



Living in Freedom Today

Bert Allen

Published by Christ Assembly
1360 S. Patrick Dr., Suite 1A
Satellite Beach, FL 32937

www.ChristAssembly.org

Permissions

You are granted a limited, revocable license to distribute this material through all lawful means, provided that you do not alter the wording or format and do not charge for copies or seek to recover any costs of publication; you may not receive any donations related to this work. Notice of revocation may be posted at ChristAssembly.org/book-notices and be sufficient to revoke all licenses without further notice. You maintain the sole obligation to stop any dissemination after the notice is published. Furthermore, you may not derive any economic benefit from such publication or distribution. All rights reserved by Herbert L. Allen, Jr. Please post a link to ChristAssembly.org for all web publications.

All Scriptural quotations are from the New American Standard Bible, Giant Print Hardcover edition. Page numbers refer to that Giant Print, Hardcover Bible.

"Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible® (NASB), Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation Used by permission. www.Lockman.org"

Table of Contents

1. [Learning Freedom in the Church Today](#)
2. [Learning Freedom in Prayer Today](#)
3. [Learning Freedom with Confidence Today](#)
4. [Learning Freedom with Consent Today](#)
5. [Learning Freedom in Partnership Today](#)
6. [Learning Freedom in Obedience Today](#)
7. [Learning Freedom in Teams Today](#)
8. [Conclusion](#)

Introduction

During the course of the beach ministry at a seaside park in Florida, I met many people from all over the world. Some of those people used drugs, others drank alcohol to excess, others indulged in sexual sins, and many had strong anger issues. People without Jesus Christ all had one thing in common: slavery to sin.

Paul wrote to Philemon, a slave owner. As Paul wrote about Onesimus, the run away slave of Philemon, Paul explained how slavery and freedom oppose each other. Slavery involves involuntary obedience while freedom comes from a heart serving in love.

Paul knew that Philemon had received the free gift of salvation. So, Paul approached his friend Philemon in love and chose to request help from Philemon, instead of commanding obedience. Paul reminded Philemon that he owed his life to Paul, apparently because Paul shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with Philemon, and so was born again.

God revealed how slavery dissolves into freedom through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The equality of all believers and the usefulness of each believer for service to other saints and to God requires freedom to pursue God's will. No believer should ever restrain another believer's freedom to pursue God's will. Of course, government acts to restrain freedom when sin produces lawlessness, but on a personal level every believer must promote freedom by the grace of God in the way we live and minister with each other.

I urge you to have [Peace with God](#).

November 20, 2020

1

Learning Freedom in the Church

Before Saul of Tarsus was renamed Paul, Saul enjoyed persecuting Christians and with great zeal sought them out to bind them and deliver them to the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. He gained a reputation from his participation in the stoning of Stephen. He became well known to the Jerusalem church as a vicious persecutor of the church. He thought he was serving God and advancing beyond his contemporaries in Judaism.

One day Paul journeyed down the Damascus Road. He intended to arrest Christians in Damascus, and bind them over for trial in Jerusalem. On the Damascus Road, Paul saw a great light and heard a voice from heaven: “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” Saul did not recognize the voice, but Jesus told Saul to stop persecuting His church because that was the same as persecuting Jesus Himself. Paul went blind temporarily, but lost his spiritual blindness forever. He became a powerful servant and apostle of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. Jesus had chosen Paul to bear His name before the Gentiles, and kings and the sons of Israel, and to suffer for the name of Jesus Christ.

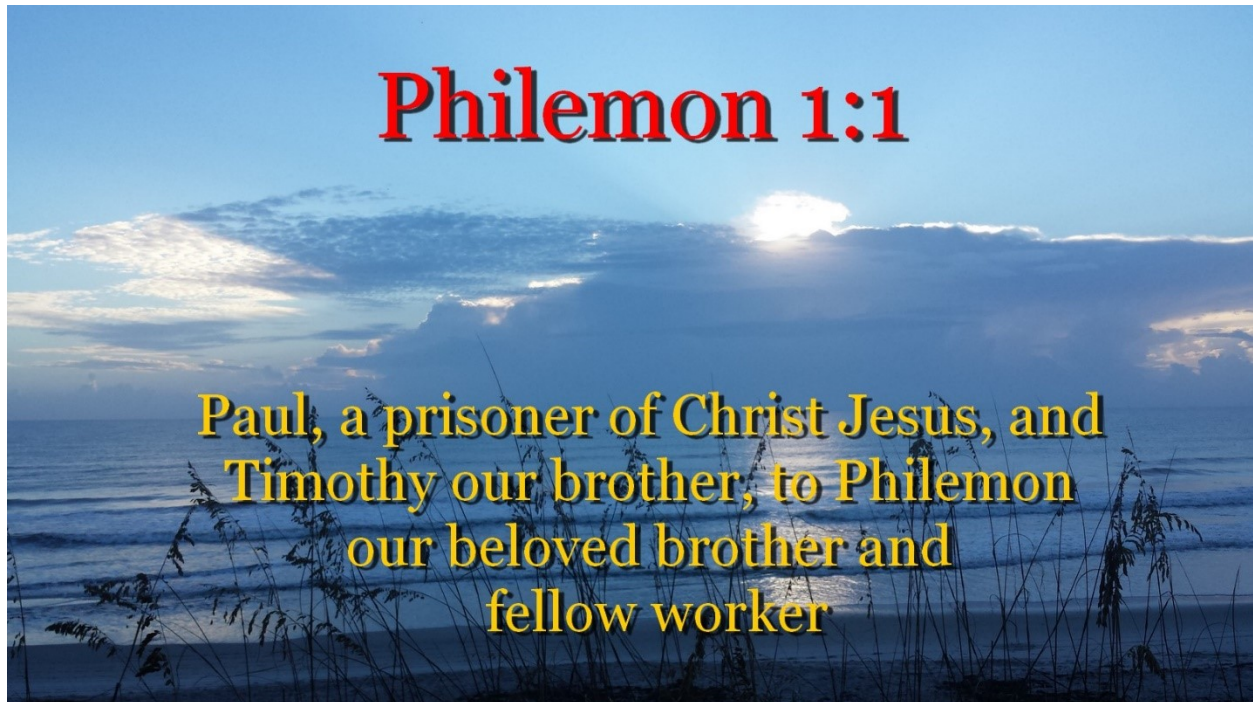
God changed the name of Saul of Tarsus to Paul. As Paul traveled through many countries, regions, and cities, he preached the mighty love of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Great works of powers attended the ministry of Paul and the ministry team. He planted churches in many places. Both Jews and Gentiles began to oppose Paul and the ministry team. They began to persecute Paul and the followers of Jesus Christ. Paul came to know about jails in many places because he spent time as a prisoner. He also knew about courts, trials, appeals, and attorneys. He suffered beatings, stoning, shipwrecks, persecutions, and many different kinds of attacks. Evil people chased him from place to place. So later in life when Paul exercised his legal right as a Roman citizen to appeal to Caesar to decide his case, Paul knew

that he would have further opportunity, even as a prisoner, to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ along the way to Rome to meet Caesar.

As Paul made that trip to Rome, he continued to make disciples and meet new people. Although Paul was imprisoned for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Gospel of Jesus Christ was not imprisoned and it flourished. Paul made disciples and worked with a ministry team all the way to Rome, and met new people in Rome. During his time in prison, Paul met a runaway slave named Onesimus, who became Paul's child in the faith. The Book of Philemon records Paul's letter to Philemon, the owner of the slave Onesimus, and reveals the powerful love of God. Paul lived as a brother with many people, male and female, and his brotherly relationship with Philemon provides great instruction for our lives and encouragement and hope from God.

Day One

Prisoner of Christ Jesus Today



Paul described himself as a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote letters while imprisoned. He displayed great concern for disciples of Jesus spread all over the areas he had visited, and also for disciples in other places. Paul never became self-absorbed, so that he no longer cared about others.

Paul met a young man named Timothy on a missionary journey. Timothy joined Paul on a ministry team spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ and making disciples in His name. The members of that team changed from time to time, and God often sent team members to different places to continue ministries and found new ones.

Paul wrote a letter to Philemon, his beloved brother and fellow worker in the Gospel of Jesus Christ ~~and making disciples~~.

Beloved Brother and Fellow Worker

1. **The Prisoner of Jesus Christ**. Paul wrote his letter to Philemon from prison. Paul wrote other letters from prison, including Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, known as the prison epistles.

2. **Timothy**. Paul called Timothy his brother. At this later point in Paul's life, Paul thought of Timothy as a brother. You may recall that Paul referred to Timothy also as his true child in the faith (1 Timothy 1:2) and as his beloved son (2 Timothy 1:2). They enjoyed a very close and spiritual relationship.

3. **Spiritual Children**. Are you raising spiritual children like a Timothy? Are you spending time helping a young believer grow up in faith by regularly reading the Bible together and praying together? Learn from Paul how to raise young believers.

4. **Philemon**. Paul identified Philemon as the recipient of this letter.

5. **Beloved Brother and Fellow Worker**. Paul described Philemon as a beloved brother. Paul described many people as his brethren. Paul also called Philemon a fellow worker. Paul often worked as a part of ministry team. He viewed other disciples as spiritually working on the same team under the leadership of Jesus. Timothy labored with Paul on that same ministry team.

6. **Brothers in Christ**. Living in freedom in the family of God means that even when on trial for his life, Paul thought about others and continued his ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and making disciples.

7. **Others First**. We rejoice today for the example of Paul, who put the interests of other people before his own interests. He understood his calling in Jesus Christ and did not shrink back from sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, raising spiritual children, writing friends, and spending time making disciples wherever he went and whatever God called him to do.

Summary for Today

- **Living in freedom in the family of God means that we love other people in Christ, no matter what happens to us.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we stay in touch with the family members.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God when we continue to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and make disciples as part of a ministry team, even under challenging personal circumstances.**

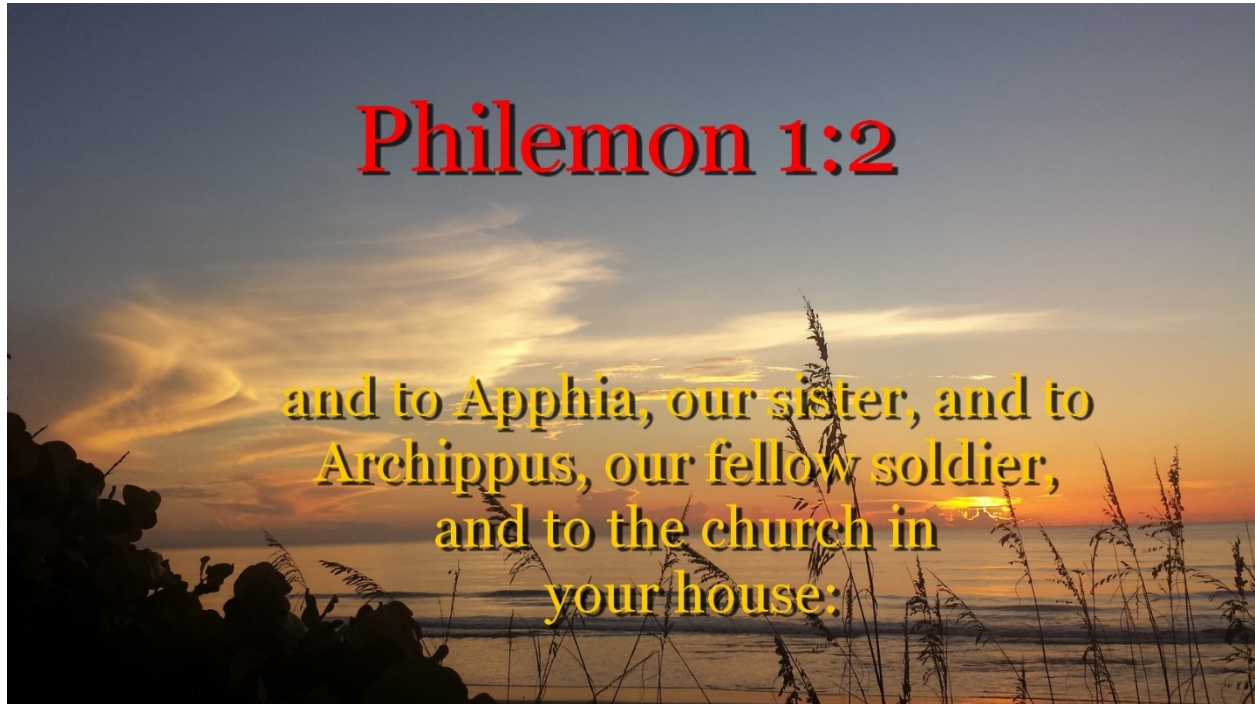
Application for Today

Today, many of our friends and children in the family of God face challenging circumstances. Will you live in freedom today by contacting them and letting them know you are thinking about them today?

HALLELUJAH!

Day Two

The Church Today



Paul labored as part of ministry team, which changed from time to time. Paul sent people to different locations and gave them different missions. As we have seen, Paul took Timothy along with him early in his ministry and disciplined him in Christ.

Paul greeted Philemon, Apphia, and Archippus. Some people speculate that Apphia was the wife of Philemon, but the text never indicates any relationship. In my mind, calling Apphia our sister seems somewhat incongruous if she is the wife of Philemon. Paul described Archippus as a fellow soldier, indicating the battles he has encountered.

Apparently Philemon had a church in his house. Therefore, we know that Philemon and Archippus met together in that house as a church, just as the early church in Acts met together from house to house.

In Your House

1. **Apphia**. Paul knew many people by name and greeted many people in his epistles. In this case, Paul recognized Apphia (only occurrence of her name in the New Testament) and called her our sister in Christ.

2. **Archippus**. Paul also mentioned Archippus. He was described as a fellow soldier. Paul also mentioned Archippus in Colossians 4:17, where Paul directs the Colossians to say to Archippus: “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.”

3. **Fellow Soldier**. Paul described Archippus as a fellow soldier. Paul used this same term in Philippians 2:25 to describe Epaphroditus, the messenger from the Colossian church and minister to the needs of Paul.

4. **House Church**. Philemon also had a church in his house. Several house churches are mentioned in the New Testament. Prisca and Aquilla had a church in their house (Romans 16:3-5; 1 Corinthians 16:19). Likewise, Nympha had church in her house (Colossians 4:15). Furthermore, believers met from house to house (Acts 2:46).

5. **Church**. Paul wrote his letter not only to Philemon, but Paul intended for the entire church to hear what he wanted Philemon to do concerning the runaway slave Onesimus. Furthermore, by directing his letter to the entire church, Paul was establishing a standard for the Christian treatment of all slaves.

6. **Discipleship**. Living in freedom in the family of God means that Paul practiced making disciples wherever he went by sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ and then following up with the believers who received the free gift of eternal life. Paul obeyed the command of Jesus Christ to make disciples of the entire world, teaching them to obey all the commandments of Christ and to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

7. **Team Ministry**. We rejoice today because God uses ministry teams to spread His work and encourage believers. Paul called team members fellows soldiers, fellow workers, sons, and other terms to describe their work and life for Jesus. Jesus also encouraged ministry teams laboring

at various places in the New Testament world. The ministry team with Paul included Timothy and the ministry team with Philemon included Apphia and Archippus.

