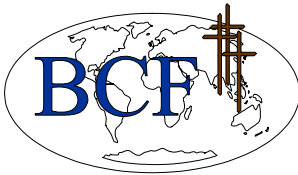


# ***BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE FELLOWSHIP***

## **PHILEMON**



Philemon was a prominent Christian and probably a member of the church at Colosse. He was also the owner of a slave named Onesimus who had run away. Somehow, this fugitive slave had come into contact with Paul who was imprisoned in Rome. Through Paul, Onesimus became a Christian.

Paul's letter is an appeal to Philemon to be reconciled with his slave whom Paul is sending back. Paul encourages Philemon to welcome Onesimus not only as a forgiven slave but as a Christian brother. This letter, though short, is warm and masterful, reminding us that the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ drastically changes all our relationships.

1. (verse 1) Who wrote this letter? \_\_\_\_\_  
What does he call himself? \_\_\_\_\_  
To whom is he writing? \_\_\_\_\_  
How does Paul describe him? \_\_\_\_\_
2. According to verse 2, what is it that they have established in Philemon's house? \_\_\_\_\_  
Although we can be saved and become members of the Body of Christ apart from a church, it is clear that God desires believers to be united in fellowship with one another.
3. (verse 4), Paul says that he always mentions Philemon in his \_\_\_\_\_ and that he has heard of his \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ that he has for \_\_\_\_\_ and for \_\_\_\_\_ (verse 5).
4. (verse 7) Paul tells Philemon he has great joy because the saints are \_\_\_\_\_ by him.
5. (verse 9) For what "sake" or on what "basis" does Paul say he is writing? \_\_\_\_\_ Paul claims to be a prisoner of whom? \_\_\_\_\_ The word "prisoner" carries an important message for Christians today. The definition of "prisoner" means *to be bound*, and in this case, it means to be bound to Jesus Christ.

6. (verse 10) Paul refers to Onesimus as his \_\_\_\_\_. He is speaking of spiritual regeneration which the Holy Spirit brings about the moment a believer receives Jesus Christ. While in prison, God used Paul to lead Onesimus to Christ. As a result, Paul has a special bond with Onesimus like that of a father and son.
7. (verse 11) Paul tells Philemon that Onesimus was \_\_\_\_\_ in the past but now is \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ and to \_\_\_\_\_.

In the Ancient World, Philemon had a legal right to punish or even kill a runaway slave. Onesimus wished to return to his master to correct his mistake, but may have been concerned about being punished for running away. Paul is careful not to force Philemon to do what is right. Instead, he guides Philemon into making the right choice for himself.

8. (verse 12) What action was Paul taking? \_\_\_\_\_.
9. (verses 13-16) Paul would have preferred that Onesimus stay with him at Rome, but he did not want to keep him without Philemon's approval. Indirectly, Paul was asking Philemon to send Onesimus back to him. How would this benefit Philemon? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. (verse 15) Paul says that "he \_\_\_\_\_ that \_\_\_\_\_." What do you think Paul means? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Write verse 16 in your own words. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. (verse 17) How did Paul want Philemon to receive Onesimus? \_\_\_\_\_
13. (verse 18) How was anything that Onesimus owed Philemon to be repaid? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

It is thought that perhaps Onesimus had stolen something from Philemon. One of the marks of true conversion is that a Christian is convicted by the Holy Spirit to right the wrongs of the past. Onesimus apparently owed Philemon a debt, but there was room for forgiveness even under those circumstances.

In this case, Onesimus' debt was to be "imputed" to Paul (charge it to me, put that on my account). This is quite similar to what Christ did for us on the cross. When he died, our sins were imputed to Him; they were reckoned to His account (see 2 Cor. 5:21).

14. Paul is of the opinion that Philemon owes him a debt; even so, he tells Philemon,  
What is the debt Philemon owes Paul? \_\_\_\_\_

Paul probably refers to the fact that he led Philemon to Christ as well.

15. (verse 20) Paul wants to have benefit and joy from Philemon in the Lord so he urges,  
\_\_\_\_\_  
What do you think Paul really wants Philemon to do?  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. (verse 21) Why does Paul believe Philemon will do even more than he has asked of him (verse 21)?  
\_\_\_\_\_

17. (verse 22) Was Paul hoping to visit Philemon? \_\_\_\_\_  
How do you know? \_\_\_\_\_

18. (verse 23) Who was Paul's fellow prisoner? \_\_\_\_\_

19. (verse 23) Paul's fellow laborers were...  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

20. (verse 25) Quote Paul's benediction. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is there a Christian brother you have offended or has offended you? Take the matter before the Lord in prayer then go to the brother and make it right. "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you (Eph 4:32)."

Is there some wrong you would like to make right? Take time now to pray and acknowledge that sin. Also ask God to show you areas of sin in your life that you might not be aware of.

Use the space below for any questions or comments:

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