

Questions on Philemon

1. Why would Paul refer to himself as “a prisoner” instead of “an apostle”? What do we know about Philemon, the one to whom the epistle is addressed? Verse 1.
2. Who were Apphia and Archippus thought to be? Where was Philemon thought to live and where did the church meet in that place? Verse 2.
3. What spiritual state did Paul wish for those who were addressed? Verse 3.
4. From what we know of Philemon, was he a good man? Do we need to pray for good men? Verse 4.
5. What good things had Paul heard about Philemon? Verse 5.
6. What difficult thing is Paul leading up to in this verse by encouraging Philemon to recognize that he has been greatly blessed and thus will be inclined to extend mercy and pardon to others? Verse 6.

7. Paul mentioned that the “bowels” or hearts of the saints had been refreshed by Philemon and then used what word that he hoped would help persuade Philemon to grant a favor he is about to ask. What was the word and what was the favor? Verse 7.

8. Why did Paul feel that he could have enjoined or commanded Philemon instead of asking. Why did he feel that way and why didn't he command? Verse 8.

9. In addition to asking a favor as a “brother,” upon what other grounds does Paul plead his case? Verse 9.

10. Who was Onesimus and why does Paul refer to him as “my child”? Verse 10.

11. Why was Onesimus once unprofitable to Philemon? What was it since that time that now made him profitable, both to Paul and Philemon? Verse 11.

12. Why didn't Paul tell Philemon that slavery was wrong? Was Onesimus in danger of falling into the hands of slave-catchers? Is that one reason he sent him back with Tychicus, who bore the letter to the Colossians? Verse 12. (See Colossians 4:7-9)

13. Under ordinary circumstances, wouldn't it have been dangerous, perhaps even deadly, for a runaway slave to be returned to his master? Verse 13.

14. If Paul wanted Onesimus to help him during his imprisonment, why didn't he demand it or come right out and ask for Philemon's approval? Verse 14.

15. In what way does Paul say that Onesimus' running away was providential? Verse 15.

16. Onesimus left as a slave and came back, not as a slave only, but as what? Verse 16.

17. How does Paul ask Philemon to treat Onesimus on his return? Verse 17.

18. How does Paul show his confidence in Onesimus? In what way was Philemon actually indebted to Paul? Verses 18-19.

19. In what way does Paul, the aged, the old soldier of the cross, ask Philemon to honor his request? Verse 20.

20. Scholars say that this verse is a request to Philemon to free Onesimus and possibly send him back to Paul? Upon what basis does Paul make this request? Verse 21.

21. Would the prospect of facing Paul make Philemon more likely to grant his wish? Verse 22.

22. What do we know about Epaphras? Verse 23. (See Colossians 1:7 and Colossians 4:12-13)

23. Which two of these men wrote New Testament books? Verse 24.

24. In closing, upon what group does Paul invoke the grace or favor of Christ? Verse 25.