

## Philemon 1:23-25

### Vocabulary:

**Philemon 1:1-3** “Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved *brother* and fellow worker,<sup>2</sup> and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:<sup>3</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

- 1) “Paul”: the proper name, Παύλος- PAULOS, “Paul.”
- 2) “Prisoner of Jesus Christ”: the noun, δέσμιος- DESMIOS, “prisoner” + the noun, Χριστός- CHRISTOS, “Christ” + the proper noun, Ἰησοῦς- IESOUS, “Jesus, Joshua.”
- 3) “Timothy our brother”: the proper noun, Τιμόθεος- TIMOTHEOS, “Timothy” + the noun, ἀδελφός- ADELPHOS, “brother.” Translate “Timothy the brother.”
- 4) “Philemon”: the proper noun, Φιλήμων- PHILEMON, “Philemon.”
- 5) “Our beloved *brother* and fellow worker”: the adjective, ἀγαπητός- AGAPETOS, “beloved” + the conjunction, καί- KAI, “and” + the adjective, συνεργός- SUNERGOS, “fellow worker.” Translate “our beloved and fellow worker.”
- 6) “Apphia our sister”: the proper noun, Ἀπφία- APPHIA, “Apphia” + the noun, ἀδελφή- ADELPHE, “sister.” Translate “Apphia the sister.”
- 7) “Archippus our fellow soldier”: the proper noun, Ἀρχιππος- ARCHIPPOS, “Archippus” + the noun, συστρατιώτης- SUSTRATIOTES, “fellow soldier” + the pronoun, ἐγώ- EGO, “our.”
- 8) “The church in your house”: the noun, ἐκκλησία- EKKLESIA, “assembly, gathering, church” + the preposition, κατά- KATA, “in, at” + the noun, οἶκος- OIKOS, “house” + the pronoun, σύ- SU, “your.”
- 9) “Grace to you”: the noun, χάρις- CHARIS, “grace, favor, goodwill” + the pronoun, σύ- SU, “you.”
- 10) “Peace from God our Father”: the noun, εἰρήνη- EIRENE, “peace” + the preposition, ἀπό- APO, “from” + the masculine noun, θεός- THEOS, “God” + the noun, πατήρ- PATER, “father” + the pronoun, ἐγώ- EGO, “our.”
- 11) “Lord Jesus Christ”: the noun, κύριος- KURIOS, “lord, master” + the proper noun, Ἰησοῦς- IESOUS, “Jesus, Joshua” + the noun, Χριστός- CHRISTOS, “Christ.”

### Revised translation:

**Philemon 1:1-3** “Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy the brother, to Philemon our beloved and fellow worker,<sup>2</sup> and to Apphia the sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:<sup>3</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

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**Philemon 1:1-3** “Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy the brother, to Philemon our beloved and fellow worker,<sup>2</sup> and to Apphia the sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:<sup>3</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Analysis of vv. 1-3:

- 1) Paul describes himself as a “prisoner of Christ Jesus.”
  - a) At the time of writing, he is literally a prisoner in Rome (cf. Eph. 4:1).
  - b) However, the apostle recognizes that that he was in Rome due to the directive will of God.
  - c) He was a prisoner for the sake of Christ.
  - d) As a prisoner, his purpose was to declare and defend the Gospel of Christ to those in Rome (Eph. 6:20, Col. 4:3, Philemon 1:13 cf. 2 Tim. 1:10-11).
  - e) Paul’s imprisonment certainly did not slow down or frustrate God’s plan.
  - f) His plan continues to move forward regardless of Paul’s difficult circumstances.
  - g) Furthermore, despite being incarcerated, the apostle flourished in his niche (cf. Phil. 1:12-13).
- 2) The salutation in vs. 1 is atypical of the customary Pauline opening in other letters.
  - a) Typically, Paul refers to his position as an apostle in his initial greetings (Rom. 1:1, 1 Cor. 1:1, 2 Cor. 1:1, Col. 1:1, etc.).
  - b) Here, he merely refers to himself as a “prisoner of Christ Jesus.”
  - c) Evidently, he didn’t wish to assert his apostolic authority over Philemon regarding his treatment of Onesimus. Rather than a command, Paul issues an appeal.
  - d) Paul defers to Philemon’s decision as a fellow believer and the owner of Onesimus.
- 3) Timothy is mentioned in the salutation.
  - a) As a fellow Christian, Paul labels him “the brother.”
  - b) As a child of a Greek father and Jewish mother, he was well versed in the Hebrew scriptures from a young age (Acts 16:1, 2 Tim. 3:15).
  - c) In addition to his mother, Timothy’s grandmother was a believer (2 Tim. 1:5).
  - d) He was a frequent companion of Paul (cf. **2 Corinthians 1:1** “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia...”, **1 Thessalonians 1:1** “Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.”).
  - e) In certain situations, he was dispatched by Paul to various churches in order to exhort, gather information, etc. (1 Cor. 4:17, Phil. 2:19).

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- 4) Although he is mentioned, Timothy is not a co-author of the letter. It is specifically addressed to Philemon from Paul. This is readily demonstrated throughout the body of the letter (e.g. “you”, “me”, Philemon 1:17).
- 5) Four parties are addressed by Paul in this context: Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and the church.
- 6) The name “Philemon” only occurs in this verse.
  - a) It is significant to note that Paul addresses him first. He is the primary recipient of this letter.
  - b) He was a resident of Colossae and the owner of Onesimus (cf. Onesimus was “from” Colossae, **Colossians 4:9** “and with him Onesimus, *our* faithful and beloved brother, who is from you. They will inform you about the whole situation here.”).
  - c) He was “beloved” by Paul and his associates.
  - d) In addition, he is described as a “fellow worker.”
  - e) It is clear from these appellations that he was held in high regard by the apostle. Both as a personal friend and a fellow laborer in the plan of God.
  - f) Philemon was a source of great encouragement to Paul (**Philemon 1:7** “For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.”).
  - g) Philemon was one of Paul’s converts to the faith. However, as Paul had never been to Colossae, it is unclear when and where they were first acquainted (**Philemon 1:19** “I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I will repay it lest I should mention to you that *you owe to me even your own self* as well).
- 7) The second addressee is Apphia.
  - a) The female name Apphia was frequently found in inscriptions throughout Asia Minor particularly in Phrygia.
  - b) Paul refers to her as “the sister” which indicates that she was a believer (i.e. a “sister” in the faith, cf. James 2:15).
  - c) She is only mentioned here in vs. 2.
  - d) Due to the fact that her name immediately follows Philemon, many have presumed that she was his wife. This is probably correct but conclusive proof is lacking.
- 8) The third addressee is Archippus.
  - a) Paul describes him as “our fellow soldier.”
  - b) Generally Paul does not refer to other believers as “fellow soldiers” or “soldiers” unless they faithfully assisted him on his missionary journeys (cf. Phil. 2:25, 2 Tim. 2:3).
  - c) In the letter to the Colossians, Paul enjoined him to direct his attention to the ministry he received in the Lord (**Colossians 4:17** “And say to Archippus, “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.”).

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- d) Many interpreters have surmised that he was the son of Philemon and Apphia.
- e) Nevertheless, it is not evident how, if at all, he was related to Philemon and Apphia.
- 9) Finally Paul greets the believers (i.e. church) that was meeting in Philemon's house.
- 10) The singular pronoun, "your" refers back to Philemon as the primary recipient and the owner of the house.
- 11) The other addressees, Apphia, Archippus, and the church, are greeted by Paul as a courtesy.
- 12) "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" is a standard Pauline greeting in the N.T. (Rom. 1:7, 1 Cor. 1:3, 2 Cor. 1:2, Gal 1:3, Eph. 1:2, Phil 1:2, 2 Thess. 1:2).
- 13) Besides being recipients of this letter, all four parties addressed in the salutation are recipients of grace and peace from God the Father and the Son.
  - a) Our term "grace" (χάρις -CHARIS) indicates favor and goodwill. Some categories of Divine "grace" that are exhibited toward believers include saving grace, living grace, and surpassing grace (saving grace: Eph. 2:8-9, living grace: Phil. 4:18-19, surpassing grace: Eph. 2:7, 1 Peter 1:4).
  - b) Various aspects of "peace" that relates to believers:
    - i) Peace with God is secured through faith in Christ (Rom. 5:1).
    - ii) Furthermore, believers may possess an inner peace through the FGHS, and the study and subsequent application of sound doctrine (FGHS: Gal 5:22, knowledge: 2 Peter 1:2 cf. Rom. 15:13; application: Gal. 6:16, Phil. 4:6-9).
    - iii) Certain contexts indicate that Christ is the provider of inner peace to believers (John 14:27, 2 Thess. 3:16, Col. 3:15).