Summary for Today

- **Living in freedom in the family of God means that we call people sister, brother, fellow soldiers, and fellow workers.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we remember our brothers and sisters in Christ and the churches where they fellowship.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God when we greet believers and let them know we love them and enjoy hearing from them.**

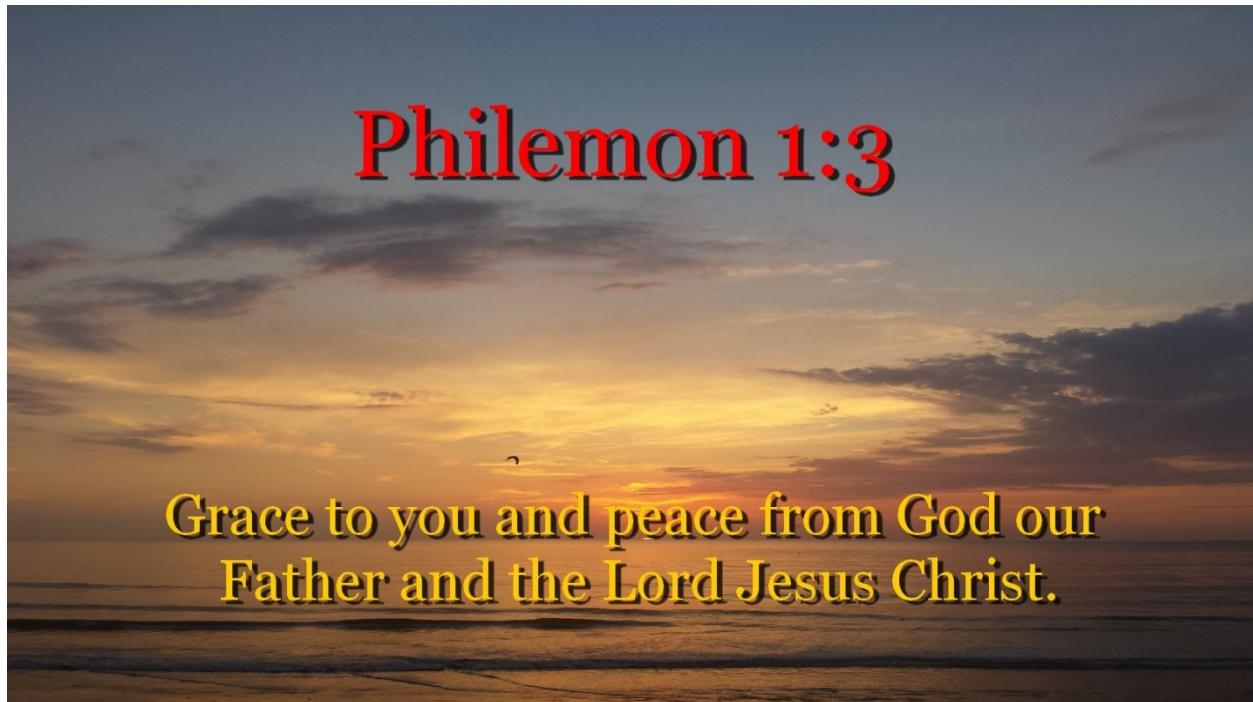
Application for Today

Today, we know sisters in Christ and fellows soldiers who labor for the church of Jesus Christ. Some of those people attend house churches and enjoy brotherly fellowship and love. Will you live in freedom today by showing your love for other believers?

HALLELUJAH!

Day Three

Grace To You Today



I liked to employ young people going to school and looking for a part-time job. I expected them to give me their best effort, but I also understood some of the demands of being a student and also having to work at the same time. One day I went into a room at my office and found a young employee sound asleep at his desk. He had moved two chairs together and laid down on them. I looked quietly and noticed that he did not stir. He usually tried hard at his job and so I understood that some days you just need a break. I gently closed the door and let him continue his sleep. Eventually, he woke up and went back to work. From time to time, I think about that employee and ask myself if I am sleeping or working for God today.

Paul wrote about the grace of God. God never condones sin, or tempts anyone to sin. Grace means that God gives us all kinds of things we do not deserve. Grace also means that we cannot earn the things that God gives freely to us. God pours His grace upon us each day. We deserve the death penalty because we have sinned and continue to sin against God. Because of His grace, He gives us forgiveness through His Son, Jesus Christ. By His grace, He continues to give us joy, peace, and many other things we do not deserve. He also gives us eternal life, which is to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ sent by God to earth. As believers, we live in the grace of God today.

Peace from God

1. **Grace and Peace.** Grace and peace from God go hand in hand. We only have peace and grace from God because of Jesus Christ fulfilling God's plan of salvation for us.

2. **Free Gift.** Paul meant that we have received a free gift, without payment from the recipient. We did not earn the gift. We did not deserve the gift. God loved us and gave us the gift without charge to us.

3. **Greeting.** So, as a greeting, Paul started with a reminder that we live in the grace of God. Grace also reminds us of our continuous benefits freely received from God. All freely bestowed upon us in Jesus by faith alone.

4. **Peace.** Living in freedom means that we have received peace from God. Because we have been justified in Jesus, we have peace with God. We live in that divine peace all day, every day, for eternity.

5. **Names.** Living in freedom means we greet people by name because we remember their names. In this case, Paul named people in the church, and greeted them individually. We can greet believers with words of grace and peace. Jesus repeatedly greeted individuals by name with the greeting of peace.

6. **Freedom, Grace and Peace.** Living in freedom means that all believers should enjoy grace and peace daily. Only God provides that peace, because He has justified us by grace.

7. **The Lord Jesus Christ.** We rejoice today because we share freedom from God each day. We may share that God-given grace and peace with other believers. God alone has freed us by grace and given us peace. Grace and peace to all of you. We live in freedom today!

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means that we greet people with grace and peace.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we address the lack of freedom by means of grace and peace.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God when we communicate with each other about personal relationships.**

Application for Today

Today, we may greet someone with words of grace and peace. We can call them by name and let them know we are thinking about them. Will you live in freedom today by spreading grace and peace?

HALLELUJAH!

2

Learning Freedom in Prayer

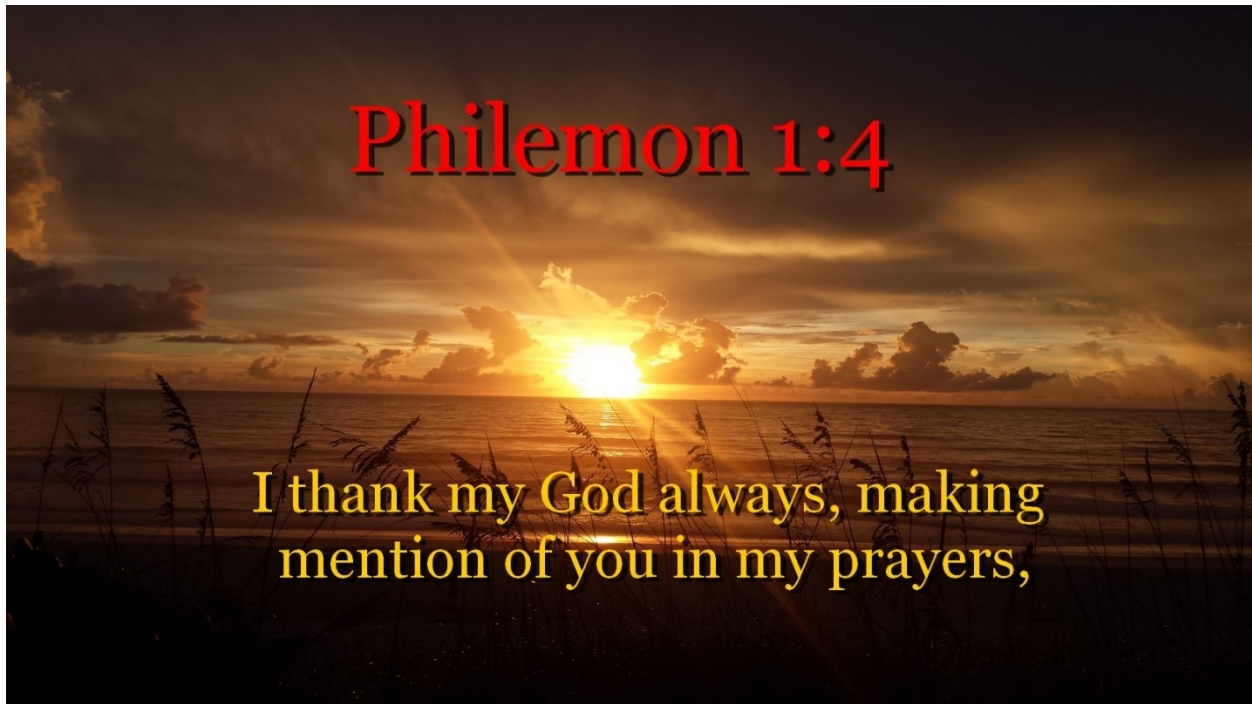
Paul prayed for people all the time. He prayed frequently for the churches he planted and visited, and the saints spread across different countries and regions. He prayed for Philemon and the church in his house.

Paul opened his prayer with thanksgiving to God. He thanked God always for the faith and love of Philemon for God and all the saints. Paul also prayed that Philemon's faith would become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in him for Christ's sake. Paul was alluding to Philemon doing the right thing in Christ for Onesimus, the slave of Philemon.

Paul also mentioned that he had much joy and comfort in Philemon's love, because he refreshed the hearts of saints. Paul had confidence in Christ that Philemon would do the right thing regarding freedom for the slave, but Paul started with thanksgiving for all the things Philemon was already doing for so many saints.

Day Four

I Thank God Today



Paul loved to pray for people. He often told those people that he prayed for them and then he told them the substance of his prayers. In other words, Paul shared the words he prayed with people he prayed for. He wanted them to know that his love for them prompted him to pray for them.

We can learn many things about how to pray for people by reading and heeding the prayers of Paul. He demonstrated his love by letting people know that he prayed for their spiritual welfare. But he usually started his prayers for other people with thanksgiving. Paul thanked God for Philemon. Paul heard of Philemon's love and of his faith. Paul thanked God for the way Philemon refreshed the saints.

In My Prayers

1. **I Thank**. Paul wanted Philemon, Apphia, Archippus and the church to know his prayers, and specifically his prayers for Philemon.

2. **My God**. Paul had a personal spiritual relationship with God. Because that relationship was personal, Paul said “my God.”

3. **Always**. Paul taught that believers should pray without ceasing. Paul practiced what he preached, praying for Philemon and other people. He prayed always.

4. **Making Mention of You**. Paul remembered Philemon and prayed for him. Paul mentioned the name of Philemon before His God. We should name people we pray for before God, and those people know we pray for them by name.

5. **In My Prayers**. We do not know how to pray as we should, but the Holy Spirit intercedes as we pray. He helps us pray. In this case, Paul described many prayers. Our lives should be characterized by frequent prayers where we mention people by name and give thanks for their specific strengths and blessings.

6. **Philemon**. Living in freedom in the family of God means that we pray for believers by name before our God, giving thanks to God for our friends in the family of God.

7. **Church**. We rejoice today because our God wants us to be thankful for the believers we know. God saved them by His grace, and not on the basis of good works which they may have done.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means that we pray for people by name and let them know.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we thank God for our friends in the family of God.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God as we remember the things that our God is doing in the lives of people in the family of God.**

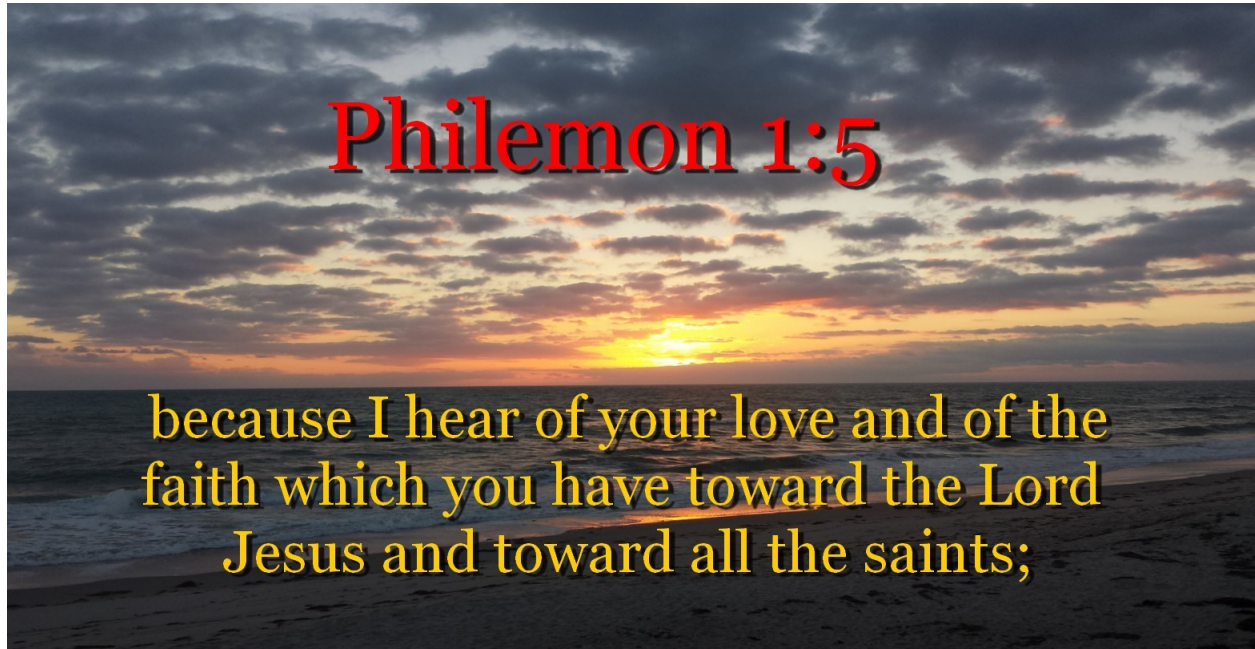
Application for Today

Today, we may pray for people by name and give thanks to God for the people we know in the family of God. Will you live in freedom today by praying for people by name and letting them know you are praying for them?

HALLELUJAH!

Day Five

Your Love Today



We all hear things about other people. Many times, we hear mean things said about others. At other times, we hear really nice things. Often, it depends upon who is talking. Some people have an axe to grind about another person and say mean things.

Paul heard about Philemon. Paul heard that Philemon had love and faith toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints. Please notice that Paul wanted not only Philemon to hear that good report, but Paul also wanted Apphia, Archippus, and the entire church to hear that good report.

Would it not be great if people heard those same things about us? What if people know that you had love and faith toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints? We would truly enjoy such a reputation.

Toward all the Saints

1. **Faith and Love**. Paul commended Philemon for his faith and love.
2. **The Lord Jesus and All the Saints**. His faith and love were directed toward the Lord Jesus and all the saints. Paul made sure everyone knew about Philemon's reputation for faith and love directed toward the Lord Jesus and all the saints.
3. **Prayer**. So, as Paul prayed, Paul remembered the faith and love Philemon displayed. If you ever wondered about having a better prayer life, you may learn from the prayers of Paul.
4. **General and Specific**. Paul prayed both general and specific prayers for people. Here, he not only prays for Philemon, but also lets Philemon know how much he appreciates the love and faith of Philemon.
5. **Pray and Tell**. We should not only pray for our friends, but we should also let everyone know that we thank God for their best spiritual qualities.
6. **Regularly**. Living in freedom means that we may encourage and refresh the hearts of our friends by praying for them regularly and letting them know that we remember them in prayer.
7. **Noticing**. We rejoice today because we notice the faith and hope in our friends in Christ.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means we notice and remember the faith and love our friends in Christ have for the Lord Jesus and all the saints.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as remember our faithful friends as we pray for them.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God as we appreciate the love and faith of the family of God and let them know we thank God for them.**

Application for Today

Today, we need to recognize members of the family of God that display love and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ and towards the family of God. Will you live in freedom today by letting people know that you are praying for them?

