimus and Philemon are equals in the spiritual realm].

Phi. 17 Therefore, if you continue to have me as a partner [close spiritual relationship], then please receive him [Onesimus] as *you would receive* me [as a grace partner].

Phi. 18 And if he has wronged you [by running away or staying with Paul too long] or if he owes *you* anything [due to indebtedness, theft or over-spending], then charge it to my account [a grace-oriented business transaction].

Phi. 19 "I, Paul," have written by my own hand [binding legal signature]: "I will compensate [promissory note or IOU] you," so that I do not have to mention to you that you owe, even yourself, to me [Paul led him to Christ and taught him Bible doctrine].

Phi. 20 Okay, brother, let me benefit [as a return on doctrinal investment] from you [in this matter] because of the Lord. Refresh my deep affections [inner happiness] *for you* in Christ.

Phi. 21 Although I have confidence in your obedience [proper application of Bible doctrine], I have written to you, knowing that you will do even more [reading between the lines] than what I am suggesting [treat Onesimus well and setting an example to others].

Phi. 22 And at the same time [along with your reception of Onesimus], also prepare for me a lodging [guest room], for I anticipate that through your prayers, I shall be graciously given back to you [just like Onesimus].

Phi. 23 Epaphrus, my fellow prisoner [inmate], salutes you in Christ Jesus;

Phi. 24 *Also* Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, *and* Luke: my co-workers.

Phi. 25 *May* the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your [human] spirit.