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### Vocabulary:

**Philemon 1:4-5** “I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers,<sup>5</sup> because I hear of your love, and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all the saints.”

- 1) “I thank”: the verb, εὐχαριστέω- EUCHARISTEO, “to give thanks, to be thankful.”
- 2) “Always”: the adverb, πάντοτε- PANTOTE, “at all times, always.”
- 3) “Making mention”: the participle, ποιέω- POIEO, “to make, to do” + the noun, μνεία- MNEIA, “mention.” Translate “when making mention.”
- 4) “Prayers”: the noun, προσευχή- PROSEUCHE, “prayer.”
- 5) “Because I hear”: the participle, ἀκούω- AKOUO, “to hear.”
- 6) “Love”: the noun, ἀγάπη- AGAPE, “love.”
- 7) “Faith”: the noun, πίστις- PISTIS, “faith.”
- 8) “You have”: the verb, ἔχω- ECHO, “to have.”
- 9) “Toward the Lord Jesus”: the preposition, πρὸς- PROS, “toward” + the noun, κύριος- KURIOS, “lord, master” + the proper name, Ἰησοῦς- IESOUS, “Jesus, Joshua.”
- 10) “Toward all the saints”: the preposition, εἰς- EIS, “for, toward” + the adjective, πᾶς- PAS, “all, every” + the adjective, ἅγιος- HAGIOS, “set apart, holy.” Translate “for all the saints.”

### Revised translation:

**Philemon 1:4-5** “I thank my God always, when making mention of you in my prayers,<sup>5</sup> because I hear of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus, and for all the saints;”

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**Philemon 1:4-5** “I thank my God always, when making mention of you in my prayers, <sup>5</sup> because I hear of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus, and for all the saints;”

Analysis of vv. 4-5:

- 1) In vs. 4, Paul points out that he gives thanks for Philemon.
- 2) Also, the apostle only refers to himself in the phrase “I thank my God...” Thanksgiving is not linked to any of his associates (e.g. Timothy, cf. Col. 1:3, 1 Thess. 1:2).
- 3) The verb, “I thank” and the adverb, “always” reveals that he repeatedly engaged in thanksgiving. It was his habit.
  - a) The verb, “I thank” may be literally translated, “I repeatedly give thanks to my God always...”
  - b) Paul did not make mention of Philemon every time he prayed. Rather, when he did mention or pray for Philemon, he always gave thanks to God for him.
- 4) As a general principle, believers are enjoined to habitually offer thanksgiving (Psa. 30:4, 136:26).
- 5) The thanksgiving is properly directed to God the Father (Luke 11:2, Eph. 5:20).
- 6) In fact, Paul describes God as “my God” which focuses on his personal relationship with the Father (cf. Psa. 30:12, 86:12, 118:28).
- 7) Vs. 5 indicates the reason for the apostle’s thanksgiving.
- 8) Paul gives thanks because he hears reports of Philemon’s “love” and “faith.”
  - a) He is not basing his thanksgiving solely on a past report (e.g. Epaphras, Col. 1:4, 8).
  - b) Instead, Paul continued to hear reports regarding Philemon from various sources.
- 9) “Love” (ἀγάπη – AGAPE) and “faith” (πίστις- PISTIS) are both products of the FGHS (Gal. 5:22).
  - a) “Love” is exhibited through the specific applications of Divine viewpoint (John 21:16, 2 Cor. 8:24, Eph. 4:2, 1 John 3:16).
  - b) The term “faith” denotes “faithfulness” or “reliability” (cf. use in Rom. 3:3, 2 Thess. 1:4).
  - c) The two terms are often linked in Paul’s letters (cf. Eph. 6:23, 1 Thess. 3:6, 5:8).
- 10) “You have” indicates that Philemon continues to manifest love and faith towards Christ and other believers (i.e. “saints”).
  - a) He manifested love toward Christ and other believers in his niche through the knowledge and application of sound doctrine (cf. John 14:15, 21-24, 1 John 5:3).

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- b) He exhibited faithfulness to Christ and other believers by being consistent (i.e. reliable) in his application of Divine wisdom.
  - c) As an example, he allowed believers to assemble in his own house. This demonstrates his generosity and hospitality towards his fellow royal family members (cf. Heb. 13:1-2. also Phm. 1:22).
  - d) Philemon applied the principle of being generous and ready to share in his prosperity (cf. 1 Tim. 6:18).
  - e) He is clearly a believer who was diligent in his niche and who actively sought to benefit the other believers in Colossae (cf. Phm. 1:7).
- 11) Rather than being self absorbed, Philemon focused on serving other believers.

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### Vocabulary:

**Philemon 1:6** “*and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake.*”

- 1) “That”: the conjunction, ὅπως- HOPOS, “that, in order that.”
- 2) “Fellowship of your faith”: the noun, κοινωνία- KOINONIA, “close association, fellowship, sharing, generosity” + “your faith”: the noun, πίστις- PISTIS, “faith” + the pronoun, σύ- SU, “your.”
- 3) “May become”: the verb, γίνομαι- GINOMAI, “to become, to come to be.”
- 4) “Effective”: the adjective, ἐνεργής- ENERGES, “active, productive, effective.”
- 5) “Knowledge of every good thing”: the noun, ἐπίγνωσις- EPIGNOSIS, “full knowledge” + the adjective, πᾶς- PAS, “all, every” + the adjective, ἀγαθός- AGATHOS, “good, useful, beneficial” + the article, τό- TO, “the, this one.” Translate “full knowledge of every good thing.”
- 6) “In you”: the preposition, ἐν- EN, “in” + the pronoun, ἐγώ- EGO, “us.” Translate “in us.”
- 7) “For Christ’s sake”: the preposition, εἰς- EIS, “into, in, for, toward” + the noun, Χριστός- CHRISTOS, “Christ.” Translate “for Christ.”

### Revised translation:

**Philemon 1:6** “*and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the full knowledge of every good thing which is in us for Christ.*”

## Philemon 1:23-25

**Philemon 1:6** “*and I pray* that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the full knowledge of every good thing which is in us for Christ.”

Analysis of vs. 6:

- 1) The standard translation, “I pray” is appropriately supplied due to the context from vs. 4.
- 2) The conjunction “that” (ὅπως- HOPOS) introduces Paul’s intercessory prayer for Philemon.
- 3) The phrase “fellowship of your faith” presents exegetical difficulties.
  - a) In certain contexts, “fellowship” (κοινωνία- KOINONIA) refers to sharing, generosity and contributions (Rom. 15:26, 2 Cor. 9:13, Heb. 13:16).
  - b) Other passages indicate that “fellowship” refers to a close relationship involving mutual interests. In a sense, this is a spiritual partnership (Acts 2:42, Gal. 2:9, 1 John 1:3, 6-7).
  - c) In our verse, “fellowship” relates more to the latter definition, a close relationship or partnership.
  - d) Paul is pointing to their mutual relationship as believers in Christ which originated by “faith.”
  - e) In a broad sense, all believers share a partnership with each other and Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 1:9, 1 Cor. 10:16, Phil. 3:10).
- 4) Paul desires that this partnership “may become effective.”
  - a) The term, “effective” (ἐνεργής- ENERGES) indicates that which is productive.
  - b) “May become” indicates potentiality. At the time of writing, the desired outcome has yet to be achieved.
  - c) How would this partnership “become effective?”
  - d) The desired outcome would be achieved if Philemon accepted Onesimus back as a “beloved brother” (Phm. 1:16-17 cf. Rom. 15:7).
- 5) Philemon is about to be tested in his grace orientation towards the fugitive, Onesimus.
- 6) He would have the capability to excel in this test “through the full knowledge of every good thing.”
  - a) Our term, “full knowledge” (ἐπίγνωσις- EPIGNOSIS) denotes a comprehensive and complete knowledge of something.
  - b) “Every good thing” refers to the realm of sound doctrine. Namely, that which is morally good according to Divine standards (cf. Rom. 16:19).
  - c) Here, Paul refers to a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of Divine viewpoint.
  - d) Moreover, “full knowledge” (ἐπίγνωσις- EPIGNOSIS) is not merely an intellectual understanding of Divine viewpoint. It is also attained as a result of the application of doctrinal precepts to one’s niche.

