

# Philemon

<sup>1</sup>Greetings from Paul, a prisoner for Jesus Christ, and from Timothy, our brother.

To Philemon, our dear friend and worker with us. <sup>2</sup>Also to Apphia, our sister, to Archippus, a worker with us, and to the church\* that meets in your home.

<sup>3</sup>Grace\* and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

## *Philemon's Love and Faith*

<sup>4</sup>I remember you in my prayers. And I always thank my God for you. <sup>5</sup>I thank God because I hear about the love you have for all of God's holy people\* and the faith you have in the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup>I pray that the faith you share will make you understand every blessing we have in Christ. <sup>7</sup>My brother, you have shown love to God's people, and your help has greatly encouraged them. What a great joy and encouragement that has been to me.

## *Accept Onesimus as a Brother*

<sup>8</sup>There is something that you should do. And because of the authority I have in Christ, I feel free to command you to do it. <sup>9</sup>But I am not commanding you; I am asking you to do it out of love. I, Paul, am an old man now, and I am a prisoner for Christ Jesus. <sup>10</sup>I am asking you for my son Onesimus. He became my son while I was in prison. <sup>11</sup>In the past he was useless to you. But now he has become useful<sup>a</sup> for both you and me.

<sup>12</sup>I am sending him back to you, but it's as hard as losing part of myself. <sup>13</sup>I would like to keep him here to help me while I am still in prison for telling the Good News.\* By helping me here, he would be

representing you. <sup>14</sup>But I did not want to do anything without asking you first. Then whatever you do for me will be what you want to do, not what I forced you to do.

<sup>15</sup>Onesimus was separated from you for a short time. Maybe that happened so that you could have him back forever, <sup>16</sup>not to be just a slave, but better than a slave, to be a dear brother. That's what he is to me. And I know he will mean even more to you, both as your slave and as one who shares your faith in the Lord.

<sup>17</sup>If you accept me as your friend, then accept Onesimus back. Welcome him like you would welcome me. <sup>18</sup>If he has done any wrong to you or owes you anything, charge that to me. <sup>19</sup>I, Paul, am writing this in my own handwriting: I will pay back anything Onesimus owes. And I will say nothing about what you owe me for your own life. <sup>20</sup>So, my brother, as a follower of the Lord please do this favor<sup>b</sup> for me. It would be such a great encouragement to me as your brother in Christ. <sup>21</sup>I write this letter knowing that you will do what I ask, and even more than I ask.

<sup>22</sup>Also, please prepare a room for me. I hope that God will answer your prayers and that I will be able to come and see you.

## *Final Greetings*

<sup>23</sup>Epaphras is a prisoner with me for Christ Jesus. He sends you his greetings.

<sup>24</sup>Also Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke send their greetings. They are workers together with me.

<sup>25</sup>The grace\* of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

<sup>a</sup>**11 useless ... useful** Paul here makes a play on words with the name Onesimus, which means "useful."

<sup>b</sup>**20 please do this favor** Paul here makes another wordplay on the name Onesimus, using a verb related to it.

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