

Day 1: Philemon vs: 17

So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me.

Paul again stresses the equality of all believers. He states that Onesimus is a partner with Paul and so is a partner with Philemon. Paul keeps coming back to the theme that in Christ all are one. One of the reasons this is an important part of scripture is that it shows that Paul does not just talk, but acts on his beliefs.

Question: How does one welcome a partner?

Challenge: Write down 5-7 things you do very well. Now, how can you use some of those things to be in ministry?

Scripture: I Corinthians 12:1-31

Day 2: Philemon vs: 18

If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me.

Scholars do not think that Onesimus actually stole something from his master, nor did he do anything wrong (except running away) that would require repayment. The "if" is probably rhetorical. It allows Philemon to reckon any damages due him to Paul, since only he would know of these.

Question: When is it correct to pay someone else's debts, if ever?

Challenge: What kind of wrongs could a slave have done to his master?

Scripture: Matthew 18:21-35

Day 3: Philemon vs: 19-20

I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back--not to mention that you owe me you're very self. I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.

Paul now writes with his own hand to assure Philemon he is serious about paying back anything that is owed to Philemon. Paul does remind Philemon that he is in a different kind of debt to Paul. It is interesting to note that Paul goes from being willing to pay a debt, to asking for something. Paul wants Philemon to minister to him by demonstrating Christian love for someone else.

Question: Is there someone that we "owe our very self" to?

Challenge: Read over the scripture below and come up with what Jesus meant when He talked to Peter.

Scripture: John 21:15-17

Day 4: Philemon vs: 21

Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask.

Paul writes a letter because he knows that he does not need to come in person. He knows that his relationship to Philemon is secure because it is built on their common Christian foundation. Paul was Philemon's spiritual father and mother. Paul helped him into new life, nurtured him and helped him through times of trouble. In Christ, they were one. In humility, they were committed to each other.

Question: How would you define humility?

Challenge: Ask God to send to you someone you can nurture in the Faith

Scripture: I Corinthians 1:10-18 and John 13:1-17

Day 5: Philemon vs: 22

And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers.

This letter was written while Paul was in prison. It is thought that Philemon was an important person in the Christian community at Colossae. Paul knew that prayer has power that no temporal force can compare with. Paul planned to be with Philemon soon and needed a place to stay.

Question: How much time do you spend praying specifically for someone else?

Challenge: After you answer the above question then choose a time of day and put a small green dot at that time on your watch. This will remind you it is time to pray.

Scripture: Philippians 4:1-9

Day 6: Philemon vs: 23-25

Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

We notice that Paul does not act alone in his ministry. He works with a team of people. The task of proclaiming the Good News is given not to just a person but to a community of believers. At this time in Paul's life he cannot make this proclamation because he is in prison but the work goes on and Jesus' works of hope continue. As Paul said in another place, "there are varieties of gifts but one spirit."

Question: Whom do you consider your fellow workers in the faith?

Challenge: The central meaning of this letter is the transforming power of the gospel in the lives of the believers. How has your acceptance of Christ changed your relationships?

Scripture: Philemon