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- e) Philemon's capability to excel in this test is directly related to his understanding and proper application of Divine principles in regard to Onesimus (e.g. forgiveness).
- f) In a very basic sense, Philemon expected to forgive an individual who had personally wronged him.
- g) Actually, all believers are expected to forgive those who have caused personal injury and insult (Mark 11:25).
- 7) Paul refers to himself and Philemon when he indicates that the full knowledge of Divine viewpoint is "in us." It is a full knowledge that is developed within the inner man (cf. Rom. 7:22, 2 Cor. 4:16, also Col. 3:10).
- 8) The anticipated welcome of Onesimus by Philemon would contribute to the cause of Christ (i.e. "for Christ").
- 9) As believers learn and practice Divine standards, we glorify God and His plan (Phil. 1:9-11, 1 Peter 4:11 cf. John 21:19).

## Philemon 1:23-25

### Vocabulary:

**Philemon 1:7** “For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.”

- 1) “I have come to have”: the verb, ἔχω- ECHO, “to have.”
- 2) “Much joy”: the noun, χαρά- CHARA, “joy, delight” + the adjective, πολὺς- POLUS, “much, great.”
- 3) “Comfort”: the noun, παράκλησις- PARAKLESIS, “comfort, consolation.”
- 4) “In your love”: the preposition, ἐπί- EPI, “at, on the basis of” + the noun, ἀγάπη- AGAPE, “love” + the pronoun, σύ- SU, “your.” Translate “on the basis of your love.”
- 5) “The hearts of the saints”: the noun, σπλάγχνον- SPLAGCHNON, “(lit.) inward parts, entrails, (fig.) heart” + the adjective, ἅγιος- HAGIOS, “set apart, holy, saints.”
- 6) “Refreshed”: the verb, ἀναπαύω- ANAPAUO, “to refresh.”
- 7) “Brother”: the noun, ἀδελφός- ADELPHOS, “brother.”

### Revised translation:

**Philemon 1:7** “For I have come to have much joy and comfort on the basis of your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.”

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**Philemon 1:7** “For I have come to have much joy and comfort on the basis of your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.”

Analysis of vs. 7:

- 1) As previously mentioned, Philemon’s love (i.e. proper application) toward other believers in Colossae was a major reason for thanksgiving (cf. vs. 5).
- 2) In our verse, Paul indicates that he derives “much joy and comfort” due to Philemon’s faithful application.
  - a) “Joy” (χαρά- CHARA) denotes inner happiness or gladness.
  - b) The term “joy” occurs first in the Greek text. The word order is designed to emphasize Paul’s happiness and delight within his inner man.
  - c) He was not merely pleased. The adjective “much” indicates that he possessed a high degree of inner happiness.
  - d) Philemon’s application(s) provided gave encouragement to Paul while the apostle was in prison.
  - e) Vs. 7 depicts two adjusted, maturing believers. Philemon exhibits love through dynamic applications. In an entirely different niche, Paul had great joy and comfort even while incarcerated.
    - i) Regardless of our circumstances, we too must strive to be dynamic in our applications and possess inner happiness (2 Thess. 3:13 cf. Col. 1:24).
    - ii) Happiness is not dependant on pleasant or agreeable circumstances in life. Rather, the believer may possess it in the midst of severe pressure and turmoil (2 Cor. 7:4; 8:2, 1 Thess. 1:6).
    - iii) Believers ought to be resolute and firm in adverse circumstances (cf. John 16:33).
    - iv) Joy is commanded and is a characteristic of the adjusted believer (Phil. 4:4, 1 Thess. 5:16, 1 Peter 4:13 cf. Psa. 68:3, Prov. 10:28).
    - v) Joy or inner happiness is a product of the FGHS (**Galatians 5:22** “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness....”).
    - vi) Happiness is attained through the knowledge and application of sound doctrine (Psa. 19:8, 106:3; 112:1; 119:1-2; 128:1-4, John 13:17; 15:11).
    - vii) Adherence to Divine standards results in happiness which in turn, has a positive effect on one’s physical health (Prov. 3:1-8; 17:22).
    - viii) Suffering is a regular part of a believer’s experience in the cosmos. The believer should recognize that difficulties in our niche should prompt us to rely on God and not our own abilities (2 Cor. 1:9-10).
    - ix) We as believers may persevere in our respective niches through Divine strength (Phil. 2:13; 4:13 cp. Eph. 3:16, Col. 1:11, 2 Peter 1:3).

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- x) God will provide the maturing believer all the necessary comfort to withstand any pressure (2 Cor. 1:5, cf. Prov. 3:34).
- 3) In addition to Paul, the “hearts” of the other believers in Colossae have been “refreshed” by Philemon.
  - a) Literally “hearts” refers to the intestines or entrails of the body (Acts 1:18).
  - b) However, in our verse, the term is used in a figurative sense. According to Greek thought, inner body parts were the seat of emotions and affections. Hence the translation “hearts” (cf. Phil. 1:8, 1 John 3:17).
  - c) The verb, “refresh” is to cause someone to gain relief from toil or to give rest.
- 4) Philemon is commended for being the source of emotional refreshment to his fellow believers in Colossae.
- 5) As an astute believer, he put his knowledge of sound doctrine to practical use by making various applications (cf. Gal. 6:10).
- 6) In light of Paul’s praise, we may infer that Philemon possessed a zeal for good works. A zeal which is a requirement for all believers (Titus 2:14).
- 7) The phrase “have been refreshed” emphasizes the present state that was produced by a past application by Philemon.
- 8) Paul doesn’t mention the specific application which refreshed the believers in Colossae only its effect.
  - a) It may have been some conspicuous act of generosity which helped the congregation.
  - b) The implication within this context is that Philemon used his prosperity to benefit other believers.
  - c) He did exhibit generosity by providing his own house as a place of assembly for believers.
  - d) As an example, Philemon may have provided aid to his fellow believers after an earthquake leveled the area in 60 A.D.
  - e) There is much speculation but the details have not been revealed. Whatever his application, Philemon provided an emotional uplift to his immediate royal family including Paul.
- 9) At the end of the verse, Paul addresses Philemon directly as “brother” (ἀδελφός- ADELPHOS) which points to their close friendship.
- 10) It is evident from vs. 7 that a believer’s application of sound doctrine often provides encouragement and refreshment to others (cf. 1 Cor. 16:18, 2 Cor. 7:13).

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### Vocabulary:

**Philemon 1:8-9** “Therefore, though I have enough confidence in Christ to order you *to do* that which is proper,<sup>9</sup> yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you-- since I am such a person as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus”

- 1) “Therefore”: the inferential conjunction, διό- DIO, “therefore, forth is reason.”
- 2) “Enough confidence”: the adjective, πολύς- POLUS, “much, great” + the noun, παρρησία- PARRHESIA, “boldness, confidence.” Translate “great confidence.”
- 3) “To order”: the infinitive, ἐπιτάσσω- EPITASSO, “to order, command.”
- 4) “That which is proper”: the participle, ἀνήκω- ANEKO, “what is proper or fitting.”
- 5) “For love’s sake”: the preposition, διά- DIA, “for the sake of” + the noun, ἀγάπη- AGAPE, “love.”
- 6) “Appeal”: the verb, παρακαλέω- PARAKALEO, “to urge strongly, to appeal.”
- 7) “Paul, the aged”: the proper name, Παῦλος- PAULOS, “Paul” + the noun, πρεσβύτης- PRESBUTES, “an aged man.”
- 8) “Prisoner of Christ Jesus”: the noun, δέσμιος- DESMIOS, “prisoner” + the noun, Χριστός- CHRISTOS, “Christ” + the proper noun, Ἰησοῦς- IESOUS, “Jesus, Joshua.”