HALLELUJAH!

Day Six

Fellowship of Faith Today



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.

As Paul continued his prayer, he prayed for the “fellowship of your faith.” Paul recognized that Jesus created a church, composed of individual believers. God used the word fellowship to describe the relationship between Himself and believers, and believers with believers. Fellowship includes a spiritual union and holy and righteous feelings for others of like precious faith.

In this case, Paul described the fellowship of your faith. The word “your” is singular, referring to Philemon. Although we take faith for granted at times, Paul wrote about faith so that we could understand it better and enjoy it more. Here, Paul prayed that the fellowship of your faith may become more effective.

God intends for our faith not only to grow, but also to become more effective. In other words, God wants our faith to have perfect effect in our lives. Our faith should dominate the decisions we make and the paths we travel in life. Faith rests upon knowledge of the truth, and knowledge of every good thing exists in each believer through Jesus Christ. But we must use our faith to know all the good things in us because of Jesus indwelling us, so that the fellowship of faith with God and all believers becomes more effective.

Every Good Thing

1. **Prayer**. Paul prayed very specific prayers for people. He recognized their physical and spiritual needs and prayed accordingly and effectively.

2. **Fellowship**. As believers, we have fellowship with God and with other believers. Fellowship means that we enjoy a spiritual relationship with other people, based upon God's presence and activity in our lives, and creates sharing of lives and all we that we have and are.

3. **Faith**. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). Therefore, Paul described a fellowship of faith, which means a spiritual sharing of like precious faith that promotes good actions and obedience to Christ.

4. **Effective**. Paul prayed that Philemon's faith would become effective, achieving God's will for Philemon's life.

5. **Knowledge**. Paul prayed further that Philemon's faith would become effective through knowledge. Because faith always involves knowledge of the truth as the target of faith, Paul prayed that the fellowship of faith would become effective through knowledge.

6. **Every Good Thing**. Living in freedom means that Philemon's fellowship of faith may become more effective in the knowledge of every good thing which is in him for Christ's sake.

7. **Christ's Sake**. We rejoice today because we have the knowledge of every good thing which is in us for the sake of Christ. That knowledge

becomes effective with the context of our fellowship of faith. We will see this knowledge and fellowship in action when Paul explained to Philemon how the fellowship of faith changed how masters deal with slaves and all saints.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God allows the fellowship of our faith to become effective in knowledge.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as our knowledge of every good thing which in us for Christ's sake becomes effective.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God as the fellowship of faith affects how we deal with other members of the family of God.**

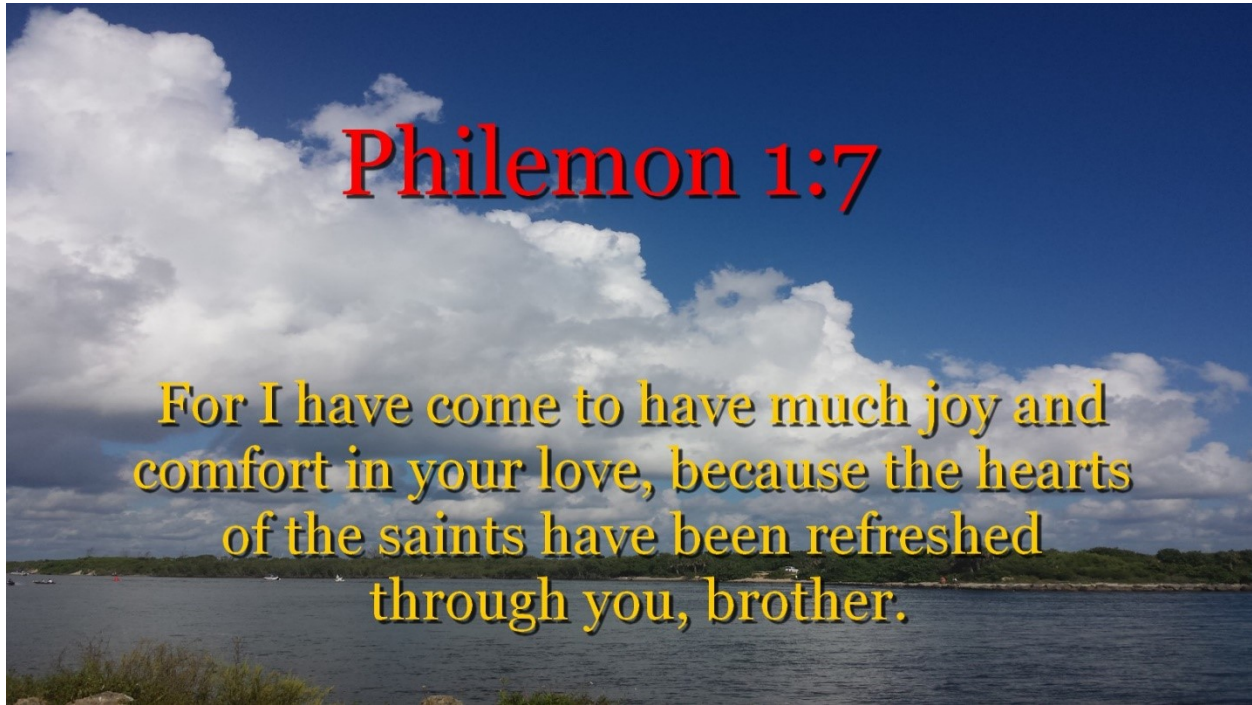
Application for Today

Today, the fellowship of our faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing in us for Christ's sake. Will you live in freedom today through the fellowship of faith?

HALLELUJAH!

Day Seven

Joy and Comfort Today



Do you know someone who refreshes you when you see them? Paul said that Philemon refreshed the intestines of the saints. When Paul heard about Philemon refreshing inward parts, Paul had much joy and comfort.

Some people seem to have a ministry of refreshing hearts. They bring joy and happiness, lifting the spirits of the people they visit. As you refresh the inward parts of people, people like Paul notice. Of course, Jesus notices every thing we do and will reward His servants.

Paul also called Philemon “brother.” As members of the family of God, we should all rejoice together in the ministry of one another. We all have

different spiritual gifts, and different ministries. Paul loved Philemon and called him a brother, emphasizing the close bond between them.

Refreshed

1. **Prisoner**. Why did Paul have joy and comfort as a prisoner of Rome? Because he heard about Philemon refreshing the inward parts (intestines) hearts of the saints.

2. **Joy and Comfort**. Joy and comfort do not depend upon where you live or the chains that bind you. Paul found joy and comfort while under arrest because he focused upon the ministry of Philemon.

3. **Refreshed**. The word "refreshed" occurs only here and in 2 Corinthians 7:13. There, it means that the spirit of Titus was refreshed by the Corinthian church.

4. **Ministry**. In Philemon, notice that the hearts of the saints were refreshed by the ministry of Philemon. He also spread joy and comfort to others.

5. **Friends**. Our friends in Christ can refresh both our hearts and spirits.

6. **Encouragement**. Living in freedom means that we may refresh the hearts of believers by the loving encouragement we show to them in the name of Jesus.

7. **Every Day**. We rejoice today because we know believers who bring refreshment, joy and comfort to the believers around them. We call them brother or sister, because we are all in the family of God.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means we refresh the spirits of other believers.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we cause other believers to have joy and comfort as they see our ministry of refreshing other believers.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God by refreshing souls, spreading joy and comfort, and calling believers brothers and sisters.**

Application for Today

Today, we bring joy and comfort to other believers through the ministry of refreshment. Will you live in freedom today by refreshing your brothers and sisters in Christ?

HALLELUJAH!

3

Learning Freedom with Confidence Today

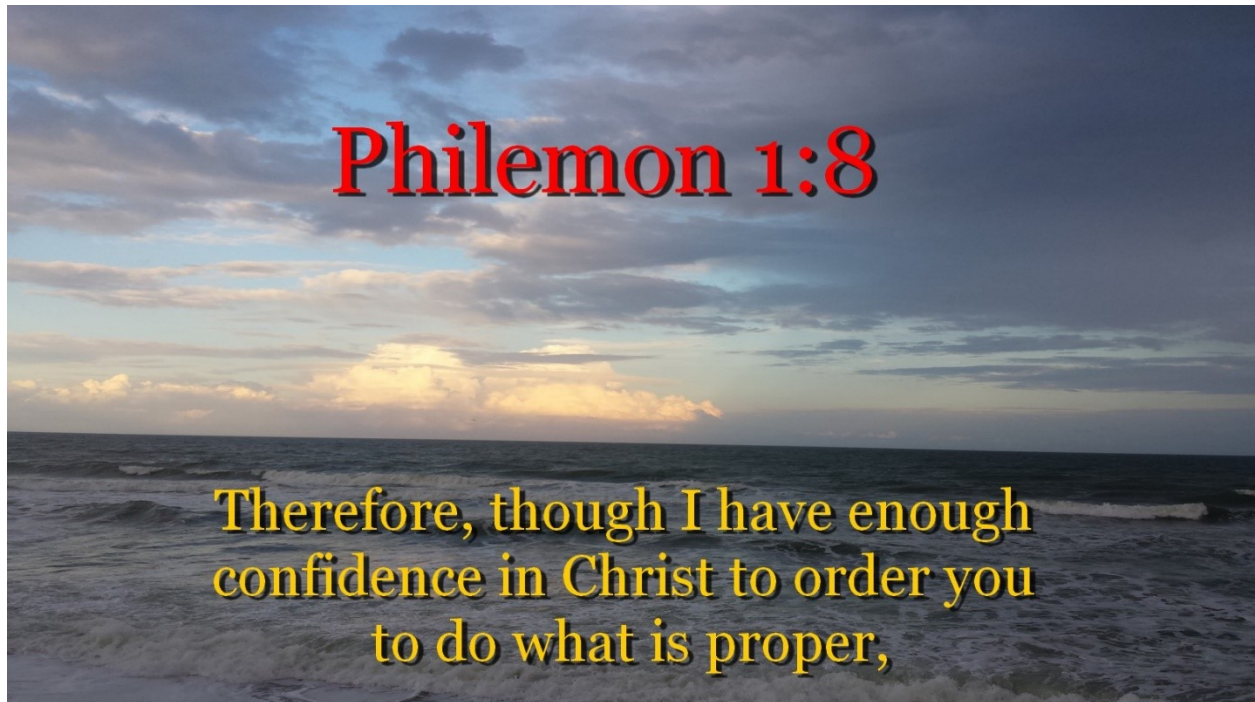
Paul had confidence in Christ regarding Philemon. Notice that Paul here placed his confidence in Christ, not necessarily in Philemon. Just as Paul prayed that Philemon's faith would be effective, Paul began to elaborate his appeal to set Onesimus free for further service to Paul.

Paul, as an apostle of Jesus Christ, said he could order Philemon to do the right thing regarding Onesimus, but Paul chose to appeal to Philemon as a brother in Christ. Paul acted for the sake of love.

Paul also reminded Philemon that he was a prisoner of Christ and an old man. Paul believed in the power of Jesus Christ to move Philemon to obedience in Christ. Paul was not seeking his freedom, but the freedom of Onesimus and, indirectly, the freedom of Philemon.

Day Eight

Confidence Today



Philemon 1:8

**Therefore, though I have enough
confidence in Christ to order you
to do what is proper,**

Confidence makes a big difference. When I was learning to surf as a child, I had great respect for the power of waves. They pushed me under, held me down, and knocked me back. As I grew older and stronger, I found I could paddle out through bigger and bigger surf.

I also found out that I could ride bigger and bigger waves. I never really liked surf that was taller than I was, but learned how to ride bigger waves. I grew up surfing in Florida and then later surfed some in California for a few years. I remember building up my confidence to surf bigger waves in California by riding bigger waves in Florida. Even so, California had consistently bigger surf than Florida.

Confidence came in two forms for surfing. Confidence that I could paddle out through bigger waves, and then confidence that I could perform maneuvers on bigger waves. I did not see much reason in paddling out if I did not intend to ride any waves. I learned how to have more confidence in bigger surf and to barrel ride bigger waves. Time and experience made a big difference.

Order You

1. **Confidence**. Why did Paul have confidence in Christ that Philemon would do the proper thing? Paul had confidence in Christ because Paul had experience in Christ transforming many lives. Paul had also spent time with Philemon and knew about the experience of other people with Philemon.

2. **Order You**. Paul said he had enough confidence in Christ that he could order Philemon to do what is proper. Paul commanded people in Christ to do many things at many different times.

3. **What Is Proper**. Paul alone used the word "proper" in various forms only three times in the New Testament. It described the appropriate thing to do.

4. **Obedience**. Obedience depends upon spiritual power and love. Jesus said that if we love Him, then we keep His commandments.

5. **Audience**. Please recall that Paul wrote the letter to the entire church. So Paul wanted everyone in the church to know about his confidence in Philemon.

6. **Action**. Living in freedom means that we should have a reputation for being obedient to God and doing the will of God. Freedom does not mean disobedience to God.

7. **Though.** We rejoice today because Paul used the word though, meaning that he would not order Philemon, but would ask Philemon. God orders us to do many things, while our friends in Christ ask us to do many things. Because we love Jesus, we rejoice in doing the proper things for our friends when they ask us for help.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means we have confidence in Christ that mature believers will do the proper thing.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we all do the proper thing.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God by joining with other believers in doing the proper thing, without being ordered to do so.**

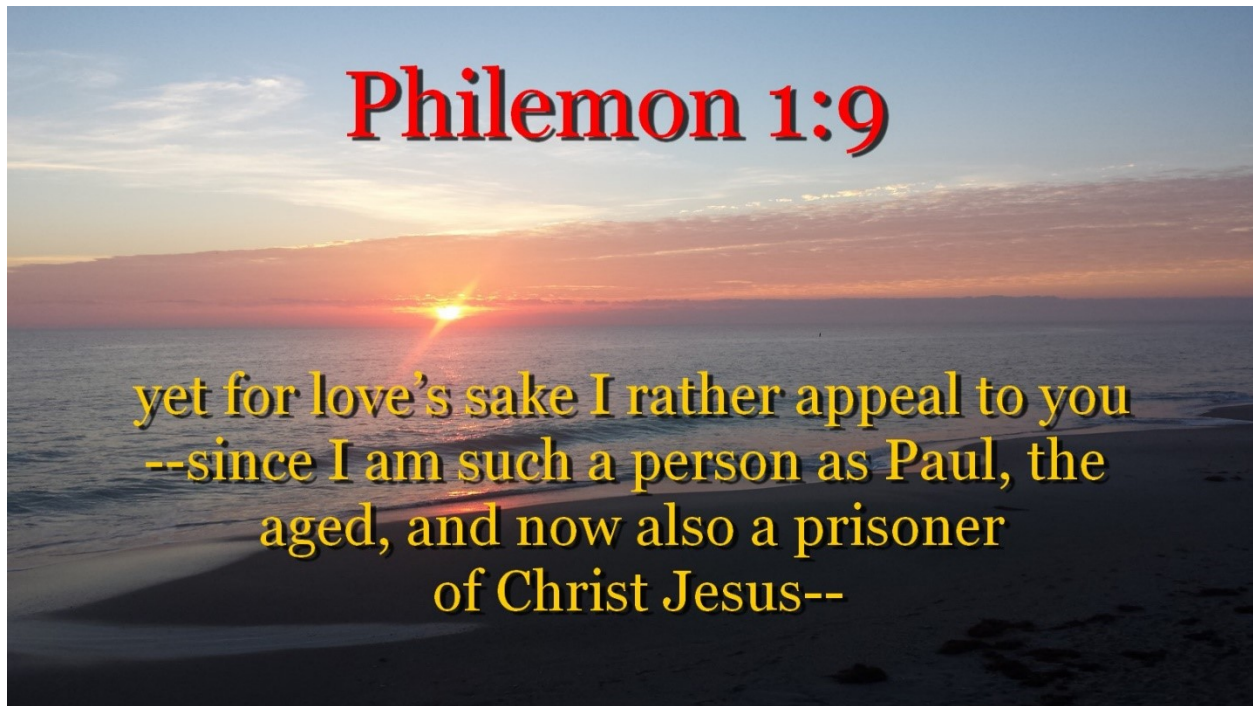
Application for Today

Today, we may have confidence in Christ that other believers will do the proper thing. Will you live in freedom today by doing the proper thing without being commanded to do so?

