

# Outline of the Book of Philemon

The book of Philemon is a personal letter written by the Apostle Paul to Philemon, a Christian leader. The letter addresses the situation of Onesimus, a runaway slave who has become a Christian, and Paul's appeal for his reconciliation and acceptance back into Philemon's household. Below is an exhaustive outline of Philemon, highlighting the dangers facing believers.

## I. Introduction (1:1-3)

- A. Salutation (1-3)
  - 1. Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother (1a)
  - 2. To Philemon, our dear friend and fellow worker (1b)
  - 3. Also to Apphia, our sister, and Archippus, our fellow soldier, and the church that meets in your home (2)
  - 4. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (3)

## II. Thanksgiving and Prayer (1:4-7)

- A. Paul's Thanksgiving (4-5)
  - 1. Thanking God always when remembering Philemon in prayers (4)
  - 2. Hearing of Philemon's love and faith toward the Lord Jesus and all the saints (5)
- 2. Paul's Prayer (6-7)
  - 1. That the sharing of Philemon's faith may become effective (6)
  - 2. Encouragement and joy brought by Philemon's love (7)

## III. Paul's Appeal for Onesimus (1:8-21)

- A. Paul's Confidence in Philemon (8-9)
  - 1. Though Paul could command, he prefers to appeal for love's sake (8-9a)
  - 2. Paul, an old man and now a prisoner of Christ Jesus (9b)
- B. Introduction of Onesimus (10-11)
  - 1. Appeal for Onesimus, who became Paul's son while he was in chains (10)
  - 2. Formerly useless to Philemon but now useful to both Paul and Philemon (11)
- C. Paul's Desire to Keep Onesimus (12-14)
  - 1. Sending Onesimus back to Philemon (12)
  - 2. Paul's desire to keep Onesimus to serve him in Philemon's place (13)
  - 3. Preferring Philemon's consent so that the favor might not be forced but voluntary (14)
- D. Onesimus's New Status (15-16)
  - 1. Perhaps Onesimus was separated for a while so that he might be returned forever (15)
  - 2. No longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother in the Lord (16)
- E. Paul's Partnership with Philemon (17-21)
  - 1. If Philemon considers Paul a partner, welcome Onesimus as Paul himself (17)
  - 2. Paul's offer to repay any debt Onesimus owes (18-19)
  - 3. Paul's confidence in Philemon's obedience and his expectation of even more than requested (20-21)

## IV. Final Greetings and Benediction (1:22-25)

- A. Paul's Request for Lodging (22)
  - 1. Asking Philemon to prepare a guest room for Paul, hoping to be restored through Philemon's prayers (22)
- B. Greetings from Paul's Companions (23-24)
  - 1. Epaphras, Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke send their greetings (23-24)
- C. Benediction (25)
  - A. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit (25)

## Dangers Facing the Believer Highlighted in Philemon

### 1. Unforgiveness and Lack of Reconciliation (1:10-16):

- **Danger:** Holding onto past grievances and failing to reconcile with those who have wronged us.
- **Application:** Embrace forgiveness and reconciliation, recognizing the transforming power of the gospel that changes relationships, even with those who have wronged us.

### 2. Failure to Act in Love (1:8-9):

- **Danger:** Acting out of obligation or command rather than from a place of genuine love.
- **Application:** Choose to act in love voluntarily, understanding that true Christian service and forgiveness stem from a heart of love.

### 3. Overlooking the Value of Every Believer (1:15-16):

- **Danger:** Failing to see the new status and value of every believer in Christ, regardless of their past or social status.
- **Application:** Recognize and treat every believer as a beloved brother or sister in Christ, valuing their transformed identity over their former status.

### 4. Neglecting Christian Fellowship and Partnership (1:17-19):

- **Danger:** Ignoring the importance of fellowship and partnership in the body of Christ.
- **Application:** Foster strong relationships and partnerships within the Christian community, being willing to support and stand by each other, even when it involves personal cost.

### 5. Inaction in the Face of Injustice (1:18-19):

- **Danger:** Remaining passive or indifferent when facing situations that require justice and restitution.
- **Application:** Take responsibility for rectifying wrongs and supporting those who need reconciliation, as Paul did by offering to repay Onesimus's debts.

### 6. Isolation from the Christian Community (1:22):

- **Danger:** Becoming isolated and disconnected from the broader Christian community and support.
- **Application:** Stay connected and involved in the Christian community, offering and seeking hospitality and support, as Paul requested lodging from Philemon.

## Well-known Passages from Philemon

[Philemon 1:4-6 ESV] I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.

## Conclusion For Philemon

By understanding these dangers and applying the principles outlined by Paul in his letter to Philemon, believers can live out the gospel's transformative power, fostering forgiveness, reconciliation, and strong Christian fellowship.