

## Philemon 1:1-25

### Overview:

This letter is written by Paul to his friend and brother, Philemon. Paul writes mainly to ask Philemon to accept Onesimus back. Onesimus, a slave, has ran away only to be converted to Christianity under Paul's ministry.

### Commentary:

1. Standard Paul opening, introduces himself – stating that he is a “prisoner of Christ Jesus”, and specifies who he is writing to: Philemon – whom he considers a friend and peer. The letter is also from Timothy.
2. The letter is also written to Apphia, Archippus, and the church that meets in Philemon's home.
3. Standard Pauline greeting
4. Paul opens by telling the recipients that he “always” thanks God for Philemon and company as he prays for them!
5. He is hearing good things! Philemon showing love/compassion for people.
6. Paul prays that Philemon is growing deeper in his faith.
7. Philemon's ministry, in fact, brings great joy to Paul! Paul is almost like a very proud older brother/mentor!
8. It is out of this respect, then, that Paul is not being arrogant in his request! He feels like he could “order” Philemon for what comes next, but I believe it is the level of respect for Phil that he does not!
9. Instead, because he sees the compassion and love of Philemon, Paul appeals to this love!
10. He explains that Onesimus has become “my son while I was in chains” – meaning, presumably, that Onesimus was converted to Christianity during this period in Paul's life.
11. Formerly, Onesimus was “useless” – does this mean he was lazy? – but he is now useful to both of them!
12. Paul explains the love he has for Onesimus, calling him “my heart”
13. Paul explains that he would have liked to keep him around
14. But did not do so out of respect for Philemon. He wants to give Philemon the opportunity to show love.
15. Paul suggests Onesimus' leaving was for this very purpose!
16. And that should no longer be viewed as a slave, but as a brother!
17. Paul pleads for Philemon to welcome Onesimus back!
18. Paul takes full responsibility for whatever monetary losses may have occurred.
19. Same
20. Same
21. Paul expresses his confidence that Philemon will do the correct thing!
22. Paul expresses his desire to return soon.

23. Here, Paul begins his salutations, speaking of his fellow prisoner Epaphras
24. As well as Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Lue.
25. End

**Discussion:**

- Who is in this passage?
- What do we know about the people mentioned? Paul, Timothy, etc?
- What do we learn about Philemon from the text of this letter?
- What do we learn about Onesimus from the text of this letter?
- What do we learn about Paul's relationship with Philemon?
- What can we glean about Paul's relationship with Onesimus?
- What do we learn about Philemon's relationship with Onesimus?
- What does Paul ask Philemon? What is the main purpose of this letter?
- Why does Paul ask this?
- How does this apply to me?