HALLELUJAH!

Day Nine

Appeal to You Today



Do you have friends in Christ that you can call upon to do the proper thing? As an old man and prisoner of Christ Jesus, Paul called upon his friend Philemon to do the right thing. Paul wrote that he had confidence in Christ that if Paul ordered Philemon to do the right thing, Philemon would do it.

Instead of ordering Philemon to do the right thing, Paul instead appealed to Philemon for the sake of love. Notice that love here means love for Jesus and love for other believers.

Paul also described himself as Paul, the aged. Paul had lived through many good times and bad times. His whole life changed on the Damascus Road when he met Jesus. He changed from a persecutor of Christ to a slave of Christ.

Paul also considered himself the prisoner of Christ Jesus. He was not a prisoner of Rome first, but rather a prisoner of Christ Jesus because Jesus controlled all things. If Paul was arrested for the sake of Christ, then Paul knew that Jesus wanted Paul to proclaim Christ before kings and others in authority. Paul knew that he served Christ as both a slave and a prisoner.

Prisoner of Christ

1. **Yet**. Why did Paul use the word “Yet”? Because small words in the Bible can make a big difference. In this case, Paul used the word “yet” to contrast an order with an appeal. Paul had confidence in Christ to order Philemon to do the right thing, but Paul also knew that Philemon loved Jesus and Paul.

2. **Love’s Sake**. Paul knew that believers keep the commandments of Jesus because they love Jesus. So, Paul counted upon the love of Philemon to do the right thing.

3. **Appeal**. Paul chose not to order Philemon to the proper thing, but to appeal to him as a brother in Christ.

4. **Paul the Aged**. Paul called himself “Paul the aged.” Paul had been to many places and done many things for the sake of Christ. During his travels, he met Philemon, and had been refreshed by Philemon. Paul had also grown old. He called himself “Paul, the aged.” Living in freedom includes living your entire life for the glory of God. Old or young, serving God means living in freedom, even in a prison cell.

5. **Prisoner of Christ**. Jesus told Pilate that he had no authority over Him unless given to Him from above. Likewise, Paul understood that he was a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and the Romans had no authority over him except as they received authority from above. People refer to the Book of Philemon

as one of the Prison Epistles. For Paul, living in freedom includes serving time in prison for the sake of Jesus Christ.

6. **Love Prevails**. Living in freedom means that Paul sought to avoid asserting his authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ; he would much rather appeal to love than command obedience.

7. **The Proper Thing**. We rejoice today because living in freedom means that should appeal to love for Christ's sake.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means we appeal to people for love's sake.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we serve God no matter our personal circumstances or age.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God by listening carefully to our friends in Christ, especially when they appeal to us for help.**

Application for Today

Today, we may appeal to other believers for love's sake. Will you live in freedom today by seeing yourself as the prisoner of Christ?

HALLELUJAH!

4

Learning Freedom with Consent Today

Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ, appealed to Philemon as a friend and spiritual brother. Paul sought the voluntary consent of Philemon regarding the release Onesimus for further ministry to Paul.

Onesimus was formerly useless to Philemon, but he had become useful to Paul. Now Onesimus could become useful to both Paul and Philemon. But Philemon must learn about voluntary freedom in releasing a believer to minister for Jesus Christ.

Paul did not violate Roman law by keeping Onesimus, a runaway slave. Instead, Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon, his master. Paul did not want to do anything with Onesimus without the consent of Philemon. Paul wanted Onesimus to minister to Paul during his imprisonment.

Paul suggested that freedom here involved Onesimus being separated from Philemon for a while, so that Philemon would have Onesimus back forever. Onesimus would no longer be a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother in Christ, both to Paul and especially Philemon.

Paul wanted Philemon to act not under compulsion, but to learn freedom of consent to do the right thing for Onesimus. Such freedom would benefit Philemon, Paul and Onesimus. Plus the entire church and the ministry teams would learn more about freedom and slavery among the saints.

Day Ten

My Child Today



Paul had a child while imprisoned. Of course, he spoke about spiritual birth. Paul said he had “begotten” Onesimus while imprisoned. Immediately Philemon would have known that Onesimus was the slave who had run away from his master, Philemon.

In a moment reading this letter, many things would become clear. Onesimus had run away from Philemon, and met Paul during his imprisonment. Now, Paul sent Onesimus back to his master, with an appeal from Paul to Philemon to send Onesimus back to Paul for further ministry.

Paul also wanted the entire church to know what happened to Onesimus and the appeal Paul was making to Philemon. Paul made the entire church fully aware of Paul’s intentions. Paul did nothing wrong with

Onesimus, because he sent Onesimus back to Philemon. Paul also developed a theology of slavery here. Christian slaves and Christian masters must learn new ways to treat each other in the name of Christ.

Imprisonment

1. **Personal Appeal**. Paul made a personal appeal directly to Philemon. In order to fulfill Paul's appeal, Onesimus had to carry that written appeal back to Philemon, his master. Onesimus must have had courage and faith in Christ to go back to Philemon, because the penalty for a slave running away from his master may be very severe.

2. **To Philemon**. Paul described Philemon in very glowing terms. Paul had confidence in Christ that Philemon would do the proper thing. Paul sought to create a new relationship between Philemon and his slave, Onesimus.

3. **My Child Onesimus**. Onesimus became the child of Paul during Paul's imprisonment. Paul did not stop sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with people he met, but continued his ministry for Christ even while in prison.

4. **I Have Begotten**. Based upon 1 Corinthians 4:15, and the use of the same root term for begotten, God used Paul in prison to bring salvation to Onesimus. In a spiritual sense, Paul became the spiritual father of Onesimus.

5. **In My Imprisonment**. At times in our lives, we encounter difficult circumstances. Paul endured imprisonment. Please recall that Paul considered himself a prisoner of Jesus Christ, implying that he was imprisoned not for doing evil, but for proclaiming Christ and fulfilling his ministry for Christ. Paul was imprisoned for the Gospel of Christ, according to the will of Christ.

6. **Relationships**. Living in freedom meant that Paul developed and maintained important relationships with many other believers. Paul used those relationships for the glory of God.

7. **Service and Slavery**. We rejoice today because we may live in freedom, even when we have grown old and been imprisoned for the Gospel

of Jesus Christ, because we have become His slaves fulfilling our service to Him.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means we share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and bear children for Him.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we appeal to other believers for help with our spiritual children.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God by developing and maintaining spiritual relationships with slaves and masters.**

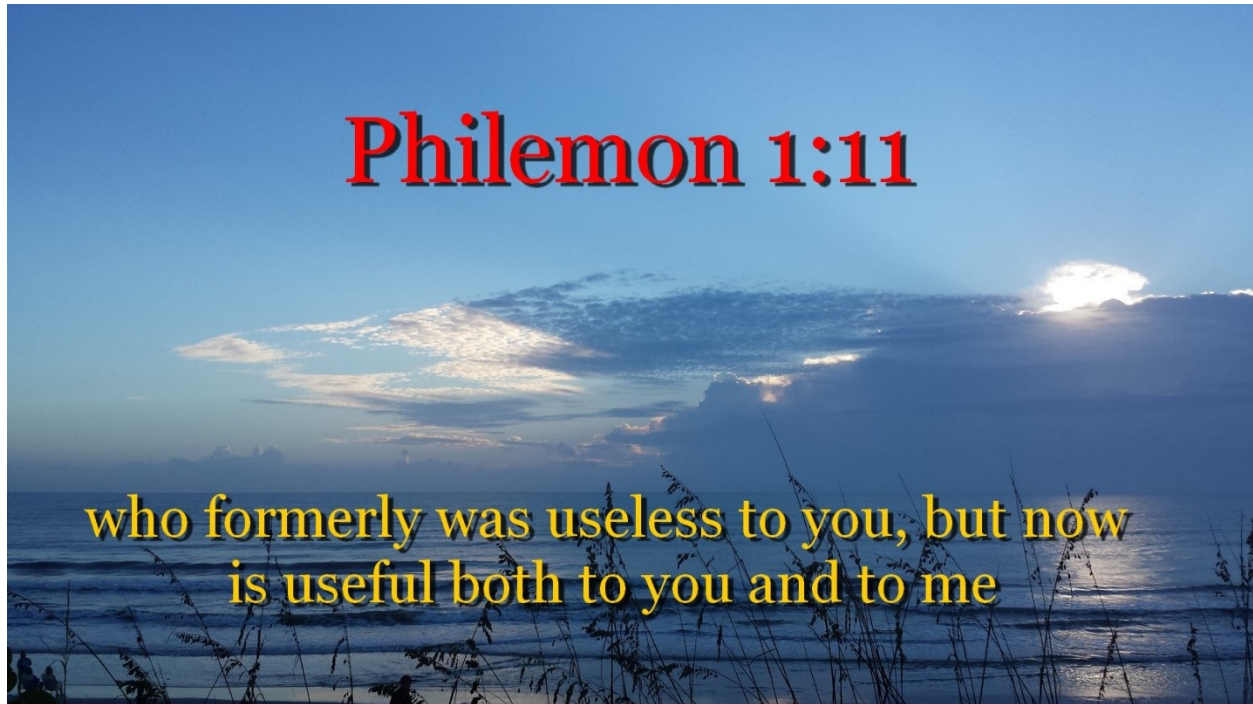
Application for Today

Today, we may appeal to other believers to help us with our spiritual children. Will you live in freedom today by promoting relationships with other believers that glorify God?

HALLELUJAH!

Day Eleven

Useless Today



What do you do with a useless life? Your life is only useless if you have not been born again and received eternal life as a free gift. The moment you receive the free gift of eternal life, you receive one or more spiritual gifts. God intends to use those spiritual gifts in the special ministry He has designed just for you.

Onesimus had a useless life when Paul first knew him. Yet, after Paul had begotten him during imprisonment, Onesimus became useful to Paul and ministered to Paul. Please keep in mind that Onesimus the slave had run away from his master, Philemon. Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon so that Philemon would release Onesimus back into the ministry and care of Paul, the aged.

Paul reminded Philemon that Onesimus was useless to both Paul and Philemon previously. But having become a spiritual child of Paul, now Onesimus had purpose in life and could be useful to Paul in his imprisonment. Paul had confidence in Christ that Philemon would do the proper thing regarding Onesimus.

Useful

1. **Useless**. Why did Paul remind Philemon that formerly Onesimus (the slave) was useless to his master, Philemon? Because he wanted Philemon to understand the spiritual change in Onesimus. Before we were born again, we lived in slavery to sin and were not useful for the Gospel ministry.

2. **Change**. Notice the huge change in Onesimus. Because Paul had begotten Onesimus in Paul's imprisonment, Onesimus had become the spiritual child of Paul.

3. **New Life**. Evidently, Paul led Onesimus to Christ while Paul was in prison. Suddenly, Onesimus became very useful to Paul.

4. **Salvation**. Living in freedom starts with salvation in Jesus Christ. We gain new life by grace through faith.

5. **Useful**. Once saved, we become useful to Jesus for His purposes.

6. **Running**. Living in freedom means that we share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with slaves running from their Master.

7. **New Friends**. We rejoice today because we make new friends in the family of God who find our lives useful in their lives to the glory of God. We thank Jesus for our friends in Christ as we work together in Christ and share living in freedom in Christ.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means we are no longer useless.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we become useful for ministry to other people.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God by encouraging saints to spend time ministering to others.**

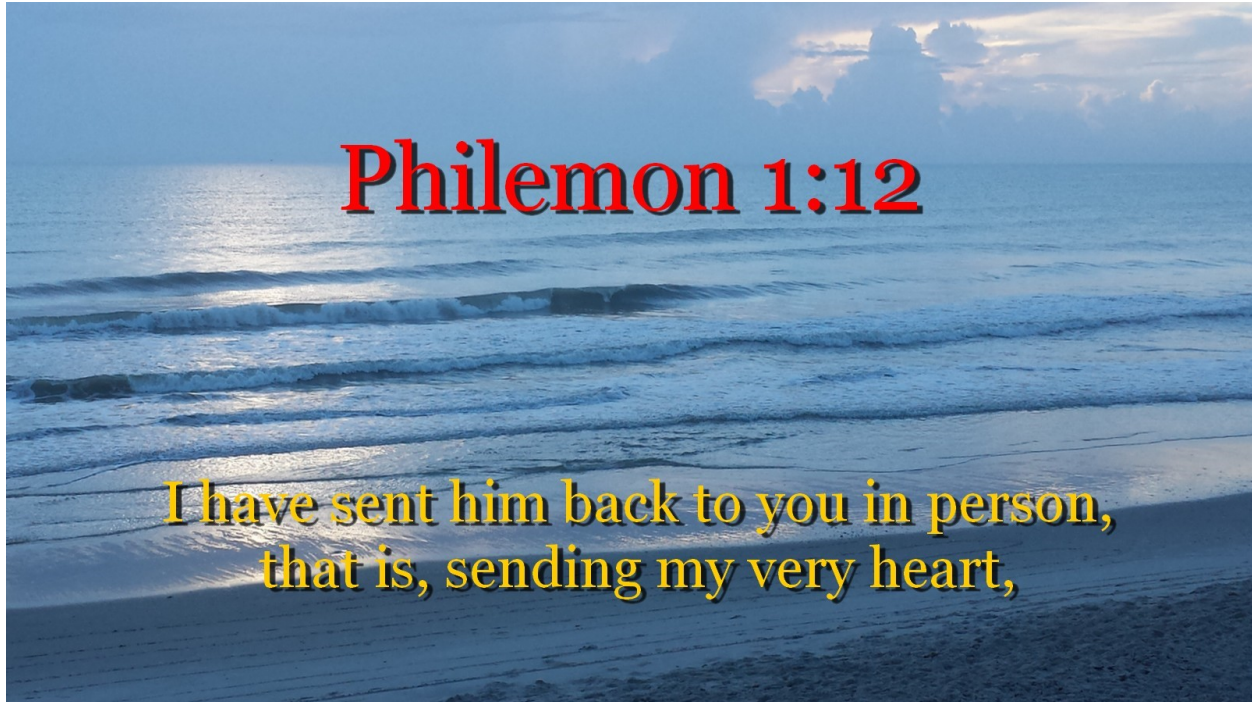
Application for Today

Today, our spiritual gifts make us useful to God for ministry to others. Will you live in freedom today by allowing God to use you in ministering to others?

HALLELUJAH!

Day Twelve

My Very Heart Today



Would you call someone your very heart? Paul called a Onesimus, a runaway slave, his very heart. Paul meant it as a term of great affection. He built deep relationships in Christ with people.

Living in freedom in Christ means that we live with the freedom to make close personal friends. Our hearts are united in Christ. We share the same interest in serving Jesus Christ and enjoying the freedom He brings into our lives.