### Revised translation:

**Philemon 1:8-9** “Therefore, though I have great confidence in Christ to order you *to do* that which is proper,<sup>9</sup> yet for love's sake I rather appeal *to you*-- since I am such a person as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus”

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**Philemon 1:8-9** “Therefore, though I have great confidence in Christ to order you *to do* that which is proper,<sup>9</sup> yet for love's sake I rather appeal *to you*-- since I am such a person as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus”

Analysis of vv. 8-9:

- 1) The principal section of the letter begins with the conjunction “therefore.”
- 2) “Therefore” provides a transition from the introductory commendation of Philemon in vv. 4-7 to the actual appeal to him.
- 3) Paul concedes that he has great confidence in Christ to order Philemon to handle this situation in a proper manner.
  - a) Paul’s great confidence was based on the fact that he was an apostle of Christ by the will of God (**1 Corinthians 1:1** “Paul, called *as* an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother”, **1 Timothy 1:1** “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, *who is* our hope;”).
  - b) The term “confidence” (παρρησία- PARRESIA) indicates an attitude of openness that stems from a lack of fear. It may indicate outspokenness or fearlessness in one’s speech (Eph. 6:19 cf. Acts 9:27-28, 1 Thess. 2:2).
    - i) Christ exhibited this trait during His incarnation (John 18:20).
    - ii) Other apostles possessed this confidence (Acts 4:13).
  - c) Clearly Paul is not reticent to address Philemon in a frank or open manner. Especially since he is addressing his friend.
  - d) In addition, he possessed the apostolic authority to command Philemon in the proper treatment of Onesimus.
- 4) Although he was free to exercise his authority, Paul opted for another approach.
- 5) Rather than command, he appeals to Philemon on account of “love” (ἀγάπη) in vs. 9.
  - a) “Love” would be the motivating factor for reconciliation.
  - b) Paul has already pointed out Philemon’s “love” for other believers (vv. 5, 7).
  - c) Now, it is Paul’s desire that he exhibit this same love for Onesimus (i.e. accept him back).
- 6) In order to provide emphasis, Paul refers to himself as the one making the appeal (“I am such a person as Paul...”).
- 7) The apostle describes himself as “aged” and a “prisoner of Christ Jesus.”
  - a) Paul is in the latter part of his ministry (c. 61 A.D.) and is now an old man (πρεσβύτες- PRESBUTES).
    - i) Paul is “a young man” at the stoning of Stephen which occurred in 35 AD. (Acts 7:58).
    - ii) “Young man” (νεανίας -NEANIAS) refers to a young man between the ages of 24-40 yrs. Old

## Philemon 1:23-25

- iii) Now roughly 26 years later, Paul's age would range from 50-66 years old.
- iv) However, trying to determine his exact age is problematic as there is not enough evidence.
- b) Once again, he describes himself as a "prisoner of Christ Jesus" (cf. vs. 1).
  - i) Based on appearances, he was simply a prisoner in Rome while awaiting an appeal before Nero.
  - ii) However, Paul was fully aware that he was in Rome for a far more prominent purpose. Namely, that he was a prisoner for the sake of Christ.
  - iii) As a prisoner of Christ, he was to proclaim and make a defense of Gospel. He was appointed for this purpose and was therefore fulfilling God's directive will (Phil. 1:7, 16, cf. 2 Tim. 2:9).
  - iv) God's plan for Paul continues unabated despite his circumstances.
  - v) In Paul's day as today, the Divine plan can not be thwarted because of various circumstances that arise in the world or in one's life (Psa. 33:6-11, Prov. 19:21).
- 8) The appeal is designed to stir up Philemon to make the proper application.
- 9) As a general principle, believers are instructed to consider how to provoke one another to apply Divine standards (Heb. 10:24).

## Philemon 1:23-25

### Vocabulary:

**Philemon 1:10-11** “I appeal to you for my child, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, Onesimus,<sup>11</sup> who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me.”

- 1) “Appeal”: the verb, παρακαλέω- PARAKALEO, “to urge strongly, to appeal.”
- 2) “Child”: the noun, τέκνον- TEKNON, “child.”
- 3) “Begotten”: the verb, γεννάω- GENNAO, “to bear, to father.”
- 4) “Imprisonment”: the noun, δεσμός- DESMOS, “bond, fetter, imprisonment.”
- 5) “Onesimus”: the proper name, Ονήσιμος- ONESIMOS, “Onesimus, (lit.) useful.”
- 6) “Useless”: the adjective, ἄχρηστος- ARCHRESTOS, “useless, worthless.”
- 7) “Useful”: the adjective, εὐχρηστος- EUCHRESTOS, “useful, serviceable.”

Revised translation: the standard translation is sufficient.

## Philemon 1:23-25

**Philemon 1:10-11** “I appeal to you for my child, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, Onesimus,<sup>11</sup> who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me.”

Analysis of vv. 10-11:

- 1) Paul repeats the verb, “I appeal” (παρακαλέω- PARAKALEO) from vs. 9 to emphasize his personal intercession for Onesimus.
- 2) He is not making a simple request about Onesimus, but is personally representing the slave to his master.
- 3) Again, the apostle is not issuing a command to Philemon, but, rather, an appeal. It is based on the Divine standard of “love” (ἀγάπη- AGAPE, vs. 9).
- 4) Paul refers to Onesimus as “my child.”
  - a) He and Onesimus have a familial relationship (i.e. parent and child).
  - b) However the relationship is not based on genetics or even adoption. Onesimus is not Paul’s child in a physical sense.
  - c) Instead, the relationship must be understood in a spiritual sense.
- 5) The apostle indicates that he fathered (i.e. “begotten”) Onesimus while imprisoned in Rome.
  - a) This refers to the point that Paul converted the slave to Christianity.
  - b) We do not have an account of when and under what circumstances they first met in Rome.
  - c) Prior to his conversion, Onesimus was considered a child of the devil (cf. John 8:44, also “wrath,” Eph. 2:3).
  - d) As a result of the conversation, Paul viewed himself as the spiritual parent and Onesimus, as his spiritual child.
- 6) It was not uncommon for Paul to use the imagery of spiritual parenthood in other epistles.
  - a) The Corinthian and Galatian believers (1 Cor. 4:14-15, Gal. 4:19).
  - b) Timothy (1 Cor. 4:17, 1 Tim. 1:18, 2 Tim. 2:1, cf. Phil. 2:22).
  - c) Titus (Titus 1:4).
- 7) The imagery is also seen between a master and his student (cf. 2 Kings 2:12, Mark 10:24).
- 8) In a broad sense, believers are viewed as born of God and therefore His children (John 1:12-13, Rom. 8:16-17, 1 John 3:1-2).
- 9) As children of God, we ought to have a manner of life that is pleasing to our Father (Eph. 5:1-2, Phil. 2:15 cf. John 8:29).
- 10) Paul mentions Onesimus by name for the first time in vs. 10. The meaning of the name Onesimus is “useful” or “profitable.”
- 11) Based on this meaning, he uses a play on words to contrast the former and current traits of the run away slave.
  - a) Formerly, as an unbeliever, Onesimus was “useless” (ἄχρηστος- ARCHRESTOS) to Philemon.

