

*The*  
**PHILEMON**  
*Remnant Church*  
**THE LEGACY BIBLE OUTLINE SERIES**



*Bible Institute*

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## THE LEGACY BIBLE OUTLINE SERIES

*The Legacy Bible Outline Series* is a study of the Bible using the text of the Bible itself. The series outlines books of the Bible in simple format, providing commentary only as needed to enhance understanding. Text-based questions are also included for every chapter.

We suggest you create a notebook for each book of the Bible. Insert the outlines in your notebooks and add your own study notes. Each time you study a book, you can easily append the outlines to continuously expand the materials.

*The Legacy Bible Outline Series* is designed so you can easily personalize it. The files for the series are in MS Word format to enable you to revise, input your own notes, change page numbers, and alter the layout as needed. You can also create your own outlines for other books of the Bible using this format

The text of the King James Version is included in *The Legacy Bible Outline Series* to enable you to underline and make notes in the actual text as part of your study. Unlike a Bible which will eventually wear out, you can photocopy worn pages if they need to be replaced--which means you won't lose your notes and underlining. Be sure to read the text in other versions of the Bible also, as different translations will greatly enhance your study.

You can print copies of the outlines for your students or--a more cost-effective method--copy the files to a CD ROM and let each student print out their own outlines. If you want students to have only the study questions and not the outlines, then copy the questions to a separate file and print them out for distribution.

**For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line...**  
(Isaiah 28:10, KJV)

**...His word burns in my heart like a fire. It's like a fire in my bones!...**  
(Jeremiah 20:9, NLT)

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# INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF PHILEMON

**AUTHOR:** Paul.

**TO WHOM:** Some epistles were directed to churches; others to individuals. This letter was written to Philemon, a Christian who lived at Colosse, but it was also to be shared with the church.

**PURPOSES:** To appeal for Onesimus, Philemon's runaway slave, who had become a believer. There were some 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire. Why would a simple, private letter about a runaway slave become part of the Bible?

1. It serves as a practical example of Christian principles applied to social relationships and the importance of personal relationships in the Body of Christ.
2. Philemon serves as an example of tact in dealing with sensitive issues. Slavery was a sensitive issue and under Roman rule a runaway slave could be executed. There are no arguments for or against slavery in Philemon, as that is not the purpose of the book. To argue against slavery would have been suicidal in the ancient world. Freedom of slaves, like all freedom, must come from the heart of God-inspired men. It should arise out of love and justice, not from regulations or constraint.
3. It illustrates the principle of forgiveness, the ministry of intercession, and what Christ did for us (slaves of sin) before God our master. It is an analogy of Christ's love for us and how all we owe is on His account. We were previously unprofitable, but now we are profitable.
4. Philemon shows the difference conversion makes and how we should receive a person who has been converted.
5. This book is also a classic example of how God redeems negative situations for His glory.

**KEY VERSE:** *I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds.*  
(Philemon 1:10)

**LIFE AND MINISTRY PRINCIPLE:** Christian principles must be applied to social relationships.

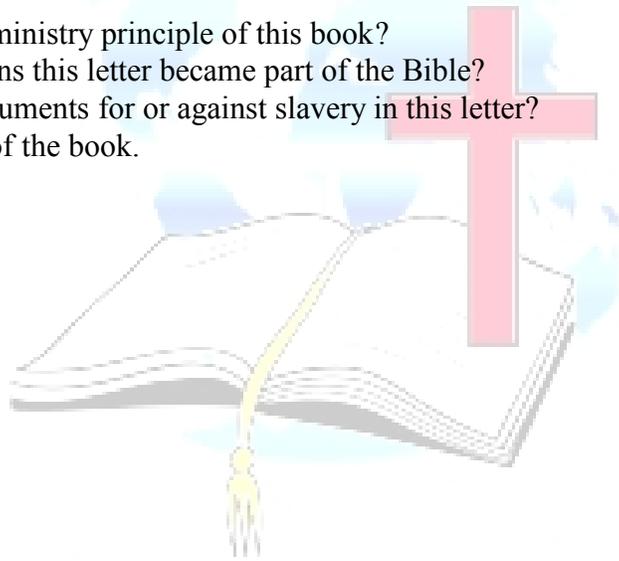
**MAIN CHARACTERS:** Paul, Onesimus, Philemon. Minor characters mentioned are Apphia, Archippus, Epaphras, Marcus, Demas, Lucas, Aristarchus.