As Paul wrote his letter to Philemon, Paul used beautiful word pictures to describe his relationships. He also followed the law of slaves imposed by the Roman empire. Paul did not promote the rebellion of all slaves in Christ, but did encourage Christian masters to put their slaves into service for Christ, just as the master was also the slave of Christ. Paul sent Onesimus back to

Philemon, the owner of the slave, to choose the future for Onesimus. Paul had confidence in Christ that Philemon would make the right choice. Paul communicated clearly that Onesimus had become the very heart of Paul.

Sent Him Back

1. **Sent Back**. Paul sent Onesimus in person back to his master Philemon. Notice Onesimus had to make a personal appearance before his master.

2. **Personal Appearance**. At times, we have to appear before people we have wronged, confess our sins, repent, and seek their forgiveness. A letter may not be sufficient.

3. **Reconciliation**. God commands us to live in reconciliation and minister reconciliation through Jesus to the entire world.

4. **Missions of Reconciliation**. At times, our spiritual friends send us on missions of reconciliation. We are wrong, and God can reconcile us to those people we have sinned against. Here, Onesimus apparently ran away from Philemon, and Paul sent Onesimus back to his master.

5. **His Very Heart**. Paul also called Onesimus his very heart. Do you have even one friend you would refer to as "my very heart?"

6. **Heart Level**. Living in freedom means that we open our hearts wide to other believers. We have a spiritual relationship on the heart to heart level.

7. **Freedom for All**. Living in freedom means that we open our hearts wide and let Jesus fill our lives with His love. We then share the love of God with others so that they may live in freedom also.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means people become our very hearts.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we reconcile with people we have wronged.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God by sharing freedom with other saints.**

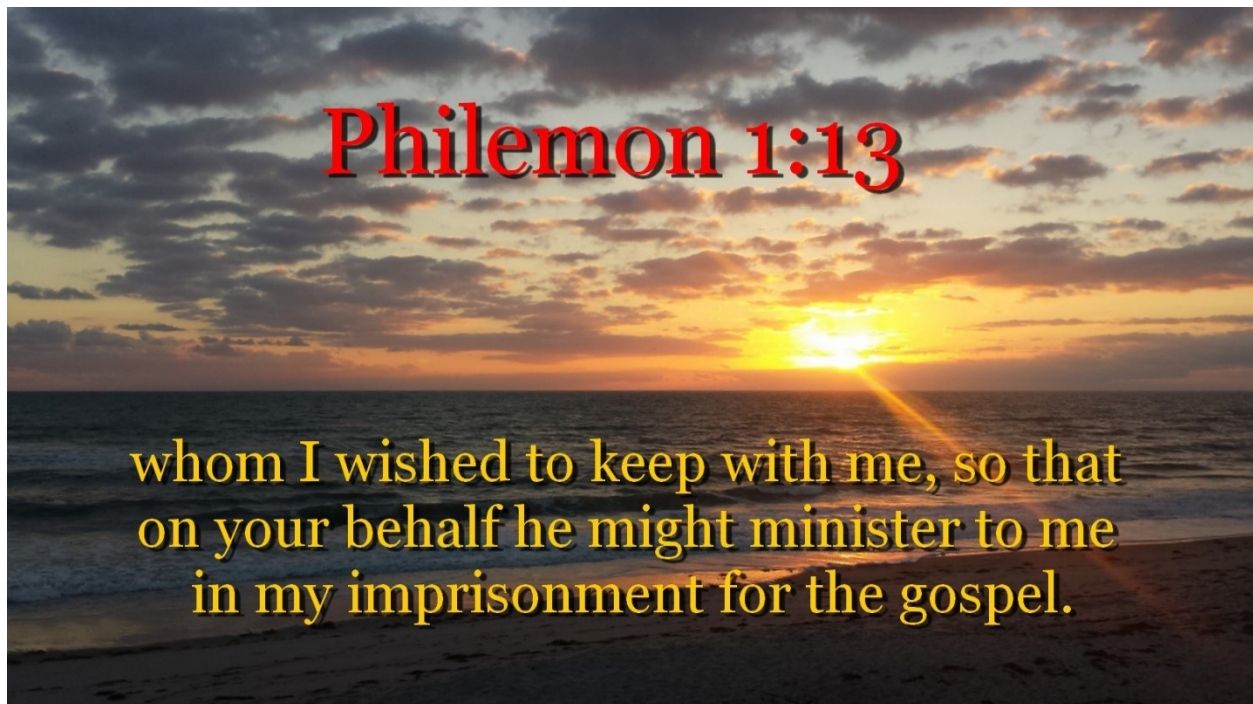
Application for Today

Today, we may open our hearts to others and be reconciled. Will you live in freedom today by sending your heart to someone?

HALLELUJAH!

Day Thirteen

Minister to Me Today



My wife ministers to me every day. She talks with me, takes care of the house, and we hold each other every day. My wife has a Ph.D. in molecular biochemistry and molecular biology. She also proof reads my writing which I truly appreciate. Not many people see her ministry directly, but they benefit from her work as she makes my life far better. She ministers to me on behalf of Jesus Christ.

Paul wanted to keep Onesimus with him. On behalf of Philemon, Onesimus ministered to Paul in his imprisonment for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

God often sends particular people into our lives to help us meet difficult times. They show up at just the right time and serve as ministers of Christ. In this case, Onesimus became the spiritual child of Paul during his imprisonment. Onesimus started his ministry upon his conversion.

Paul wanted Philemon to know that Onesimus ministered on behalf of Philemon. Therefore, Paul wanted Philemon to know that Paul would continue to benefit from the ministry of Onesimus, but only as long as Philemon would allow him to do so. Paul wanted Philemon to understand the decision to return Onesimus to Paul for further ministry.

Imprisonment for the Gospel

1. **Keep**. Why did Paul want to keep Onesimus with him, even though Philemon owned Onesimus? Paul wanted to keep Onesimus because he ministered to Paul.

2. **Prison Ministry**. Paul never stopped making disciples and living in freedom, even when imprisoned.

3. **Imprisonment for the Gospel**. Paul recognized that he was imprisoned for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, not for any evil behavior on his part.

4. **On Your Behalf**. Onesimus ministered to Paul on behalf of his owner, Philemon. Notice how Paul recognized the lawful claim of Philemon upon Onesimus.

5. **Minister to Me**. Paul wanted Philemon to know that Onesimus ministered to him during his imprisonment. We all need ministry from others and we all can minister to others.

6. **Your Ministry**. Living in freedom means that one believer can minister to us on behalf of another believer.

7. **Freedom to Minister**. We rejoice today because some believers who minister to us stay close by.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means some believers minister to other believers in prison.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we support ministry to people in prison.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God by keeping people who minister to us close by.**

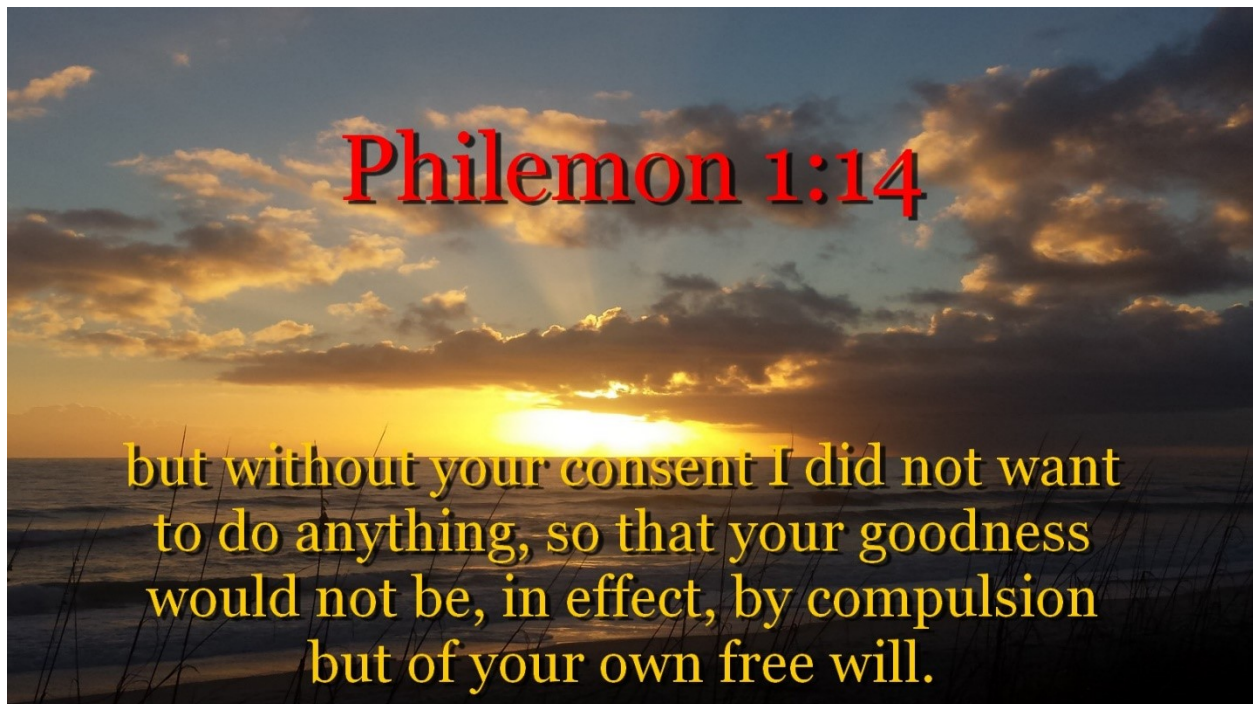
Application for Today

Today, we can minister to believers on behalf of other believers, just like Onesimus ministered to Paul in prison on behalf of Philemon. Will you live in freedom today by ministering to believers who need you to be close by them?

HALLELUJAH!

Day Fourteen

Free Will Today



The law requires each party to have an opportunity to be heard to full traditional notions of substantial justice. In order to be heard on a matter, you must receive notice of the matter at issue. In other words, if you ask the court to do something, you have to give the other side notice of the date and time you want to ask the court to do something. You must send out notice to them so they have an opportunity to tell the judge their side of the story.

In some cases, the law only requires you give the other side notice of the hearing. If the other party does not appear for the hearing, then the court may proceed without that party. But notice of hearing remains critical.

In other cases, particularly probate cases, interested parties may file a written consent to the action before the court. The court sees the written consent and then waives the hearing and signs the order without having a hearing. The court wants to be sure that everyone has a chance to be heard before it decides any matter.

Paul wanted Philemon to consent to Paul's plan for Onesimus. He gave Philemon notice of the plan, and then an opportunity to be heard, and then had confidence in Christ that Philemon would do the right thing.

Your Consent

1. **Paul's Plan**. What plan did Paul have for Philemon and Onesimus? Paul wanted Philemon (the master) to allow Onesimus (the slave) to serve Paul.

2. **Consent**. Paul did not want to do anything without the consent of Philemon as master of the slave.

3. **Mutual Freedom**. Paul loved mutual freedom. He wanted both Philemon and Onesimus to live in mutual freedom as brothers in Christ.

4. **Relationships**. Paul sought the consent of the master before implementing his plan for Onesimus.

5. **Anything**. Paul did not want to do anything without the consent of the master, who was also his friend in Christ.

6. **Compel**. Living in freedom means we do not compel our friends to do anything. We encourage our friends to live in goodness, not compulsion, to freely follow the commands of Christ.

7. **Free Will**. We rejoice today because we encourage one another to live in freedom, exercising our free wills, to live in goodness and obedience to Christ.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means we respect established relationships and seek consent for our plans.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we encourage other believers to live in goodness.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God by encouraging, and not compelling, other believers to follow God's will.**

Application for Today

Today, we may encourage our friends in Christ to live in goodness. Will you live in freedom today by seeking consent, without compulsion, so that people live in goodness of their own free will?

HALLELUJAH!

Day Fifteen

Separated Today



Philemon 1:15

For perhaps he was for this reason
separated from you for a while,
that you would have him
back forever,

Paul wanted Philemon to have Onesimus back forever. Onesimus had run away from Philemon and now they were to be re-united in a whole new way. While imprisoned Paul met Onesimus and he ministered to Paul. Far more importantly, Onesimus received the free gift of salvation from the Lord Jesus Christ. Onesimus was born again.

Paul then explained that Onesimus began a new life in Christ and joined the family of God as a spiritual equal. Philemon may own Onesimus under Roman law, but we are all slaves of Christ because Jesus bought us with His precious blood.

Paul wanted Philemon to understand the new relationship not built upon human slavery, but upon a spiritual family. Philemon, Onesimus, and Paul had all become brothers in the family of God.

Back Forever

1. **For This Reason**. Why did Paul write: "For this reason"? Paul wanted Philemon to comprehend the reason Onesimus was separated from his master, Philemon, for a while. As believers, we often seek some reason for why things happened as they did.

2. **Perhaps**. Paul also used the word "perhaps." That word means possibly, or maybe. It conveys here the idea of one possible explanation.

3. **Final Outcome**. Paul did not express certainty about the separation of Philemon and Onesimus. The final outcome rested in their hands, to a degree. They had to make choices about God and each other.

4. **Reasons**. In our lives, we often seek reasons, but we do not always have certainty about the future. Philemon decided the outcome for his slave Onesimus. In retrospect, Philemon may gain certainty about God's reasons and plans.

5. **Confidence**. Because we serve a sovereign God, we have confidence that things do not happen by chance. We may not always know God's reasons, but we know He plans to benefit our lives as we serve Him.

6. **God's Plans**. Living Godly in the family of God means that Philemon had to make a choice about fitting into God's plans. Would Philemon follow Paul's requests to receive Onesimus and then return Onesimus to Paul? Would Philemon show love, grace and mercy to the slave?

7. **Our Choices**. We rejoice today because God offers us choices as we live our lives. Will we follow God's plan for our lives? Our choices also affect

how others fit into the plans of God, which never change because He knows all things and has all power.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means we make choices each day about the relationships we have with other believers.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we make good choices today that bring long term benefits in the relationships we have with other people.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God by giving up something now that we might have freedom forever.**

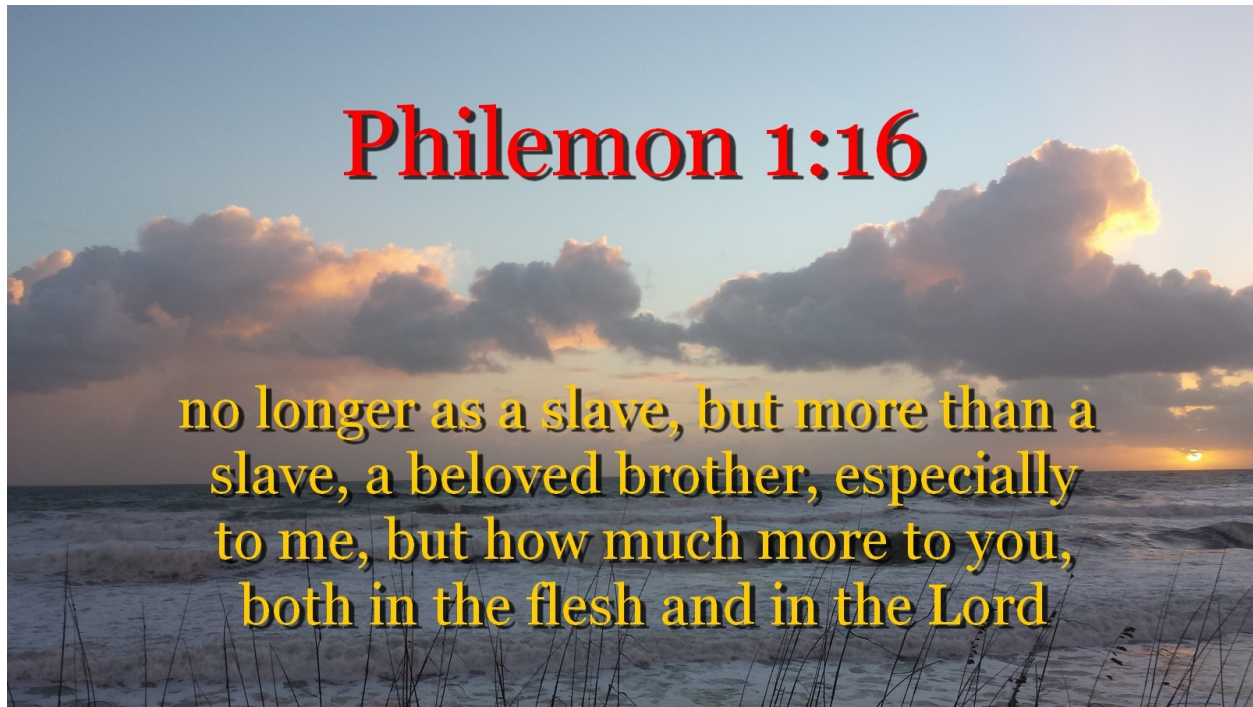
Application for Today

Today, we may promote freedom so that we gain much better relationships with other people. Will you live in freedom today by giving up something that will promote freedom forever?