## Philemon 1:23-25

- i) His former condition is in direct contrast to the meaning of his name, “useful.”
  - ii) Phrygian slaves, like Onesimus, were known for being unreliable and unfaithful.
  - iii) He was ineffectual and negligent in fulfilling his duties as a slave. As such he was without any benefit to Philemon.
- b) Now Paul describes him as “useful (εὐχρηστος- EUCHRESTOS).
- i) He is no longer an inept, irresponsible slave.
  - ii) In a spiritual sense, he is now living up to the meaning of his name.
- 12) Paul bears witness that Onesimus has been useful to him while imprisoned.
- 13) Since his conversion, Onesimus has exhibited a dramatic change in conduct.
- 14) Now, he was well versed in his responsibilities as a slave before God (Col. 3:22-25).
- 15) Certain parallels exist within the employer and employee relationship.
- a) A believers should endeavor to be useful to his employer by being diligent at work (cf. Prov. 12:27, 13:4, 2 Tim. 2:15).
  - b) Believers are to have an enthusiasm for properly doing their job (cf. Eph. 6:5).
  - c) Do not be useless or lazy (Prov. 10:26, 15:19).
  - d) The industrious believer may deflect criticism on the job. At the very least, such a believer exhibits a positive witness (cf. 1 Pet. 2:15).
- 16) The SAJG and subsequent instruction in sound doctrine ought to have a profound and permanent effect on the thinking and behavior of an individual (Deut. 4:9, 8:11, Psa. 103:2, 119:93, Col. 1:23, 2 Tim. 3:14 cf. Job 8:13).

## Philemon 1:23-25

### Vocabulary:

**Philemon 1:12-13** “And I have sent him back to you in person, that is, *sending* my very heart,<sup>13</sup> whom I wished to keep with me, that in your behalf he might minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospel.”

- 1) “And I have sent him back”: the pronoun, ὅς- HOS, “who” + the verb, ἀναπέμπω- ANAPEMPO, “to send back.” Translate “whom I have sent back.”
- 2) “In person”: the intensive use of the pronoun, αὐτός- AUTOS, “himself.”
- 3) “Heart”: the noun, σπλάγχνον- SPLAGCHNON, “(lit.) inward parts, entrails, (fig.) heart”
- 4) “I wished to keep”: the intensive use of the pronoun, ἐγώ- EGO, “I” + the verb, βούλομαι- BOULOMAI, “to wish, desire” + the infinitive, κατέχω- KATECHO, “to keep, restrain.” Translate “I myself wished to keep.”
- 5) “That”: the conjunction, ἵνα- HINA, “that, so that.”
- 6) “Minister”: the verb, διακονέω- DIAKONEO, “to serve, minister.”
- 7) “Imprisonment”: the noun, δεσμός- DESMOS, “bond, fetter, imprisonment.”
- 8) “Gospel”: the noun, εὐαγγέλιον- EUANGELLION, “good news, gospel.”

### Revised translation:

**Philemon 1:12-13** “Whom I have sent back to you in person, that is, *sending* my very heart,<sup>13</sup> whom I myself wished to keep with me, that in your behalf he might minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospel;”

## Philemon 1:23-25

**Philemon 1:12-13** “Whom I have sent back to you in person, that is, *sending* my very heart,<sup>13</sup> whom I myself wished to keep with me, that in your behalf he might minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospel;”

Analysis of vv. 12-13:

- 1) Paul sent back Onesimus in person to Philemon.
- 2) Roman law directed that runaway slaves be returned to their masters.
  - a) The verb “sent back” (ἀναπέμπω- ANAPEMPO) is a legal term. It refers to a prisoner that is sent to face an authority (cf. Acts 25:21).
  - b) This was not a judicial case being tried in the courts but the verb lends a legal tone to the proceedings.
  - c) Paul complied with the law and sent back Onesimus with Tychicus to Colossae (Col. 4:9).
- 3) In addition to the legalities of the situation, Onesimus was sent back in order to prevent any breach in friendship with Philemon.
- 4) The language used emphasizes the close bond that had developed between Onesimus and Paul.
  - a) Paul equates sending Onesimus back with sending his “very heart.”
  - b) This stresses Paul’s personal involvement in this matter.
  - c) “My very heart” may be rendered “my very self.”
- 5) The term “heart” (σπλάγχνον- SPLAGCHNON) indicates a certain level of affection for Onesimus.
- 6) The apostle’s affection for Onesimus is rooted in the slave’s commitment to the Truth.
  - a) Paul described him as “our faithful and beloved brother” (**Colossians 4:9** “and with him Onesimus, *our* faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your *number*. They will inform you about the whole situation here.”).
  - b) In our context, he refers to Onesimus as “my child” in relation to his conversion.
  - c) Formerly, as a useless, unbelieving slave there was nothing in his character that would have commended him to Paul as a friend or associate.
  - d) Now, as a believer, he was a radically different person. He had demonstrated his spiritual mettle to Paul while in Rome.
- 7) As believers they shared mutual aspirations and beliefs in regard to their ph. 2.
- 8) Simply, they were like-minded and this provided the basis for affection and friendship.
- 9) We must evaluate our friends and associates on their spiritual merits not on cosmic standards (e.g. income level, occupation, overt appearance, etc., Prov. 19:7).
- 10) Are they even believers? If so, do they understand the importance of sound doctrine? Do they care about being pleasing to God? Do they have zeal for application?

## Philemon 1:23-25

- 11) The answers to these basic questions will give some indication of the spiritual merits of an individual.
- 12) Believers are commanded to be like-minded regarding Bible doctrine. This is the foundation of a proper friendship (2 Cor. 13:11 cf. 1 Cor. 1:10, Phil 1:27. Also see Ex. 33:11).
  - a) A believer who pursues friendships with those who care nothing for sound doctrine is acting with hostility towards God (James 4:4 cf. 2 Cor. 6:14-18).
  - b) Do not be enamored with people who reject the Truth. They have nothing of value to offer the maturing believer (1 John 2:15-16 cf. Deut. 13:6-9).
  - c) Friends should seek to consistently comfort and encourage each other, especially during times of testing (cf. Job 2:11, Prov. 17:17, 18:24).
- 13) Affection develops among believers who have a mutual devotion to God and His plan (1 Thess. 2:8 cf. Rom. 12:10. Also see 1 Sam. 18:1-4).
- 14) Paul emphatically declares that he wished to keep Onesimus in Rome with him.
- 15) He intended to have Onesimus assist him in his various responsibilities during his incarceration.
- 16) Since Onesimus was now “useful,” his continued daily assistance would have been quite valuable to Paul.
- 17) Paul mentions his “imprisonment for the gospel” at the end of vs. 13. He was imprisoned for the purpose of spreading the gospel (cf. vs. 9).

## Philemon 1:23-25

### Vocabulary:

**Philemon 1:14** “but without your consent I did not want to do anything, that your goodness should not be as it were by compulsion, but of your own free will.”

- 1) “Consent”: the noun, γνώμη- GNOME, “opinion, consent.”
- 2) “I did not want to do anything”: the adjective, οὐδείς- OUDEIS, “no, nothing” + the verb, θέλω- THELO, “to wish, desire” + the infinitive, ποιέω- POIEO, “to do.”
- 3) “Goodness”: the adjective, ἀγαθός- AGATHOS, “good, useful, beneficial.”
- 4) “As it were by compulsion”: the preposition, κατά- KATA, “according to” + the noun, ἀνάγκη- ANANKE, “pressure, compulsion.” Translate “according to compulsion.”
- 5) “Of your own free will”: the preposition, κατά- KATA, “according to” + the adjective, ἐκούσιος- HEKOUSIOS, “voluntary, free will.” Translate “according to free will.”

### Revised translation:

**Philemon 1:14** “but without your consent I did not want to do anything, that your goodness should not be according to compulsion, but according to free will.”

## Philemon 1:23-25

**Philemon 1:14** “but without your consent I did not want to do anything, that your goodness should not be according to compulsion, but according to free will.”