**A BRIEF OUTLINE:**

- I. Salutation: 1-3
- II. Thanksgiving and prayer: 4-7
- III. The plea for Onesimus: 8-21
- IV. Final remarks: 22-25

**QUESTIONS ON THE INTRODUCTION:**

1. Who wrote the book?
2. To whom was the book written?
3. List the purposes of the book.
4. Write the key verse.
5. What is the life and ministry principle of this book?
6. What are some reasons this letter became part of the Bible?
7. Why are there no arguments for or against slavery in this letter?
8. Give a brief outline of the book.



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# OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF PHILEMON

(The book of Philemon consists of only one chapter)

**1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer,**

**2 And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house:**

**3 Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

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

### A. From:

1. Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ.
2. Timothy, our brother.

*(When writing churches, Paul appealed to his authority as an apostle. It is not necessary here, as this letter was to an individual. The custom was to put one's name first, instead of signing last as we do today.)*

### B. To:

1. Philemon. *(Philemon is described as dearly beloved and a fellow-laborer. The term "fellow-laborer" is applied to ministers, but not restricted to them: Romans 16:3; 2 Corinthians 8:23, Philipians 2:25; Colossians 4:11; 1 Corinthians 3:9; and 2 Corinthians 6:1.)*
2. Apphia. *(This was possibly Philemon's wife.)*
3. Archippus. *(This was probably Apphia's son; a soldier in Lord; perhaps pastor of the church in the home.)*
4. The church in Philemon's home. *(This letter was not only a letter of personal appeal, it was a letter to the church, as Onesimus would take his place in this local congregation.)*

### C. Grace and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

*(Peace always follows grace. It results from the reception of grace--unmerited favor--through which salvation is bestowed. There was an unlimited source of grace and peace to which Philemon could look to solve this problem.)*

**4 I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,**

**5 Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all**

saints;

**6 That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.**

**7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.**

II. Thanksgiving. (1:4-7)

Paul gave thanks in prayer for Philemon's:

- A. Love and faith toward the Lord and the believers.
- B. Communication of his faith, that it would be effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing in him through Christ Jesus.

*(Communication: Sharing what one has with others in order to meet their needs.*

*Effectual: Active, powerful in action, to be operative, at work, just as God's Word is active and powerful to achieve results: Hebrews 4:12. Acknowledge: To recognize a thing for what it is, be acquainted with, confess, recognize or know thoroughly.*

*Are there good things in you which you have failed to acknowledge?)*

- C. Refreshing the bowels of the saints. *(Bowels refers to the inner life. Philemon=s life was a testimony. What is your life saying?)*

**8 Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient,**

**9 Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ...**

**14 But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.**

III. The foundation for the request. (1:8-9, 14)

- A. Paul could have been bold in Christ and just told Philemon what to do. (1:8)
- B. For love's sake, however, he requested instead of demanded. (1:9)
- C. Paul perhaps mentioned his incarceration and age to help persuade Philemon. (1:9)
- D. Without consulting Philemon, Paul would do nothing. He wanted Philemon to respond willingly and not because he was forced to do so. (1:14)

**10 I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:**

**11 Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:**

**12 Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:**

**13 Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel...**

- 15 For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever;**
- 16 Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?**
- 17 If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.**
- 18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account;**
- 19 I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.**
- 20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.**
- 21 Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.**