HALLELUJAH!

Day Sixteen

More than a Slave Today



Do you remember being born again? I recall standing in a church in Melbourne, Florida when I was five years old. The preacher described hell and how to avoid going to hell. I was listening and understood the free gift of eternal life based upon Jesus dying on the cross for me.

For months afterward I was so happy that my sins were forgiven. I knew that I had eternal life by grace through faith. I truly enjoyed my salvation. Since then, I have gained many brothers in Christ.

Paul stressed that Onesimus was no longer a slave, but more than a slave. Because Onesimus was born again, he became a beloved brother to Paul, to whom he ministered in prison. Onesimus also became more than a slave to Philemon, his master in the flesh. He became a beloved brother in Christ.

Beloved Brother

1. **Onesimus the Slave**. Why did Paul refer to Onesimus as a slave? Because Paul wanted to show how Onesimus had become more than a slave after salvation.

2. **More than a Slave**. Paul sent Onesimus back to his master as no longer a slave and more than a slave. Both concepts deserve our attention.

3. **No Longer a Slave**. Paul urged Philemon to receive Onesimus as no longer a slave. Paul received Onesimus as a fellow believer in Christ and an equal member of the family of God.

4. **New Creature**. Paul urged Philemon to receive Onesimus back as more than a slave. Onesimus had become a new creature in Christ. Paul also taught us about being more than a slave. Like Onesimus, we are more than slaves. We live as children of the King of kings and treat each other accordingly.

5. **Beloved Brother**. More than a slave means we are all members equally of God's family. Paul considered Onesimus a beloved brother. We are all brothers and sisters, equals, in Christ.

6. **In the Flesh and in the Lord**. Living in freedom means that we see each other not only as brothers in the flesh, but also brothers in Christ. We must be very careful to live by faith in these new relationships. We all share one Father, one Son, and one Holy Spirit. We have all changed forever in Christ.

7. **Free**. We rejoice today because Paul explained why Philemon should no longer view Onesimus as slave, but far more than a slave, a beloved brother in Christ and free in Christ.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means we are no longer slaves, except slaves to Christ.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we recognize that we are all beloved children of God.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God by receiving people back into our lives as new creatures in Christ.**

Application for Today

Today, we live in freedom, and are no longer slaves to anyone except Christ. Will you live in freedom today by treating other believers as beloved members of the family of God?

HALLELUJAH!

5

Learning Freedom in Partnership

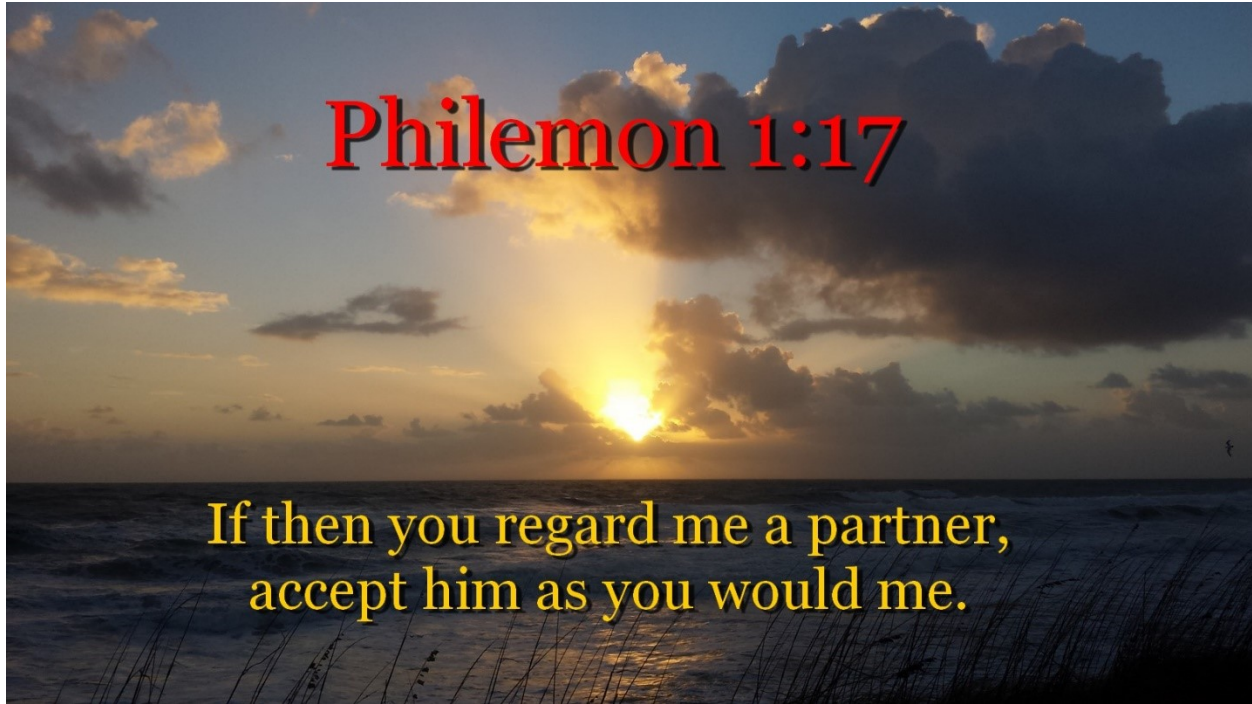
Paul considered himself a partner of Philemon. Paul urged Philemon to accept Onesimus as Philemon accepted Paul. In essence, Paul wanted Philemon to help Onesimus just as he helped Paul, and to show Onesimus the same love and respect that he showed Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ.

Paul wanted Philemon to learn about the freedom of partnership. As partners, neither has the right to command the other. They share all things as partners and seek to pursue their mutual interests. In this case, they had a mutual interest in doing the will of Christ Jesus. Therefore, Paul urged Philemon to accept Onesimus as one more member of the partnership in Christ Jesus.

Partners also share debts equally. So Paul told Philemon to charge any debt of Onesimus owed to Philemon to Paul's account. Paul even signed the letter with his own hand guaranteeing that Paul would cover all debts of Onesimus owed to Philemon. Of course Paul also mentioned to Philemon that he owed even himself to Paul. Paul asked Philemon to let him benefit from Philemon in Christ. Learning freedom in partnership means that each believer is an equal partner in the family of God.

Day Seventeen

A Partner Today



When Saul of Tarsus met Jesus on the road to Damascus, a bright light shone of upon him that he became blind. After entering Damascus, he regained his sight and then was baptized.

Later, Saul went to Jerusalem and the brethren in Jerusalem feared Saul because of his personal history of persecuting the church. Barnabas stood up for Saul and helped the brethren at Jerusalem accept Saul.

Barnabas had an excellent reputation and relationship with the Jerusalem church. So, when Barnabas spoke up for Saul, people listened to him. Barnabas went on to minister with Saul, who later became known as Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ.

Having a spiritual friend who will speak up for you with others can be very helpful. Paul was willing to speak up for Onesimus with Philemon, just as Barnabas had spoken up for him in Jerusalem.

Accept Him as You Would Me

1. **Partner**. Why did Paul address Philemon as a partner? Because Paul had a history of ministry with Philemon.

2. **Relationship**. Notice too that Paul used his relationship with Philemon to benefit the slave Onesimus.

3. **Partners and Slaves**. Partners help slaves to prosper in freedom.

4. **Accept**. Paul also wanted Philemon to "accept" the slave Onesimus. The word "accept" means to receive a person with an attitude of welcome, without passing judgment on his opinions (Romans 14:1-3). We accept other weaker believers as God accepts all believers.

5. **Wronged**. As partners in Christ, we learn to accept people who have wronged us, just like Jesus accepts us after we murdered Him. No grudges.

6. **One Another**. Living in freedom means that I help believers accept one another. God used Paul to bring Philemon and Onesimus back together.

7. **Partiality**. We rejoice today because Jesus intends for us to develop strong friendships with both slaves and masters, and avoid partiality. God shows no partiality to slaves or masters (Ephesians 6:9). The true Master of all believers is in Heaven.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means we are partners who have learned to accept one another.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we build partnerships with other believers.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God by accepting one another, as God accepted us into His family.**

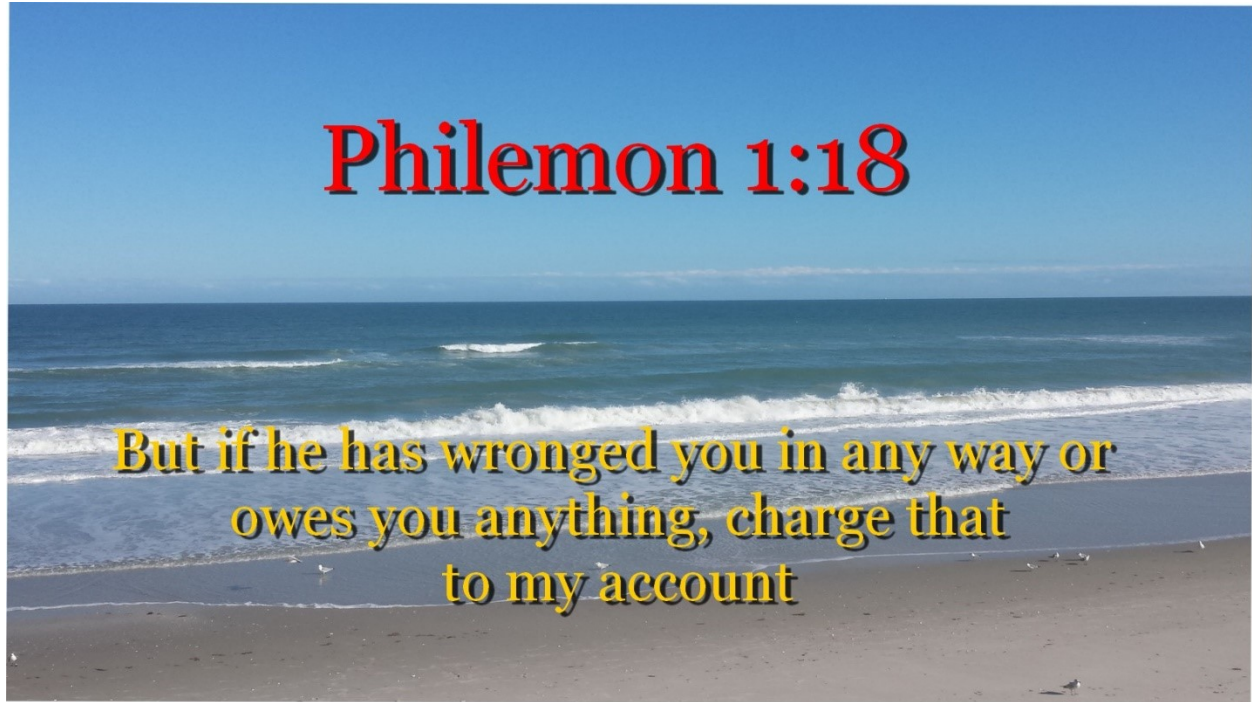
Application for Today

Today, we may learn to accept people and live with them as partners. Will you live in freedom today and build a new partnership?

HALLELUJAH!

Day Eighteen

Charge That to My Account Today



Have you ever been so broke that you needed someone else to pay the bill for you? Paul said that if Onesimus the slave owed his master anything, then the master should charge that debt to the account of Paul. Paul would pay for any debt incurred by Onesimus to his master, Philemon.

Paying the debts of another goes to the foundations of Christianity. Jesus paid the debt we all owed to God for being sinners. We compounded our debt by murdering Jesus, the Son of God. God the Father did not spare even His own Son to pay our debt incurred by our sin.

With God all debts have to be settled one way or another. God's justice and righteousness requires the payment of debts. The grace of God allows

forgiveness of debts through another paying the debt. We could never pay off our debts incurred through sin against God.

Paul wanted to pay off all the debts Onesimus owed to Philemon. Paul did not want Philemon to suffer financial loss by sending Onesimus back to Paul. Love and grace take many forms, but Paul showed just how precious Onesimus had become to Paul. He proved it by offering to pay off the debts of Onesimus.

Paul also wanted to show Philemon how debts work among Christians. He would have more to teach Philemon about paying off debts. Philemon owed Paul a great deal, as we will read later.

Owes You Anything

1. **Money**. Why did Paul put his money where his mouth was, as the old saying goes? Because Paul wanted to cure all debts with Philemon and establish financial freedom for Onesimus.

2. **All Debts**. Paul directed Philemon to add up all the debts of Onesimus the slave and charge all that amount to Paul's account.

3. **My Account**. In effect, Philemon would not suffer financial or other loss because Paul redirected the debt to Paul's account.

4. **Accounts**. Do you have anyone in your life that would do that for you? Has anyone ever paid off all your debts for you? God paid all our debts at great expense—the precious life-blood of His only Son, Jesus Christ.

5. **Relationships**. People often hold a financial grudge related to an unpaid debt. In this case, Paul not only wanted Onesimus to be free spiritually as a brother in Christ, but also to have all debts transferred to Paul's account, freeing Onesimus from that burden.

6. **The Debts of Friends**. Living in freedom means that we tell our friends to charge another's debts to our account.

