

Paul's Plea for Onesimus - Philemon 1:8-25

Topics: Change, Compassion, Forgiveness, Friendship, Reconciliation, Restitution, Slavery

Open It

- * 1. When you have to ask someone for a favor, how do you go about it?
- 2. How would you welcome back into your home a family member who had run away?
- 3. What does it take to reestablish trust with someone who has made a major mistake?

Explore It

- 4. What type of attitude did Paul project toward Philemon? (1:8-9)
- 5. How did Paul describe himself? (1:9)
- 6. Who is the subject of Paul's appeal to Philemon? (1:10)
- * 7. How did Paul describe his relationship with Onesimus? (1:10-11)
- * 8. Why was Paul sending Onesimus back to Philemon? (1:12-16)
- 9. What was Onesimus's former relationship to Philemon? (1:12-16)
- 10. What was Paul's motivation for sending Onesimus back to Philemon when Paul could have used him as a helper? (1:12-14)
- 11. What happened to Onesimus during the time he had been away from Philemon and with Paul? (1:15-16)
- 12. How did Paul want Philemon to greet Onesimus when he returned? (1:17)
- 13. To what level was Paul willing to be involved in the reconciliation between Philemon and Onesimus? (1:18-19)
- 14. Of what debt did Paul remind Philemon? (1:19)
- * 15. What response from Philemon did Paul anticipate? (1:20-21) Why?
- 16. For what future event did Paul hope? (1:22)

Get It

- 17. Why do you think this short letter related to a specific relationship problem is included in the Bible?
- 18. Why do you think was it important to Paul that Onesimus return to his former master?
- 19. What risks did Onesimus take by going back to Philemon?
- 20. How should someone else's new commitment to Christ change our relationship with him or her?
- 21. In what circumstances should Christians return to people they knew before their conversion to rectify past mistakes?
- * 22. What role should we play in helping people be reconciled to others with whom they have had conflicts?
- * 23. What do you think was Philemon's response when Onesimus returned to him? Why?

Apply It

- 24. What broken relationship or promise from your earlier life are you willing to take steps to rectify this week?
- * 25. What can you do this week to help other people settle their disputes or separation?
- 26. Who needs your affirmation this week to help him or her more fully understand the changes God is working in his or her life?