

All That Matters

Lesson 10—Restored

Philemon

I. Greeting (vv. 1-3)

Paul was the Billy Graham of his day. How do you think Philemon would have felt receiving a personal letter from him? Notice that it was also addressed to his wife, Apphia, Archippus (fellow soldier), and the church that met in their home. There is a certain level of accountability that went along with the letter.

Philemon had been led to Christ by Paul. It most likely happened when Paul was in Ephesus. Epaphras would have been his pastor and had brought news to Paul about his growth and leadership in the church.

II. Prayer and Commendation (vv. 4-7)

Paul prayed regularly for Philemon and the church at Colossae. He commended Philemon for his reputation of love and faith toward the Lord and the saints.

“It is Calvary’s love that provides the only lasting answer to social ills. First change the man; changed men no longer want to enslave other men” (John Phillips).

III. Appeal to His Character/Maturity (vv. 8-22)

Paul appeals to Philemon as an elder; as a spiritually mature man. He called him to actions that honor Christ and the gospel.

“Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others” (Philippians 2:2-4).

“Paul set an example of Christian maturity in every church he founded. He demonstrated what it looked like to build a family and live as a community. Nearly all of his instructions have to do with how to live in unity and build a group that runs on love. In our individualized, Western way of looking at life, we have tended to take Paul’s instructions almost entirely as rules for personal improvement rather than corporate engagement” (*Rare Leadership*, p. 154).

A. Appeal for his child, Onesimus

1. Formerly useless - he left as a slave and thief
2. Now a beloved brother - returned a new man; a son of the Most High
3. Urged to accept him - choose forgiveness (vv. 16-18)
4. Charge Paul's account - Paul is a Christ-like figure for Onesimus. He was his advocate and volunteered to pay his debt.

B. We desire to "live up to" what others think about us. Paul held the bar high.

A group's identity is formed by the answers to two simple questions: "Who are my people?" and "How is it like us to act?" (*Rare Leadership*, p. 92)

IV. Salutation (vv. 23-25)

V. Spiritual Assessment

Infant
Child
Adult
Parent
Elder

Parent and Elder level maturity allow us to be "Safe People" (Henry Cloud and John Townsend).

1. Draw us closer to God
2. Draw us closer to others
3. Helps us become the real person God created us to be

VI. The Disciplines of Maturity

"Leaders who are dominated by fear will map out the world around them in terms of problems to be solved. Their brains by default lock on to whatever is scary or potentially bad in their environment, and that is what gets all of their attention. On the other hand, joy-oriented people map out their world in terms of what is good in life. They excel at appreciation and (as Paul encouraged us) fix their minds on what is lovely, excellent, and praiseworthy. These leaders don't ignore problems. In fact, like Joseph, they are more likely to stop avoiding problems than fear-based leaders. However, they deal with problems in a relational way. Their goal is to solve problems in a way that makes relationships stronger when they are finished" (*Rare Leadership*, p. 126).