Analysis of vs. 14:

- 1) In vs. 13, Paul clearly stated his desire to keep Onesimus in Rome to assist him.
- 2) During his time in prison, Paul understandably relied on the services and applications of other believers (e.g. Timothy).
- 3) However, as our verse indicates, he was reluctant to do anything without Philemon’s consent in the matter.
- 4) Paul is displaying a great deal of sensitivity and tact. He completely defers to his friend’s judgment.
- 5) In the short term, “your goodness” refers to Philemon’s anticipated acceptance of Onesimus. In the long term, it may refer to Onesimus’s future return to Rome to help the apostle.
- 6) Paul intends Philemon to make this decision without any external pressure (i.e. “compulsion”).
- 7) Any decision he rendered would be voluntary, according to his own free will.
- 8) Although he was free from external coercion, Philemon, as a maturing believer, no doubt was under “internal” pressure to make the proper doctrinal application. This pressure would be exerted by God the Holy Spirit and his own knowledge of Divine viewpoint (cf. Psa. 143:10, Gal. 5:16, 25).
- 9) Remember Paul has just commended him for his applications towards other believers. He knew the right application to make towards Onesimus.
- 10) Forgiveness and reconciliation were required. Certainly the Colossian letter made this explicit (**Colossians 3:13** “...bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.”).
- 11) Apart from this context concerning Philemon, the decision of whether or not to apply any doctrine is squarely on the shoulders of each individual believer.
- 12) Human volition is a fundamental element in the angelic conflict. It functions on three levels: cold, lukewarm, and hot (cf. Rev. 3:14-19).
- 13) As believers, we will answer for our own decisions. Regardless of how tough a niche we might have endured during our ph. 2 (cf. 2 Cor. 5:10).
- 14) Everyone has an equal opportunity to make the decision to follow God and his plan to spiritual maturity.

## Philemon 1:23-25

### Vocabulary:

**Philemon 1:15-16** “For perhaps he was for this reason parted *from you* for a while, that you should have him back forever,<sup>16</sup> no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.”

- 1) “Perhaps”: the adverb, *τάχα*- TACHA, “perhaps, possibly.”
- 2) “For this reason”: the preposition, *διά*- DIA, “because of” + the adjective, *οὗτος*- OUTOS, “this.”
- 3) “Parted”: the verb, *χωρίζω*- CHORIDZO, “to part, separate.”
- 4) “That”: the conjunction, *ἵνα*- HINA, “that, so that.”
- 5) “You should have him back”: the pronoun, *αὐτός*- AUTOS, “he, him” + the verb, *ἀπέχω*- APECHO, “receive back.”
- 6) “Slave”: the noun, *δοῦλος*- DOULOS, “slave.”
- 7) “More than”: the preposition, *ὑπέρ*- HUPER, “more than.”
- 8) “Beloved brother”: the noun, *ἀδελφός*- ADELPHOS, “brother” + the adjective, *ἀγαπητός*- AGAPETOS, “beloved.”
- 9) “Flesh”: the noun, *σάρξ*- SARX, “flesh, human standards”
- 10) “Lord”: the noun, *κύριος*- KURIOS, “lord, master.”

**Revised translation:** the standard translation is sufficient.

## Philemon 1:23-25

**Philemon 1:15-16** “For perhaps he was for this reason parted *from you* for a while, that you should have him back forever,<sup>16</sup> no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.”

Analysis of vv. 15-16:

- 1) Onesimus “parted” company with his master when he fled to Rome.
- 2) At that time he was an unbeliever and living his life according to his own plan. In fact, Onesimus was in violation of both Roman and Divine statutes.
- 3) Hence, fleeing his master was in no way sponsored by God. Rather, he was within the realm of God’s permissive will.
- 4) When he was converted and began to acclimate to Divine viewpoint with Paul, Onesimus placed himself within the domain of God’s directive will. This is further demonstrated by his willingness to go back and face his master.
- 5) Certainly he could have refused and continued on with his life as a fugitive. After all who really desires to be a slave? As a believer he might at least have a measure of peace knowing his eternal future as a believer (i.e. basic blessings of heaven).
- 6) Now, however, the former “useless” one is committed to making the correct application towards Philemon. Quite a change in character and conduct.
- 7) In our context, it is evident that God didn’t cause the separation. Instead, He can take an individual in an abysmal situation and transform it for good to conform to His plan (Rom. 8:28, Eph. 1:11, cf. Gen. 45:4-8, 50:20).
  - a) Bear in mind, in addition to the other components of His essence, God is both omniscient and omnipotent. These components guarantee that He possesses all the facts in any given situation and His inherent ability to accomplish His goals (Psa. 33:13-15, 139:1-6, 1 Chron. 29:11-12, Jer. 27:5).
  - b) In addition, He will accomplish His goal despite the saturation of evil in the world (cf. Prov. 16:1-4, Isa. 46:8-10).
- 8) Moreover, as God accomplishes His purpose, He is able to benefit all the parties involved: Onesimus, Paul, and Philemon.
- 9) Although the situation came about as a result of disobedience, it would benefit Philemon since he would receive Onesimus back forever.
  - a) We must not understand “forever” to mean that Onesimus would forever be a slave to Philemon.
  - b) Their relationship has undergone a radical change. They are now permanent equals and fellow heirs in Christ (cf. Gal. 3:28, Col. 3:11).
  - c) His application of forgiveness towards Onesimus would eventuate in future blessings (e.g. temporal blessing: gaining a productive slave).
- 10) In the phrase, “no longer as a slave” Paul does not imply that Philemon should receive back and release Onesimus since he is a believer.

## Philemon 1:23-25

- 11) Paul is certainly not engaging in a social commentary on the morality of slavery.
- 12) Rather, the phrase should be understood to mean to receive him back “not **merely** as a slave” or “**just** as a slave.”
- 13) Whether or not Onesimus would be released is irrelevant to the context. His status as a slave should bear no significance to him as a believer.
- 14) In the Colossian epistle, he had been instructed by Paul on how to acclimate and live within his niche as a slave (Col. 3:22-25).
- 15) Onesimus was now “more than” a mere slave. He is also a “beloved brother” of Paul and Philemon.
- 16) As much as Onesimus was a “beloved brother” to Paul, he would be exceedingly more so to Philemon.
- 17) Their relationship of master and slave would continue in a mutual devotion to Divine viewpoint. Whereas before it was one-sided, Philemon was positive and Onesimus was negative to the plan of God.
- 18) Although they were not social equals, they were “spiritual” equals due to their position in Christ.

## Philemon 1:23-25

### Vocabulary:

**Philemon 1:17** If then you regard me a partner, accept him as *you would* me.

- 1) “If”: the conjunction, εἰ- EI, “if.”
- 2) “You regard”: the verb, ἔχω- ECHO, “to have, consider, regard.”
- 3) “Partner”: the noun, κοινωνός- KOINONOS, “a partner, companion.”
- 4) “Accept”: the verb, προσλαμβάνω- PROSLAMBANO, “to receive, accept, welcome.”

Revised translation: the standard translation is sufficient.