7. **Jesus**. We rejoice today because Jesus said: charge all the wrongs and debts to My account: I will pay for all of your wrongs, debts, and sins. We owe Jesus everything because He paid everything for us.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means we spread financial freedom among the family of God.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we forgive the debts of other people.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God by remembering that Jesus paid our debts with His life.**

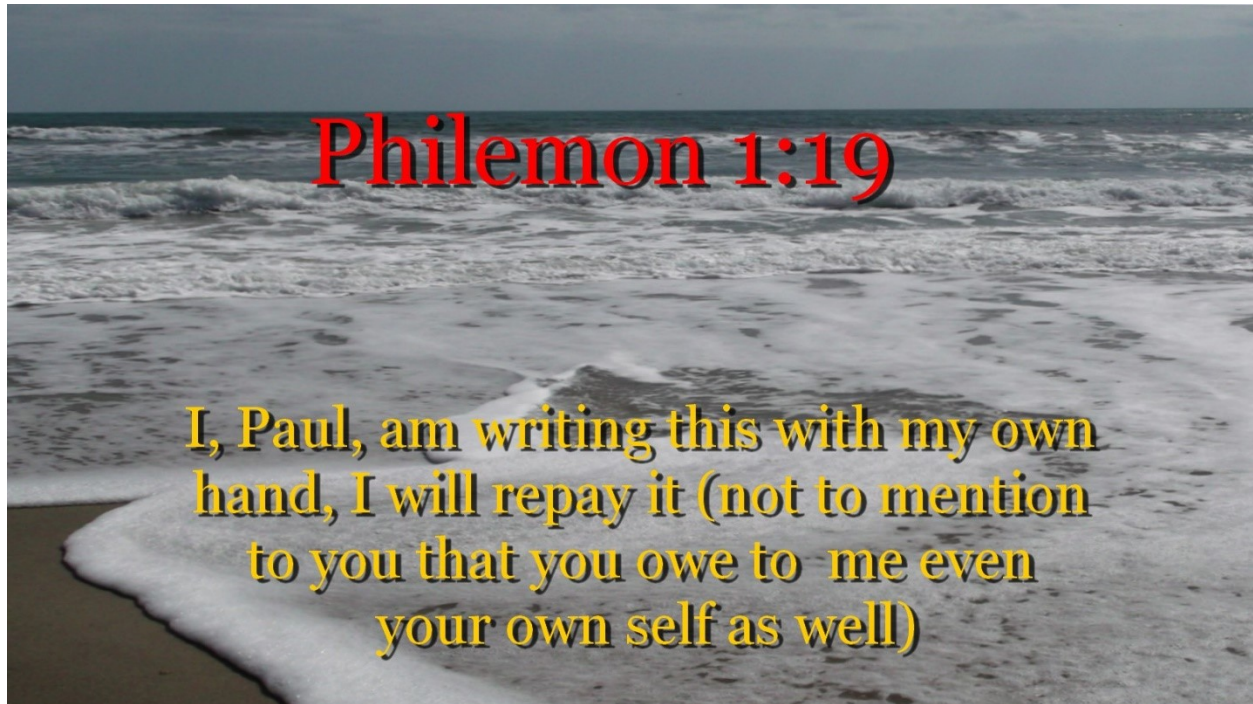
Application for Today

Today, we may encourage freedom from all debts. Will you live in freedom today by promoting financial freedom?

HALLELUJAH!

Day Nineteen

My Own Hand Today



Have you ever offered a personal guarantee of payment? Many new businesses starting out do not have a credit history, but they need to borrow money. When they apply for a loan, many lenders will review the financial records and require a personal guarantee.

When you give a creditor a personal guarantee, you promise to pay the debt of another if they do not pay. In fact, some personal guarantees make the signor personally liable just like the primary borrower. So, upon default in payment, the creditor can sue you on the guarantee, even if the primary creditor shut its doors or left the country.

Paul gave a personal guarantee of payment to Philemon for the debts of Onesimus. Whatever Onesimus owed to Philemon, Paul promised to

cover that debt. Paul mentioned, however, that Philemon owed his own self to Paul.

Therefore, it appears that Paul had shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with Philemon and he had become a believer through Paul's ministry. So, Paul was urging Philemon to be careful when it comes to collecting debts against Onesimus.

Why did Paul mention he wrote with his own hand? Paul's original handwriting emphasized that he himself was promising in writing to pay any debt Onesimus owed to Philemon.

You Owe To Me

1. **Repayment**. Paul personally guaranteed all the debts of Onesimus. He promised to pay Philemon any sum that Onesimus owed.

2. **Hand Written**. Paul emphasized his personal guaranty of the debt by indicating he wrote those words with his own hand.

3. **Appreciation**. Paul sincerely intended to pay any debt owed because he appreciated the ministry of Onesimus.

4. **Your Self**. Paul also gently reminded Philemon of his debt to Paul, saying that he owed his own self to Paul. Why? Apparently Paul shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with Philemon and he was born again through the ministry of Paul.

5. **The Spot**. Paul put Philemon in a very interesting spot. First, Paul promised to pay Philemon. Then, Paul reminded Philemon that he owed himself to Paul.

6. **God Owns Us**. Living Godly in the family of God means that God often reminds us that He bought us with the precious blood of Jesus, God the Son. We belong to God. Therefore, we owe God our very souls and our entire lives. So, we should be careful about enforcing debts against other believers.

7. **Debtors.** We rejoice today because we are all debtors to the blood of Jesus. Praise God for His love, that He bought us so that we live free in Him.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means we forgive the debts others owe to us.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we pay the debts of other people.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God by reminding people not to collect certain debts.**

Application for Today

Today, we may encourage freedom by paying the debt of another believer. Will you live in freedom today by paying the debt owed to another person?

HALLELUJAH!

Day Twenty

Benefit Today



Why did Paul ask for Philemon to refresh his heart in Christ? Because Paul wanted Philemon to send Onesimus back to Paul for ministry, which would refresh the heart of Paul in Christ.

Paul had told Philemon to charge any debt Onesimus owed to Philemon to his account. In effect, Paul wanted Philemon to recognize that Onesimus had become a believer, and now was the brother in Christ of Philemon and Paul. Therefore, Philemon should be careful to promote freedom and ministry by sending Onesimus back to Paul.

Paul also said he wanted to benefit from Philemon. At times in our lives, we all have to ask for favors, so that we benefit from other people. Paul

gently reminded Philemon that he owed his life to Paul, apparently because Paul shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with Philemon. Paul really was asking for Philemon to release Onesimus back to Paul for free, and, at least for the time being, to grant Onesimus freedom from slavery. By doing so, Philemon would refresh in Christ the heart of Paul.

Refresh My Heart

1. **Benefit**. Why did Paul admit that he sought a benefit from Philemon? At first, you may think Paul imposed unfairly upon Philemon by asking Philemon to return Onesimus the slave to Paul.

2. **Seek**. At times the best thing we can do is to seek benefits in the Lord from fellow believers.

3. **Refresh**. When is the last time you asked another believer to refresh your heart in Christ? When is the last time anyone asked you to refresh his heart in Christ?

4. **Benefit**. We refresh the hearts of other believers when we lay aside legal rights and provide benefits to other believers at our expense.

5. **The Lord**. Paul does not seek purely personal benefits, but rather benefits in the Lord. Paul means that Philemon can act to glorify God by helping Paul.

6. **Bestowing**. Living in freedom means that we refresh our friends in Christ by bestowing benefits in Christ upon them. We hope we can refresh someone every day.

7. **Jesus**. We rejoice today because Jesus our Lord refreshes us forever, especially through our friends in Christ.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means we seek benefits in the Lord from other believers.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we refresh the hearts in Christ with benefits.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God by giving and receiving benefits in Christ from friends in Christ.**

Application for Today

Today, we may encourage freedom by seeking benefits in Christ from other believers. Will you live in freedom today by bestowing a benefit in Christ upon another believer?

HALLELUJAH!

6

Learning Freedom in Obedience Today

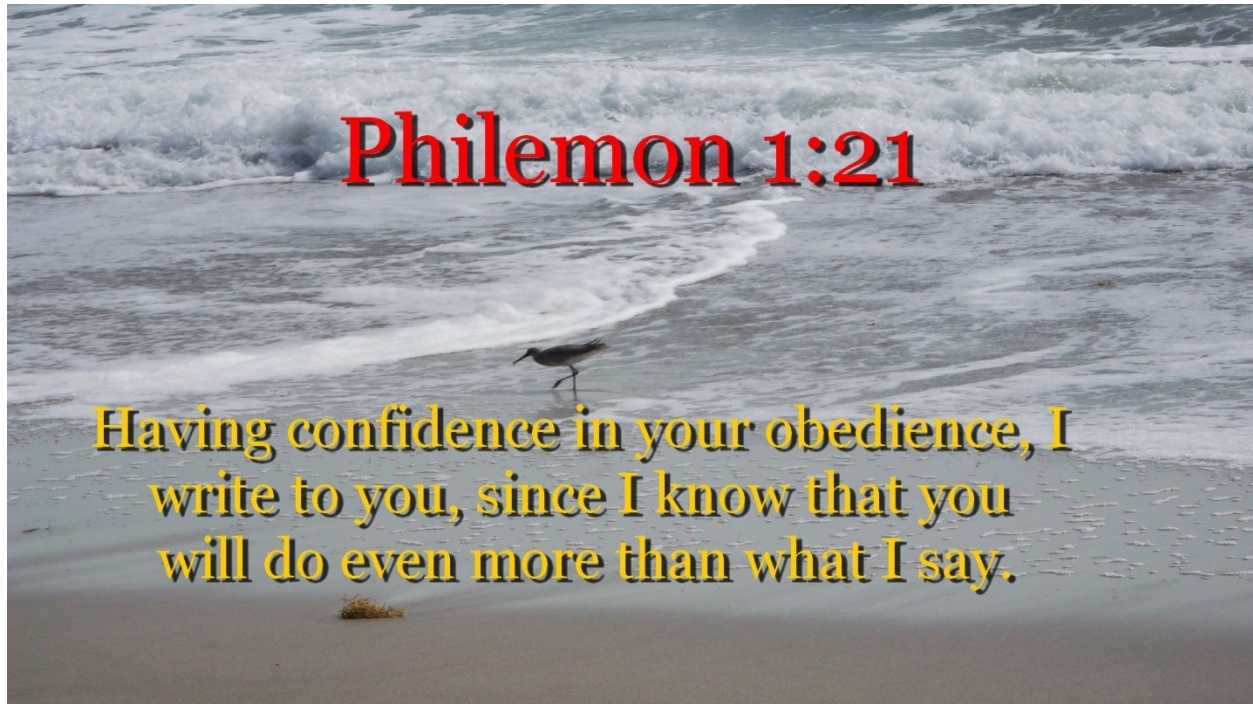
Paul also spoke about confidence in the obedience of Philemon. Paul expected that Philemon would not only do what Paul asked, but even more than what Paul asked.

Paul also expressed his confidence in Philemon by asking him to prepare a lodging for him. Paul intended to visit Philemon and needed a place to stay. Spending time in the home of Philemon would be a great way to build their fellowship with each other and with Christ.

Learning freedom in obedience means that we help other believers and do more than they ask of us. If obedience would require us to go one mile, then we go two miles as added service to Jesus Christ. We also learn to spend time with saints during times of deep decisions, so that freedom may abound for all.

Day Twenty One

Do Even More Today



How many people have confidence in your obedience to Christ? Paul emphasized his confidence in Philemon, based upon what he knew and heard about Philemon. This confidence reflects a life of obedience to Christ. In our lives, do we build confidence in other people that we live in obedience to Christ? If not, what can we do to change things?

By the power of God in our lives, God can change everything, not just some things. When we start to believe that Jesus will remove every bad thing from our lives by faith alone, then God starts to improve our spiritual lives. Jesus can remove every evil thing from our lives.

We may have grown accustomed to some evil habits in our lives. We kind of overlook them and think they do not really matter. The more we do them, the more we become o.k. with them. Our evil habits influence the confidence that other people have in us. Jesus promised to cleanse us from all sins at the moment of saving faith. He forgave all our sins--past, present and future. But the process of becoming holy in our conduct continues on to Christian maturity. In our lives, we build confidence by God removing evil habits by faith and also by doing above and beyond what people expect us to do for them. Paul said he was confident that Philemon would do more than what Paul asked of him regarding Onesimus.

Confidence in Your Obedience

1. **Confidence**. Why did Paul express great confidence in the obedience of Philemon? Because he knew about the faithful work and love of Philemon for God and other believers.

2. **Appeal**. Paul had appealed to Philemon for Philemon to send Onesimus the slave back to Paul, after receiving Onesimus as a brother in Christ.

3. **Freedom**. As our obedience to God grows, so does our freedom.

4. **More**. God loves for us to do more than our friends seek from us.

5. **Seek**. Paul has confidence that Philemon will actually do more than Paul asked.

6. **Reputation**. Living in freedom means that we have a reputation with our friends in Christ for doing more than they ask of us.

7. **Count Upon**. We rejoice today because Jesus freed us to live in obedience to Him, building friendships where we count upon our friends in Christ to do more than we ask. Jesus Himself does far beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means we do more than people seek from us.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we build a reputation of confidence that we are obedient to Christ.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God by letting believers know of our confidence in them to do more than we ask of them.**

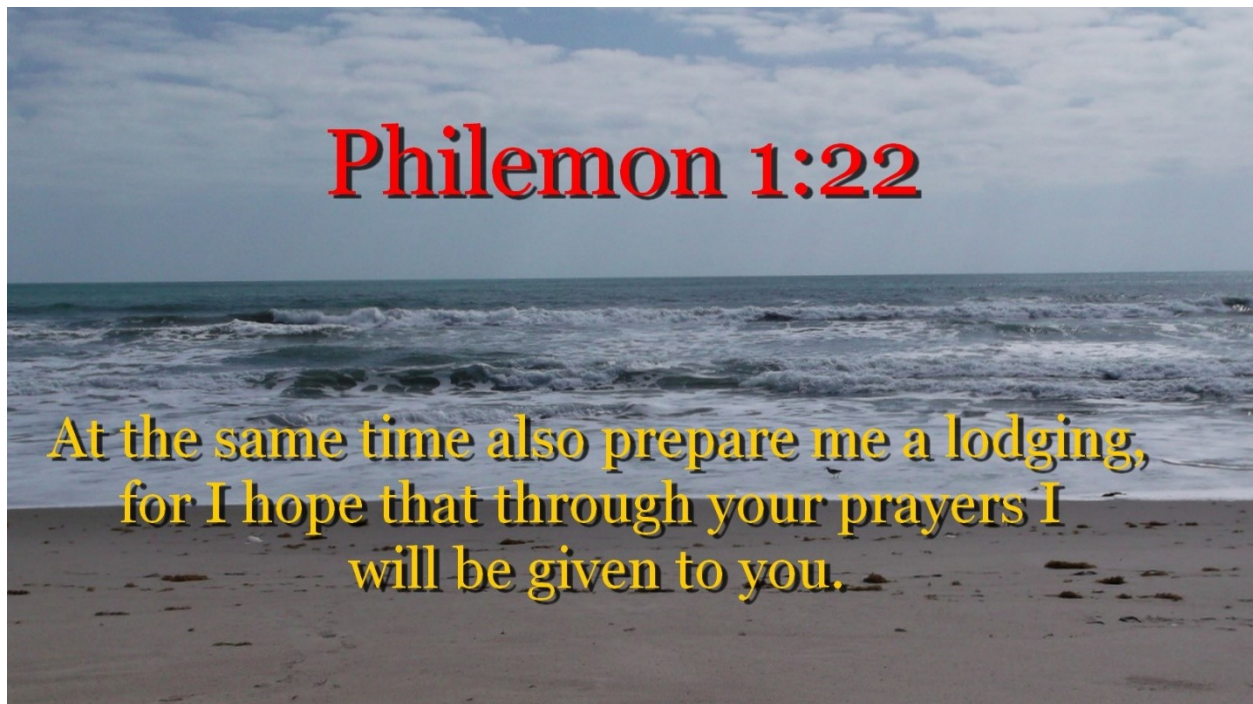
Application for Today

Today, we may encourage freedom by doing more for Christ than people ask of us. Will you live in freedom today by doing more for Christ than believers ask from you?

HALLELUJAH!

