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Thanksgiving and Prayer - Philemon 1:1-7

Topics: Encouragement, Friendship, Prayer, Relationships, Slavery, Thankfulness, Words

Open It

1. Who has prayed for you in the past?
- * 2. What role have someone's words of encouragement played in your life?
3. How much of what is said to you each week at work and home is negative or positive?

Explore It

4. Who wrote this letter? (1:1)
5. To whom was this letter written? (1:1)
6. What do we know about the church from this brief introduction? (1:2)
7. What two godly qualities did Paul desire for his readers? (1:3)
- * 8. What was always a part of Paul's prayers? (1:4)
- * 9. What had Paul heard about the readers of this letter? (1:5)
- * 10. How did Paul pray for his audience? (1:6)
11. What did Paul suggest that Philemon would gain by actively sharing his faith? (1:6)
12. What had Philemon done for Paul? (1:7)
13. What had Philemon done for the other Christians in the region? (1:7)

Get It

14. When are the normal times in a day or week that you pray?
15. What are the subjects or concerns you most often address in your prayers?
16. What are the marks or ingredients of a good prayer?
- * 17. When should we ever tell someone that we are praying for him or her?
18. What is your reaction when someone says he or she is praying for you?
19. How does it help a person to tell him or her that you are praying for them?
- * 20. How can compliments and encouragement influence someone's life?
21. How does it help a person to pray for him or her?
22. What is the difference between what a person should and should not pray for?

Apply It

23. Who are several people for whom you need to pray this week?
- * 24. Who in your life needs a word of compliment or encouragement at this time?
25. Whom could you write or call this week to thank for the joy or encouragement they have given to you during your life?

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?