## Philemon 1:23-25

**Philemon 1:17** If then you regard me a partner, accept him as *you would* me.

Analysis of vs. 17:

- 1) By virtue of his saving faith, Onesimus should be viewed as a “beloved brother” by Philemon (cf. vs. 16).
- 2) Certainly a unique relationship between a master and his slave.
- 3) In vs. 17 Paul explicitly states the content of his appeal to Philemon.
- 4) Previously, the apostle “appealed” in vv. 9 -10 but only now does he spell out his request.
- 5) His request is presented in a conditional sentence (i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> class condition).
  - a) Paul bases his appeal on his close personal tie with Philemon.
  - b) A “partner” (κοινωνός- KOINONOS) is one who shares or participates with another in some matter of mutual concern (Luke 5:10, 1 Peter 5:1).
    - i) In our context, Paul and Philemon are “partners” in the faith. Each desired to further the cause of Christ in his respective niche (cf. “fellowship”, κοινωνία- KOINONIA in vs. 6).
    - ii) In his initial greeting, Paul described him as his “fellow worker.” Both “partner” and “fellow worker” are closely related in meaning (vs. 1, 2 Cor. 8:23).
  - c) The phrase, “if then you regard me as a partner” indicates a condition that, based on context, is undoubtedly true (cf. vs. 7, 20).
  - d) As this condition is true, Philemon is entreated to “accept” Onesimus as if the slave was Paul himself, a partner in the same cause.
  - e) Our verse is reminiscent of vs. 12, where Paul likens sending Onesimus back to sending “my very heart.”
- 6) Our term “accept” (προσλαμβάνω- PROSLAMBANO) is to receive or welcome into one’s home or circle of acquaintances. The nuance is a warm welcome (cf use of our term in Acts 28:2).
  - a) The form of our verb in the Greek text stresses the urgency of the act (“Accept him!).
  - b) Philemon was to welcome Onesimus without malice or acrimony, but rather with forgiveness. This the primary focus of the letter (cf. **Colossians 3:13** “bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.”).
  - c) He was to exhibit the same love towards Onesimus that he displayed towards other believers in his niche (cf. vv. 5, 7, 9).
  - d) His love and grace orientation towards Onesimus would be demonstrated in forgiveness (cf. Matt. 18:21-22).
  - e) His forgiveness would also comply with the command to be at peace with all men (Rom. 12:18 cf. Heb. 12:14).
- 7) The welcome was to be sincere with out any hypocrisy (Rom. 12:9).

## Philemon 1:23-25

- 8) As a general principle, other passages instruct believers to “accept” one another without any ulterior motives (Rom.14:1, 15:7 cf. 1 Peter 2:1).
- 9) Even among believers, there are those that desire to cultivate friendships for insincere reasons.
  - a) Unlike a true friend, these types don’t care for or about you. Instead they care about some advantage they can gain from you (Prov. 19:4, 6; Jude 1:16 cf. Lev. 25:14).
    - Jude 1:16: “flattering people” lit is “praising the face.”
  - b) You, as the pawn, serve some useful purpose in their plans. Clearly this doesn’t constitute true friendship. Beware of these treacherous types (Luke 6:16, 22:5-6, 2 Tim. 3:4).
  - c) It is a comfort to know that God will judge those who utilize treachery and deceit in their dealings with others (Prov. 11:3, 6; 22:12; Ezek. 18:24).
- 10) True friendship is centered on a mutual commitment to the Divine viewpoint (Phil. 1:27).
- 11) Various characteristics of a true friendship also include:
  - a) Friends reveal their thinking, motivations, aspirations, concerns, etc. to one another (cf. John 15:15).
  - b) On occasion friends fail one another so grace orientation is required (Job 19:14 c.f., Job 42:7-10).
  - c) Friends should be loyal and not engage in verbal sinning against one another (Psa. 15:3).
  - d) Obedience to sound doctrine takes precedence over loyalty to any friend (cf. **Deuteronomy 13:6-9** "If your brother, your mother's son, or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or your friend who is as your own soul, entice you secretly, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods' (whom neither you nor your fathers have known, <sup>7</sup> of the gods of the peoples who are around you, near you or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other end), <sup>8</sup> you shall not yield to him or listen to him; and your eye shall not pity him, nor shall you spare or conceal him. <sup>9</sup> "But you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.").
  - e) At times, a truthful rebuke is required among friends (cf. Mark 8:33).

## Philemon 1:23-25

### Vocabulary:

**Philemon 1:18-19** “But if he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account; <sup>19</sup> I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I will repay it (lest I should mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well).”

- 1) “Wronged”: the verb, ἀδικέω- ADIKEO, “to do wrong, to act unjustly.”
- 2) “Owes”: the verb, ὀφείλω- OPHEILO, “to owe.”
- 3) “Anything”: the pronoun, τίς- TIS, “anything.”
- 4) “Charge that to my account”: the pronoun, οὗτος- OUTOS, “this” + the pronoun, ἐγώ- EGO, “me” + the verb, ἐλλογέω- ENLOGEO, “to charge to.” Translate “charge this to me.”
- 5) “Writing”: the verb, γράφω- GRAPHO, “to write.”
- 6) “My own hand”: the adjective, ἐμός-EMOS, “my” + the noun, χεῖρ- CHEIR, “hand.”
- 7) “I will repay it”: the intensive pronoun, ἐγώ- EGO, “I, me” + the verb, ἀποτίνω- APOTINO, “to repay.” “Translate “I myself will repay.”
- 8) “Lest I should mention to you”: the conjunction, ἵνα- HINA, “so that” + the negative particle, μή- ME, “not” + the verb, λέγω- LEGO, “to say, speak” + the pronoun, σύ- SU, “you.” Translate “so that I may not say to you.”
- 9) “You owe”: the verb, προσοφείλω- PROSOPHEILO, “to still owe. Translate “you still owe.”
- 10) “Even your own self as well”: the conjunction, καί- KAI, “and, also, even” + the pronoun, σεαυτοῦ- SEAUTOU, “yourself.”

### Revised translation:

**Philemon 1:18-19** “But if he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge this to me; <sup>19</sup> I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I myself will repay it (so that I may not say to you that you still owe to me even your own self as well).”

## Philemon 1:23-25

**Philemon 1:18-19** “But if he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge this to me; <sup>19</sup> I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I myself will repay it (so that I may not say to you that you still owe to me even your own self as well).”

Analysis of vv. 18-19:

- 1) In vs. 18, Paul seeks to prevent any hindrance to a full reconciliation between Philemon and Onesimus.
- 2) Corresponding to the previous verse, the conjunction “if” (εἰ- EI) begins a conditional sentence (i.e. a 1<sup>st</sup> class condition).
- 3) “If he has wronged...or owes you anything” sets for a condition that is certainly true.
  - a) Evidently in the past, Onesimus had “wronged” Philemon in some manner. If nothing else, he “wronged” Philemon by running away.
  - b) Besides the general meaning to act unjustly, “wronged” possesses other connotations that may be applicable to our context: a violation of law (Acts 25:10-11), financial “wrong” (1 Cor. 6:7-8), physical injury (Acts 7:26-27).
  - c) Due to his flight, Onesimus is indebted to his master in a financial sense (i.e. he “owes” him money).
  - d) In other contexts, the term signifies a moral rather than a financial obligation (cf. 1 John 4:11).
  - e) Nonetheless, considering the context, a financial obligation is in view.
  - f) How would a useless slave finance his flight and subsequent freedom? Probably through thievery.
- 4) Paul instructs Philemon to “charge” any wrong or financial debt to him. He personally assumes responsibility for the damages incurred by Onesimus as a result of the slave’s misconduct.
- 5) Why does the apostle assume this responsibility? He effectively removes a potential obstacle to the process of forgiveness.
- 6) Paul is adept at playing the role of “peacemaker” (cf. Rom. 14:19).
- 7) In vs. 19, the apostle inserts his own legal promissory note.
- 8) He emphatically declares that he personally composed the note (“my own hand”).
- 9) Also, he unequivocally states that he will “repay” Philemon for any damages and has entered into a contract.
  - a) This is not a simple reassurance that he would repay any damages. Rather, he is now bound by a legal contract.
  - b) The natural question arises since he was imprisoned, “How would Paul have the financial means to repay a debt?”
  - c) Even while in prison, he received financial support from other so he was not without some means (cf. Phil. 2:30, 4:14-18).

## Philemon 1:23-25

- 10) In case the subject of debt is broached, Paul reminds Philemon that he “still owes” himself to the apostle.
  - a) Philemon is depicted as having an outstanding debt to Paul.
  - b) A financial debt is not in view. Philemon still owes himself.
- 11) We may infer that Paul was personally and directly responsible for his conversion to Christianity.
- 12) In a figurative sense, Philemon owed his spiritual life to Paul.
- 13) In other words, any actual financial debt owed to Philemon by Onesimus was insignificant compared to the “debt” owed by Philemon to Paul.