IV. The request. (1:10-13, 15-21)

- A. The subject of his request: Paul was interceding for his spiritual son, Onesimus. (1:10-13)
1. Onesimus was begotten spiritually while Paul was in jail.
  2. Onesimus was previously unprofitable.
  3. He was profitable now to both Paul and Philemon  
*(This illustrates how God can take an unprofitable person and make them profitable for the kingdom. The changed person becomes a beloved brother, no matter what the previous relationship. We are no longer slave/master or servant/lord. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. The name "Onesimus" means profitable.)*
- B. The request: Paul was returning Onesimus to Philemon with the request that he be forgiven (1:15-18):
1. Forgive him for your sake: (1:15)
  2. Forgive him for his sake: (1:16)
  3. Forgive him for my sake: (1:17-18)
- C. The desired reception: Paul asked that Onesimus be received not as a servant, but as a beloved brother and partner in the Lord to both Paul and Philemon. (1:16-17)
- D. The pledge and encouragement to fulfill this request. (1:18-19)
1. Paul signed the pledge in his own handwriting.
  2. Paul would take responsibility for anything Onesimus had done wrong or anything he owed.
  3. A reminder to Philemon that he owed his own life to Paul.
- E. Confidence in an answer. (1:20-21)
1. It will bring Paul joy.
  2. It will refresh him in the Lord.
  3. He is confident that Philemon will do even more than he was asking him to do (*perhaps even setting Onesimus free*).

**22 But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.**

**23 There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus;**

**24 Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.**

**25 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.**

V. Conclusion. (1:22-25)

A. Paul's proposed visit:

1. He requested that a lodging be prepared for him.
2. He trusted that through their prayers he would return to them.

*(Philemon was written during Paul's first confinement in Rome, so it is possible that he visited Philemon later on.)*

B. Greetings to his fellow-laborers.

1. Epaphras:

- Minister of the Colossian church: Colossians 1:7.
- Faithful minister of Christ: Colossians 1:7.
- Fellow-servant who was dear to Paul's heart: Colossians 1:7.
- Fellow-prisoner in Christ: Philemon 23.
- Toiled for the people in Colosse: Colossians 4:12.

2. Marcus (John Mark):

-Deserted Paul earlier but later became profitable: Acts 12:25; 13:13

3. Aristarchus:

- Member of the Thessalonian church: Acts 19:29; 20:4.
- One of the believers attacked in Ephesus: Acts 19:29.
- Went with Paul to Asia: Acts 20:4.
- Went with Paul to Rome when he was being transferred as a prisoner: Acts 27:2.
- Fellow-prisoner with Paul in Rome while Paul awaited trial. Apparently he was charged with the same crimes: Colossians 4:10, Philemon 24.

4. Demas:

- Here he is seen as a fellow-laborer: Philemon 24.
- Later, he is depicted as one who loved the present world and forsook the Lord's work: 2 Timothy 4:10.

5. Lucas:

- Author of Gospel of Luke: Luke 1, Acts 1.
- Beloved physician: Colossians 4:14

C. Benediction: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. (1:25)

*(Grace—unmerited favor—was what would be required to fulfill Paul's request for Onesimus. Grace is required for all successful relationships.)*

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## Study questions on Philemon:

1. Who wrote this letter? (1)
2. To whom was this letter written? (1)
3. How does Paul refer to himself? (1)
4. How does he refer to Timothy? (1)
5. Is this letter only for Philemon? If not, who else would read it? (2)
6. What do we know about the church from this brief introduction? (2)
7. What two qualities did Paul desire for his readers and from where do these come? (3)
8. What was always a part of Paul's prayers? (4)
9. What had Paul heard about the readers of this letter? (5)
10. How did Paul pray for the recipients of this letter? (6)
11. What does the "effectual communication of your faith" mean? (6)
12. What are some examples of Philemon's love for the saints? (7, 22)
13. What gave Paul great joy while he was imprisoned? (7)
14. What attitude did Paul project toward Philemon? (8-9, 14)
15. How did Paul describe himself? (9)
16. Who is the subject of Paul's appeal to Philemon? (10)
17. How did Paul describe his relationship with Onesimus? (10-13)
18. What was Onesimus's former relationship to Philemon? (12 and 15-16)
19. Why was Paul sending Onesimus back to Philemon? (12-16)
20. What happened to Onesimus during the time he had been with Paul? (10, 15-16)
21. How did Paul want Philemon to receive Onesimus when he returned? (17)
22. To what extent was Paul willing to be involved in the reconciliation between Philemon and Onesimus? (18-19)
23. Of what obligation did Paul remind Philemon? (19)
24. What response from Philemon did Paul anticipate? (20-21)

