

PHILEMON

CHAPTER ONE

1) [This letter is from] **Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother**, [and is being sent] **to Philemon our dearly loved [brother] and fellow-worker**, 2) **and to Apphia our sister** [Note: This was probably Philemon's wife], **and to Archippus our fellow-soldier** [Note: This was probably Philemon's preacher son. See Col. 4:17] **and to the church [that meets] in your house**. 3) **May there be unearned favor to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

4) **I always thank my God [for you] as I mention you in my prayers**, 5) **hearing of your love for all saints** [i.e., God's holy people], **and your faith toward the Lord Jesus**. 6) [I pray] **that the sharing of your faith** [with others, or possibly with Paul] **will be effective when you fully realize all the good you can do for Christ**. 7) **For I have much joy and encouragement from** [observing] **your love, because you have cheered the hearts of the saints** [i.e., God's holy people], **brother.**

8) **Therefore, although in** [the fellowship of] **Christ I have enough boldness to order you to do the proper thing**, 9) **yet out of** [mutual] **love, I appeal to you** [to do what I ask]. **For I Paul, am an old man, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus.** [Note: Most calculations suggest that Paul was approximately 60 years old, which was considered a relatively advanced age in that day]. 10) **I appeal to you on behalf of my son, Onesimus, whom I** [spiritually] **conceived while** [here] **in prison**. 11) **He was once useless to me, but is now useful to** [both] **you and me.** [Note: Since the name Onesimus means Auseful, it appears Paul is making an intentional play on the word]. 12) [Now] **I am sending him back to you in person**, [as though he were] **part of my very self**. 13) **I really wanted to keep him** [here] **with me so that, on your behalf, he could minister to me while in prison for the sake of the Gospel**. 14) **But I did not want to do anything without your permission, so that your goodness** [of heart] **would not be shown out of a feeling of obligation, but out of willingness**. 15) **For possibly Onesimus left you for a short time so that you could**

have him [back] forever, 16) not as a slave [only], but more than a slave, as a dearly loved brother. [He is that] to me especially, but how much more to you, both in a physical way [i.e., by continuing to serve as your slave] and in [the fellowship of] the Lord [i.e., now also as your brother in Christ]. 17) If then you consider me to be a partner [in the faith], welcome him [back] as [you would] me. 18) But if he has done anything wrong to you, or owes you any [money], charge it to my account. 19) I, Paul, am writing this in my own handwriting: I will pay you back. [But] I will not mention that you owe me your own self, as well. 20) So, brother, I would like to have your help in [the fellowship of] the Lord; cheer me up in Christ [i.e., by welcoming Onesimus back on good terms]. 21) I am writing you, confident that you will be obedient [to my requests], and I know that you will do even more than I am asking [of you].

22) And another thing: Prepare a place for me to stay, because I hope that through [an answer to] your prayers I will be returned to you. [Note: Paul was hoping to be released from imprisonment to visit Philemon at Colosse].

23) Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in [the service of] Christ sends you his greetings, 24) along with [John] Mark [Note: This shows that Mark was now back in the good graces of Paul. See Acts 15:36-40], Aristarchus, Demas [Note: This man later deserted Paul. See II Tim. 4:10] and Luke, who are [also] my fellow-workers. [Note: These men, unlike Epaphras who was imprisoned with Paul, were free to minister for Christ there in Rome].

25) May the unearned favor of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. May it be so.