Day Twenty Two

Lodging Today



Philemon 1:22

**At the same time also prepare me a lodging,
for I hope that through your prayers I
will be given to you.**

Why was Paul confident in the obedience of Philemon that he would do more than Paul asked of him? Because Paul was sure that Philemon would send Onesimus back to Paul. In fact, Paul was so confident that he even asked Philemon to prepare a lodging for Paul.

Paul travelled frequently and stayed in various cities for weeks, months and years. He traveled with a ministry team and often stayed with believers he had met in his travels. Many of those believers came to Christ through the ministry of Paul.

When Paul the apostle asked for things, he knew that people would obey his commands. With Philemon, Paul took the gentle route, asking him as a brother in Christ to send Onesimus back to Paul for continued service. Paul also intended that Philemon recognize Onesimus as his brother in Christ, and that Onesimus should live in freedom. In essence, Paul was

promoting a theology of freedom for Christian slaves owned by Christian masters.

Through Your Prayers

1. **Lodging**. Paul requested lodging from Philemon. Paul expected that Philemon would still be glad to see him, even with everything Paul had written in the letter.

2. **Homes**. Paul expected to spend time in the homes of other believers, as the opportunity arose.

3. **Hope**. Paul also had hope that he would see Philemon face to face and spend time at his home.

4. **Shared Hope**. Paul shared his hope with other people to build their faith and confidence in Christ.

5. **Prayers**. Paul counted upon the prayers of Philemon. Paul hoped he would be released from prison so that he could visit Philemon in person. Paul had hope for freedom, even while imprisoned.

6. **Never Give Up**. Living in freedom means we never give up on hope and sustain our confidence in our friends. We count upon their prayers to bring us together.

7. **Given**. We rejoice today because the prayers of other believers allow us to be given to them. Paul looked upon his visit with Philemon to be a gift. We recognize our visits as friends in Christ as gifts from God.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means we ask Christian friends to prepare lodging for us.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we share our hope that through prayers we may spend time together.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God by viewing times we share with other believers as gifts from God.**

Application for Today

Today, we may encourage freedom by seeking to spend time with our friends in Christ and ask them to pray that we may be given to them. Will you live in freedom today by spending more time with believing friends?

HALLELUJAH!

7

Learning Freedom in Teams Today

Paul labored as part of ministry team. That team included Timothy, Epaphras, Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke. It also included Philemon. Learning to live in freedom in teams means that freedom is not just personal, but also for teams.

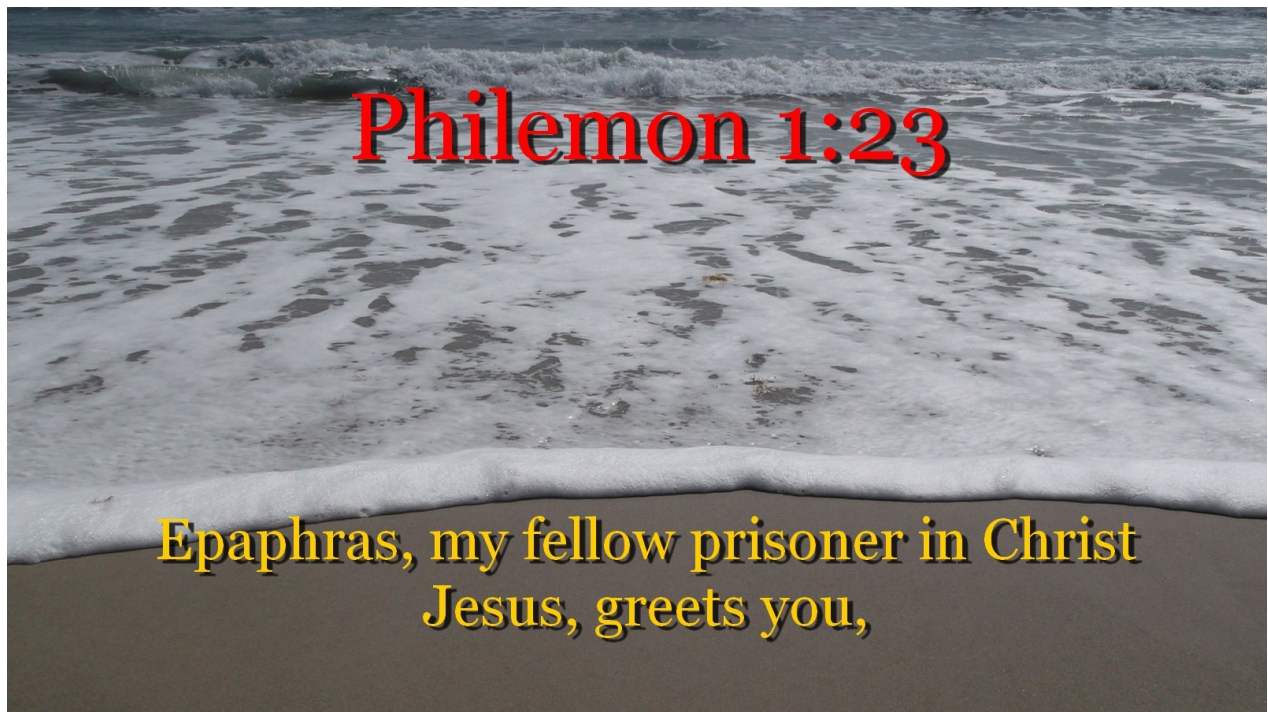
Ministry teams allow each believer to use their spiritual gifts in union with other believers with different spiritual gifts producing a variety of ministries and a variety of effects. The ministry team does not have one ministry, but a variety of ministries. Only when individual believers become obedient to the will of God, and then do more than obedience asks of them, do they personally live in freedom.

On the team level, each team member has to live in freedom for the entire team to reach full freedom. Freedom for the team means that each team member promotes freedom so that each saint can use their spiritual gifts to the full measure of faith allotted to them. Only when all saints join together in mutual freedom can the church reach its full stature in Christ and live in the freedom only God provides.

HALLELUJAH!

Day Twenty Three

My Fellow Prisoner Today



Why did Paul send personal greetings to Philemon from various members of his ministry team in Rome? Because they all shared a common bond in Jesus Christ and labored for Him. Each member of the ministry team had various relationships with different churches.

Paul mentioned Epaphras first and described him as “my fellow prisoner in Christ.” In Paul’s epistle to the Colossians, Epaphras was numbered with the church at Colossae and was called a bond-slave of Jesus Christ. Epaphras also informed Paul and his ministry team about the conditions at Colossae. Although Epaphras had left his home assembly, he

still kept them in his prayers and shared their love for Jesus Christ. He served as a messenger to Paul of the condition of the Colossians. Onesimus was also from Colossae (Colossians 4:9). Therefore, it seems that Philemon, who owned Onesimus, resided in Colossae.

Epaphras was traveling with Paul and gave his greetings to his home church at Colossae. He always labored earnestly for the Colossians in his prayers, seeking that they may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. Paul knew he had a deep concern for the Colossians and the believers at Laodicea and Hierapolis (Colossians 4:12-13). Just as Paul wrote his epistle to Philemon to be read by the entire church, so also Paul wanted his entire ministry team to know that he was writing to Philemon about Onesimus.

Epaphras

1. **My Fellow Prisoner in Christ Jesus**. How did Paul think of Epaphras? Paul thought of him as a fellow prisoner of Christ Jesus.

2. **Ministry Team**. Traveling with Paul on the ministry team certainly had many benefits, but it also had drawbacks. Epaphras also seems to be under arrest with Paul, being described as a fellow prisoner of Jesus Christ.

3. **Colossian**. Epaphras had a reputation with Paul of praying earnestly for the assembly at Colossae.

4. **Philemon**. Apparently Philemon resided in Colossae (Colossians 4:12-13). So, Paul wanted the entire Colossian assembly to know about Paul's message about how to deal with Onesimus.

5. **Selfless**. Paul never lost focus on ministry while imprisoned. He never allowed his own legal peril to eclipse his concern for the churches and the ministry team.

6. **Greets**. Living in freedom means that while absent in person, Epaphras was not absent in spirit. Paul wanted Philemon and the church to know that Epaphras passed along his greetings, even while a prisoner of Christ Jesus.

7. **Teams**. We rejoice today because we all labor together for Christ Jesus and work on specific ministry teams, knit together in love and serving Christ Jesus from a glad heart.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means that we continue to work together in ministry teams, even when imprisoned together.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we greet other people so that they know we still love them in Christ.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God by sending our greetings to people we may not have seen for a long time, but we want them to know about living in freedom as a prisoner of Christ Jesus.**

Application for Today

Today, we may encourage freedom by sending greetings in the name of Christ Jesus. Will you live in freedom today by greeting someone who has not heard from you in a while and may be living as a prisoner of Christ Jesus?

HALLELUJAH!

Day Twenty Four

My Fellow Workers Today



Philemon 1:24

**as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas,
Luke, my fellow workers.**

Why did Paul labor in prison, sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ and ministering to his fellow workers? Because he was a prisoner of Jesus and doing the will of Jesus Christ by being in prison. While in prison, the ministry team surrounding Paul included all kinds of people. Paul sent members of the team to various destinations to appoint elders, strengthen believers, deliver reports, and encourage the saints with a special visit.

As Paul closed his epistle to Philemon, he mentioned four more men by name: Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke. One was a cousin of Barnabas, the saint who helped Paul in many ways. One was a fellow prisoner with Paul. One was a person who would later forsake Paul. One was beloved Physician, who wrote two large books in the New Testament.

Paul ministered with very important people. They were described as fellow workers. Paul labored with them in sharing the Gospel. The members of the team came from various cities spread across the Mediterranean region. Many of them had Greek names. Paul was appointed a minister and teacher to the Gentiles, although he also spoke in many synagogues.

Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke

1. **The Ministry Team**. Why did Paul name four men in his greeting to Philemon? Because those four men labored with Paul in sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul named Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke.

2. **Mark**. Mark apparently was the cousin of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10). John was also called Mark (Acts 12:12; Acts 15:37). Mark was the helper of Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:5). At Perga, John left Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey. As Paul and Barnabas contemplated their second missionary journey, Paul refused to take John with them because John had deserted them and had not gone to the work, but instead left them and went to Jerusalem (Acts 15:37-38). So, a sharp disagreement arose between Paul and Barnabas. Paul took Silas and left. Barnabas took John. When sent to Rome, Paul was united again with John, and calls him a fellow worker. John had joined Paul in the work (Philemon 1:24). Likewise, Paul wrote Timothy that Mark (John) had become useful for service (2 Timothy 4:11). Paul had forgiven Mark and they labored together. Eventually, Mark did go to the work with Paul.

3. **Aristarchus**. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was a travelling companion with Paul (Acts 19:29). In Ephesus, he was dragged into the assembly with Paul, and the city rioted. He spent time with Paul sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the ministry team met in Troas (Acts 20:4). Aristarchus travelled with Paul on the third missionary journey (Acts 19:29). At Ephesus, Aristarchus and Gaius were dragged by a mob into the

theater. After the town clerk calmed the roaring crowd, they were released (Acts 19:35-41). Aristarchus also sailed with Paul the prisoner to Rome, and apparently suffered shipwreck with Paul and Luke (Acts 27:2). Paul and Aristarchus were imprisoned together in Rome and sent greetings with Paul to the Colossians (Colossians 4:10).

4. **Demas**. In Paul's epistle to the Colossians, he mentioned Demas only by name. In 2 Timothy 4:10, Paul wrote that Demas had forsaken him. Paul indicated that Demas loved this present world, deserted Paul, and gone to Thessalonica.

5. **Luke**. Luke wrote the New Testament books of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. Luke wrote his gospel from a chronological point of view, having investigated everything very carefully (Luke 1:3). Eyewitnesses and servants of the word handed down material concerning Jesus directly to Luke (Luke 1:2). He wanted everyone to know the exact truth (Luke 1:4). He composed his Gospel to include all that Jesus "began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen" (Acts 1:1-2). Luke then wrote the Acts of the Apostles, continuing on from his Gospel. In Acts, he wrote in a lofty style, with wide vocabulary, well-suited to details and chronological revelations. Luke wrote some of Acts in the first person, "we," (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18 and 27:1-28:16), indicating he had first-hand knowledge of the journeys of Paul. Paul called Luke the "beloved physician" (Colossians 4:14). In 2 Timothy 4:11 only Luke was still with Paul.

6. **Friends in Freedom**. Living in freedom means we work with friends in Christ, and forgive friends who desert us.

7. **Thick and Thin Friends**. We rejoice today over friends who stay with us through thick and thin times. Not only do they stay with us, but they also continue to work on the ministry team during the toughest of times.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means that God places all kinds of people from all kinds of different places upon the same ministry team.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we allow slaves to become free and join ministry teams.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God by supporting ministry teams.**

Application for Today

Today, we may hear from other believers and meet new ones. Will you live in freedom today by remembering the people you once shared a ministry together?

HALLELUJAH!

Day Twenty Five

Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ Today



Why does Paul close his epistle with words of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and your spirit? Because Paul knew that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ works in your spirit. We not only have a soul, but we also have a spirit. The grace of God encourages and lifts our spirit.

Paul never lost sight of the power of grace. As Paul labored in prison for Christ Jesus, he knew the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and depended upon it. Consider a prisoner who believed that he was in prison by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many people would be very unhappy they were in prison and feel abandoned by God.

In this case, Paul recognized the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in working with his spirit, even while in prison, and sent that greeting on to Philemon, Apphia, Archippus and the entire church in the house of

Philemon. What a blessing to hear saints greet us with wishes that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Be with Your Spirit

1. **The Lord Jesus Christ**. Why did Paul focus upon the Lord Jesus Christ in closing his letter to Philemon? Because the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ sustained him every day of his life.

2. **Grace**. Grace means we receive a free gift from God which we could never earn or pay for. In this case, the entire epistle to Philemon involves the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace enables freedom in Christ, because we were all prisoners to sin before God rescued us by His grace from the domain of darkness.

3. **Daily Free Gifts**. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ includes the daily free gifts He bestows in our lives every day, in so many ways.

4. **Lord and Messiah**. Notice too that Paul linked this grace of the Lord Jesus Christ to ending slavery for Onesimus and Philemon. The titles of Lord and Messiah (Christ) emphasize the Lordship and Messianic qualities inherent in Jesus. Here, Jesus brings these blessings of grace into our daily lives.

5. **With Your Spirit**. God revealed that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ works with our spirit. That grace changes our spirit and lifts our spirits, enhancing fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ and the family of God.

6. **Freedom and Grace**. Grace provides freedom to lay down legal rights to slaves so that we may all be equal slaves of Christ, following the will of the Lord Jesus Christ, and not asserting human legal rights that interfere with the ministries of all members of the family of God.

7. **Slavery**. We rejoice today because we live in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, which means we are His slaves, ready to follow His will, and live in true freedom by the grace of the God.

Summary for Today

- **Living in Freedom in the family of God means that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is with our spirit each day.**
- **We increase freedom in the family of God as we remind other saints of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ each day.**
- **We strengthen freedom in the family of God by living together in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, with our spirits united with His Spirit.**

Application for Today

Today, we may see the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ at work in our spirits. Will you live in freedom today by encouraging other saints to live in the grace that only the Lord Jesus Christ provides to the spirits of His children each day?

HALLELUJAH!

Conclusion

Paul taught Philemon many things about freedom in Christ. We can all learn about freedom by studying Paul's letter to Philemon and heeding the words of Christ to be free indeed in all things. Many forms of slavery still plague our world, but all saints can see other saints as partners and fellow workers in Christ. We all come from different backgrounds, but we all belong to the family of God, with spiritual gifts that operate best in the freedom of Christ as part of ministry teams pursuing the will of God.

HALLELUJAH!