25. For what future event did Paul hope? (22)
26. What closing blessing does Paul bestow on the readers of this epistle? (25)
28. How is Paul's appeal an analogy of Christ's intercession and intervention for you, as a former slave of sin?
29. Summarize what you learned about the following people mentioned in Philemon: Philemon, Paul, Onesimus, Epaphras, Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas.
30. What did you learn from this chapter to apply to your life and ministry?

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## **SUPPLEMENTAL STUDIES**

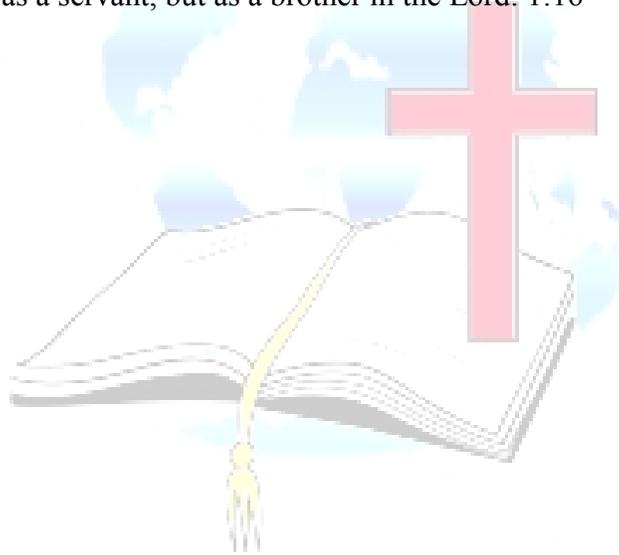
1. Things about Philemon revealed in this book:
  - Philemon was a true friend:
    - To Paul in Rome: 1:2
    - To Christians in Colosse: 1:5,7
  - He was a man of wealth:
    - He had servants: 1:15-16
    - He had extra room for guests: 1:22
  - He owed Paul his life: 1:19
  - He had a church in his home: 1:2
  - He was a fellow-laborer with Paul: 1:1
  - He had positive Christian qualities shown by his: Love: 1:5; faith: 1:5; communicating of his faith: 1:6; refreshing of the saints: 1:7; obedience: 1:21; prayerfulness: 1:22
  - He apparently visited those in prison, as Paul asked him to salute Epaphras, a fellow-prisoner in bonds in his own city: 1:23
2. Things learned about Paul in this book:
  - He was a prisoner: 1:1
  - He was a man of prayer: 1:4; 22
  - He had joy in the midst of bad circumstances: 1:7
  - He was aged: 1:9
  - He did not take advantage of a relationship, although he had the right to do so:

1:8-9,13-14,19

- He was reproducing spiritually even in prison: 1:10
- He was unselfish: 1:13-14
- He was a man of love: 1:18-19
- He was a man of faith: 1:22
- He was a man who cherished relationships: Onesimus, Philemon, and others he salutes in the chapter.
- He had a personal relationship with God: He called him “Father” and “my God”: 1:3-4
- He was an intercessor for others: The whole book illustrates this.

3. Things revealed about Onesimus. He was:

- A runaway slave: 1:10-19
- In the past, unprofitable: 1:11
- Now, through Jesus, profitable: 1:11
- A spiritual son of Paul, begotten in his bonds: 1:10
- A minister to Paul: 1:11, 13
- Loved by Paul: 1:16
- Returning not as a servant, but as a brother in the Lord: 1:16



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