

WALK THE TALK //////////////////////////////////////

Our goal is not just “to know” but to “act upon what we know.” (His Word, Our Walk!) We encourage you to discuss the following questions with family, friends or your group.

For Discussion:

1. What did you learn about the Book of Philemon and/or the main characters that was helpful in comprehending?

2. With which person do you most relate: Philemon or Onesimus, and why?

3. Have you been a person that is willing to give second-chances to people who have messed up? Do you have some examples? What could you be doing better?



November 16 & 17, 2019 | Philemon #1 | Dennis Miller, pastor

THREE LESSONS FOR THIS SERIES

1. God can **CHANGE** a person's character.
2. When people do change, they often feel they don't have an **OPPORTUNITY** to start over because of the attitude of **OTHERS** towards them.
3. As Christians, we need to **OFFER** that opportunity!

PHILEMON — THE LETTER

1. One of four books in the New Testament that contains no **CHAPTERS** — only **VERSES**.
2. One of four **LETTERS** that Paul wrote from **PRISON**.

PRIMARY PEOPLE OF PHILEMON

Paul — Missionary in prison for his **FAITH** (probably in Rome in the early 60's AD). The writer of at least 13 books of the Bible.

Philemon — A good **FRIEND** of Paul who was wealthy and lived in Colossae. He owned servants as did **MOST** people in the Roman empire. The church of Colossae met in his **HOME**.

Onesimus — A **SERVANT** of Philemon who was possibly a **THIEF**, who ran away and went to **ROME**. He met Paul there and became a follower of **JESUS**. He was now in quite a predicament.



THE PLEASANTRIES

Philem. 1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker— 2 also to Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier—and to the church that meets in your home: 3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The letter's authors were PAUL and his "son" and BROTHER in the faith, Timothy (the actual writer?).
2. The recipients were MANY:
 - a. Philemon, who was a "DEAR friend" and a Christian LEADER. His name means "AFFECTIONATE".
 - b. Apphia, who was possibly Philemon's WIFE.
 - c. Archippus, possibly Philemon's SON and also probably the PASTOR of the local church ("fellow soldier").

— *According to history and tradition, Philemon, his wife, and son were MARTYRED by Nero in 68 AD. They are considered "SAINTS" in some traditions.*

- d. The local CHURCH in Colossae. This letter would have been read ALOUD to them. This puts Philemon in a predicament as the whole church will hear Paul's REQUEST and watch the RESPONSE of one of their leaders! This could affect how everyone might TREAT others in the future.

THE PRAYER

Philem. 4 I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, 5 because I hear about your love for all his holy people and your faith in the Lord Jesus. 6 I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ. 7 Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people.

1. Paul was a man of PRAYER and prayed specifically for Philemon.
2. His prayers included the following:
 - a. Thanks for Philemon's LOVE for the church people.
 - b. Thanks for Philemon's FAITH.
 - c. EFFECTIVENESS in ministry and growth.
 - d. Philemon's FRIENDSHIP.

THE PLEA

Philem. 8 Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, 9 yet I prefer to appeal to you on the basis of love. It is as none other than Paul—an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus— 10 that I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. 11 Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me.

1. Paul uses the term "THEREFORE" to transition to the actual PURPOSE of the letter — for Philemon to forgive his former slave and receive him back.

— *In the Roman Empire a runaway slave could be put to DEATH by the owner without trial or repercussions. In fact, this punishment was encouraged as a DETERRENT to other slaves.*

2. Paul reminded Philemon that he could ORDER him to receive Onesimus back (after all, he was the Apostle), but that wouldn't change Philemon's HEART. It would only cause MORE conflict.

3. Instead, since Philemon's name was "AFFECTION" he made his request on the basis of mutual LOVE. *(Paul also tries to soften Philemon's resolve by reminding him that he is an "OLD man" and a "prisoner".)*

4. WHILE in prison, Paul led Onesimus to Christ. This former servant is now a "SON" of Paul and of God. Onesimus has CHANGED. At first glance it appears that Paul ALSO had a predicament!

Deut. 23:15 If a slave has taken refuge with you, do not hand them over to their master.

5. Onesimus may have been "USELESS" to Philemon before, but now he was a different man. Now he could be "USEFUL" to both Philemon and Paul. Onesimus means "USEFUL" in Greek.

THE PRACTICE OF OUR STUDY

1. Serve wherever God has placed you NOW. Sometimes we wait for just the right TIME or place. WHILE in prison, Paul was writing and sharing his faith!
 2. Understand that the way you treat people is SEEN by others who may FOLLOW your lead. Pray for guidance!
3. Ask yourself if your heart is truly OPEN to giving someone the opportunity to start over. What must the Lord do within you?