## Philemon 1:23-25

### Vocabulary:

**Philemon 1:20** “Yes, brother, let me benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.”

- 1) “Yes, brother”: the emphatic particle *ναί*- NAI, “yes, certainly, indeed” + the noun, *ἀδελφός*- ADELPHOS, “brother.”
- 2) “Let me benefit”: the verb, *ὀνίνημι*- ONINEMI, “to benefit from.”
- 3) “In the Lord”: the preposition, *ἐν*- EN, “in” + the noun, *κύριος*- KURIOS, “lord, master.”
- 4) “Refresh my heart”: the noun, *ἀναπαύω*- ANAPAUO, “to refresh” + the pronoun, *ἐγώ*- EGO, “I, me” + the noun, *σπλάγχνον*- SPLANGCHNON, “(lit.) inward parts, entrails, (fig.) heart.”
- 5) “In Christ”: the preposition, *ἐν*- EN, “in” + the noun, *Χριστός*- CHRISTOS, “Christ.”

**Revised translation:** the standard translation is sufficient.

## Philemon 1:23-25

**Philemon 1:20** “Yes, brother, let me benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.”

Analysis of vs. 20:

- 1) Paul strengthens his appeal to Philemon in vs. 20.
- 2) Our term “yes” is not used to denote affirmation or agreement. Instead it is used to provide emphasis and thereby intensify the apostles wish. It may also be translated, “Yes, indeed” or “Indeed.”
- 3) Once again Philemon is affectionately addressed as “brother” (cf. vs. 7).
- 4) Paul wishes to “benefit” directly from Philemon in these circumstances.
  - a) The verb, “benefit” indicates an obtainable wish and is an appeal to Philemon’s volition.
  - b) It may be considered a polite but emphatic request.
- 5) Certainly Paul does not refer to monetary or material profit.
- 6) In what way is Philemon able to benefit or profit Paul?
  - a) First, he could benefit Paul by welcoming back Onesimus.
  - b) Secondly, after a full reconciliation, Philemon could send Onesimus back to Rome to assist Paul (cf. vs. 13).
- 7) Both scenarios necessitated forgiveness and an attitude of grace on behalf of Philemon.
- 8) The astute believer recognizes the profit of applying Divine principles to his everyday circumstances (1 Tim. 4:8).
- 9) Previously, Paul commended Philemon for being a source of emotional refreshment to his fellow believers in Colossae (**Philemon 1:7** “For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because **the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.**”).
- 10) Now, he enjoins Philemon to be the same source of emotional refreshment to him (“refresh my heart”).
- 11) Paul would be “refreshed” through Philemon’s application of Divine standards.

## Philemon 1:23-25

### Vocabulary:

**Philemon 1:21-22** “Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, since I know that you will do even more than what I say.<sup>22</sup> And at the same time also prepare me a lodging; for I hope that through your prayers I shall be given to you.”

- 1) “Having confidence” the participle, πείθω- PEITHO, “to convince, have confidence.”
- 2) “Obedience”: the noun, ὑπακοή- HUPAKOE, “obedience.”
- 3) “Since I know”: the participle, οἶδα- OIDA, “to know, to know someone.”
- 4) “More than what I say”: the preposition, ὑπέρ- HUPER, “more than” + the pronoun, ὅς- HOS, “what” + the verb, λέγω- LEGO, “to say, speak.”
- 5) “Prepare”: the verb, ἐτοιμάζω- HETOIMADZO, “to cause to be ready, to prepare.”
- 6) “Lodging”: the noun, ξενία- XENIA, “hospitality, lodging, guest room.”
- 7) “I hope”: the verb, ἐλπίζω- ELPIDZO, “to hope, to expect.”
- 8) “Through your prayers”: the preposition, διά- DIA, “through” + the noun, προσευχή- PROSEUCHE, “prayer” + the pronoun, σύ- SU, “your.”
- 9) “I shall be given”: the verb, χαρίζομαι- CHARIDZOMAI, “to give, to hand over.”

**Revised translation:** the standard translation is sufficient.

## Philemon 1:23-25

**Philemon 1:21-22** “Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, since I know that you will do even more than what I say. <sup>22</sup> And at the same time also prepare me a lodging; for I hope that through your prayers I shall be given to you.”

Analysis of vv. 21-22:

- 1) Paul is confident that Philemon will be obedient to the will of God in resolving his issues with Onesimus.
  - a) Our term, “obedience” (ὕπακοή- HUPAKOE) refers to thinking and conduct that conforms to God’s righteous standards (Rom. 16:19, 2 Cor. 10:5, 1 Peter 1:14).
  - b) As the preeminent example, Jesus Christ was completely obedient to will of the Father (cf. Rom. 5:19).
- 2) His confidence is based on the personal knowledge of his friend’s character.
- 3) As a close friend, he knew what doctrinal response to expect from Philemon.
- 4) Philemon had demonstrated that he had an enthusiasm to apply towards others (vv. 5, 7).
- 5) Furthermore, the apostle is confident that Philemon will even exceed all that he has requested of him (“...do even more...”).
- 6) In vs. 22, Paul instructs him to “prepare” a place for him to stay (i.e. a guest room).
- 7) We see in addition to the other applications expected of Philemon, he also has the opportunity of providing hospitality to Paul upon his release.
- 8) Here Paul refers to his hope or expectation of release. This is a firm hope or expectation of freedom (cf. Phil. 1:26, 2:24).
- 9) He indicates that his release, in part, is attributed to the “prayers” of the believers in Colossae.
  - a) Paul switches back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural in “your prayers.”
  - b) Now, besides Philemon, he includes his associates: Apphia, Archippus, and the group of believers meeting in his house (cf. vs. 2).
- 10) Again, it is evident that the apostle was supremely confident in the effectiveness of prayer (cf. Prov. 15:29, 1 Peter 3:12).
- 11) Any indication of fret or worry about his release is absent in the context. He doesn’t know the time frame, but nevertheless, he is confident that he will be released.
- 12) Ultimately his release is in God’s hands.
  - a) The verb, “be given” has the nuance of something being given graciously.
  - b) Also, the verb is passive which points out only God can secure his freedom.
- 13) Paul’s release would be a grace benefit for all those in Colossae.

## Philemon 1:23-25

### Vocabulary:

**Philemon 1:23-25** “Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you,<sup>24</sup> *as do* Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers.<sup>25</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.”

- 1) “Fellow prisoner”: the noun, συναιχμάλωτος- SUNAICHMALOTOS, “fellow prisoner, fellow captive.”
- 2) “Greet”: the verb, ἀσπάζομαι- ASPADZOMAI, “to greet, welcome.”
- 3) “Fellow workers”: the adjective, συνεργός- SUNERGOS, “fellow worker.”
- 4) “Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ”: the noun, χάρις- CHARIS, “grace” + the noun, κύριος- KURIOS, “lord, master” + the proper name, Ἰησοῦς- IESOUS, “Jesus, Joshua” + the noun, Χριστός- CHRISTOS, “Christ.”
- 5) “Spirit”: the noun, πνεῦμα- PNEUMA, “spirit.”

Revised translation: the standard translation is sufficient.

## Philemon 1:23-25

**Philemon 1:23-25** “Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, <sup>24</sup> *as do* Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers. <sup>25</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.”

Analysis of vv. 23-25:

- 1) Paul relates the greetings from several of his co-workers to Philemon.
- 2) A corresponding list of names is found in the Colossian epistle (Col. 4:10-14).
- 3) In vs. 23, the list begins with Epaphras.
  - a) This is appropriate since Epaphras is a fellow Colossian and would be well known to Philemon.
  - b) Paul describes him as “my fellow prisoner” which indicates that he was confined with the apostle in Rome.
- 4) Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke conclude the list.
  - a) All are described by Paul as “fellow workers.”
  - b) They labored together with Paul in a joint effort to proclaim Christ, especially to Gentiles (e.g. Aristarchus, Acts 19:29, 20:4, 27:2).
- 5) Paul addresses Philemon and his associates in vs. 25 (“your” is plural).
- 6) In typical fashion, the apostle desires those in Colossae to more fully apprehend Divine grace (cf. Gal. 6:18, Phil 4:23).

\*See the Doc. of Hospitality.