

PHILEMON

Greetings (1-3)

¹⁻²From Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy, my brother.

To Philemon, my dear friend and our fellow worker, and to Apphia our sister and Archipus our fellow soldier and to all who belong to the church that meets in your home.

³May God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ impart grace and peace to you all.

Paul gives thanks for Philemon's love and faith (4-7)

⁴⁻⁵I always thank my God when I remember you in my prayers, because I have heard of your love for all your fellow believers and the faith that you place in the Lord Jesus. ⁶I pray that, as you share your faith with others, so you may become fully aware of everything good that we have in Christ. ⁷For I have received much joy and strength through your love, my brother, because you have refreshed the hearts of the saints, your fellow believers.

Paul's appeal on behalf of Onesimus (8-20)

⁸⁻¹⁰So, although I am bold enough to tell you to do what is right, yet I want to appeal to your love. I, Paul, who am now advancing in years as a prisoner of Jesus Christ, appeal to you on behalf of my spiritual child, Onesimus, whom I brought to the Lord while I was in chains. ¹¹In the past he was of no use to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me. ¹²⁻¹³As I send him back to you it is like sending my own heart, for I would love to keep him here with me so that, on your behalf, he could serve me while I am in chains for the gospel. ¹⁴But I decided to do nothing without your consent, so that I was not forcing you to express such kindness to me, leaving it to your own free choice instead.

¹⁵⁻¹⁶Perhaps this is the reason why he left you for a while, so that you might have him back permanently, no longer as a slave but now more than a slave – a dearly loved brother in the Lord. He is already precious to me; and how much more precious he should be to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.

¹⁷So if you think of me as your partner in the faith, receive him as you would me. ¹⁸And if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge it to my account. ¹⁹I, Paul, write this with my own hands and tell you that I will repay his debt, without saying anything of the debt you owe me – your very self! ²⁰Yes, my brother, I need some help from you in the Lord; so refresh my heart in Christ.

Final greetings (21-25)

²¹I write to you confident of your obedience, knowing you will do even more than I ask of you. ²²And I take this opportunity to ask you also to prepare a room for me as I hope to visit you in response to your prayers.

²³⁻²⁴Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ, sends you greetings, together with Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.

²⁵May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.