

Philemon: You Can't Outrun God

Have you ever tried to _____ God? If so, did you succeed? Jonah ran fast and hard from God's call. However, he ended up in the belly of a fish. The younger son ran from his father with pockets full of money. However, he ended up dining with the pigs. Onesimus stole from Philemon and ran for his life. However, he ended up in the company of Paul. You and I need to know that we'll never outrun God.

The personal letter of Philemon is a testimony to grace, the power of Christ, and the beauty of Christian fellowship. Five books in the Bible are only one chapter in length: _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____.

What do we know about Philemon?

- Partnered with Paul in the _____ ministry (1:17).
- Led his family in the _____ faith (1:1-2).
- Labored to build the _____ church (1:2).
- Lived a life of _____ influence (1:5).
- Knew how to encourage _____ people (1:7).

The Colossian church met in Philemon's _____. Early churches didn't have elaborate _____. Buildings were expensive, and persecution was commonplace. What is the church? The church is made up of people, baptized believers. We're the "called out" ones. The church is more than bricks and mortar. Is Jesus pleased with your involvement in His church? Who do you see missing in our church family? How are you reaching out to them (Heb. 10:25)? How does Jesus relate to the church?

- "I will _____ my church" (Mt. 16:18).
- "The Lord _____ to their number day by day those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47).
- "Christ _____ the church and gave himself up for her" (Eph. 5:25).

Paul prayed for Philemon (1:4). Who are you and I praying for by name? How do we need to pray for other people?

- Spiritual _____.
- Christian _____.
- Radical _____.
- Relational _____.
- Kingdom _____.

What do you and I know about Onesimus?

- He was a troubled _____.
- He ran from _____.

- He ended up in _____.
- He heard the _____ (1:10).
- He experienced _____ (1:10).
- He became a “_____” person (1:11).
- He testified to God’s _____ (1:15-16).

Paul had spiritual _____ in Philemon. He trusted God’s servant. Paul said, *“Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. At the same time, prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that through your prayers I will be graciously given to you”* (1:21-22). It’s powerful to have spiritual confidence and trust in another believer. Do people have confidence and trust in you and me?

A prominent theme in the letter to Philemon is _____. Paul appealed for Philemon to forgive and restore Onesimus. Paul wanted Philemon to take Onesimus back. He was no longer a slave. Onesimus was a brother in Christ. Paul lived a generous life. He offered to pay what Onesimus owed (1:18). Is forgiveness hard or easy for us? What does the Bible say about forgiveness? Is forgiveness and reconciliation the same thing?

- *“Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors”* (Mt. 6:11-12).
- *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1 Jn. 1:9).
- *“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you”* (Eph. 4:32).
- *“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive”* (Col. 3:12-13).

What are the consequences of unforgiveness?

- Hindered _____.
- Strained _____.
- Divided _____.
- Evangelistic _____.
- Personal _____.
- Spiritual _____.

1. Are you _____ from God?
2. Are you eager to share _____?
3. Is your _____ building the Lord’s church?
4. Do you need to offer or receive _____?
5. Do you need to _____ another believer?

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Have you ever tried to **outrun** God? If so, did you succeed? Jonah ran fast and hard from God's call. However, he ended up in the belly of a fish. The younger son ran from his father with pockets full of money. However, he ended up dining with the pigs. Onesimus stole from Philemon and ran for his life. However, he ended up in the company of Paul. You and I need to know that we'll never outrun God.

The personal letter of Philemon is a testimony to grace, the power of Christ, and the beauty of Christian fellowship. Five books in the Bible are only one chapter in length: **Obadiah**, **Philemon**, **2 John**, **3 John**, and **Jude**.

What do we know about Philemon?

- Partnered with Paul in the **Gospel** ministry (1:17).
- Led his family in the **Christian** faith (1:1-2). *Joshua*
- Labored to build the **Lord's** church (1:2).
- Lived a life of **spiritual** influence (1:5).
- Knew how to encourage **God's** people (1:7).

The Colossian church met in Philemon's **home**. Early churches didn't have elaborate **buildings**. Buildings were expensive, and persecution was commonplace. What is the church? The church is made up of people, baptized believers. We're the "called out" ones. The church is more than bricks and mortar. Is Jesus pleased with your involvement in His church? Who do you see missing in our church family? How are you reaching out to them (Heb. 10:25)? How does Jesus relate to the church?

- "I will **build** my church" (Mt. 16:18).
- "The Lord **added** to their number day by day those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47).
- "Christ **loved** the church and gave himself up for her" (Eph. 5:25).

Paul prayed for Philemon (1:4). Who are you and I praying for by name? How do we need to pray for other people?

- Spiritual **Redemption**.
- Christian **Discipleship**.
- Radical **Obedience**.
- Relational **Unity**.
- Kingdom **Purpose**.

What do you and I know about Onesimus?

- He was a troubled **employee**.
- He ran from **Philemon**.

- He ended up in **Rome**.
- He heard the **Gospel** (1:10).
- He experienced **grace** (1:10).
- He became a “**useful**” person (1:11).
- He testified to God’s **love** (1:15-16).

Paul had spiritual **confidence** in Philemon. He trusted God’s servant. Paul said, “*Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. At the same time, prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that through your prayers I will be graciously given to you*” (1:21-22). It’s powerful to have spiritual confidence and trust in another believer. Do people have confidence and trust in you and me?

A prominent theme in the letter to Philemon is **forgiveness**. Paul appealed for Philemon to forgive and restore Onesimus. Paul wanted Philemon to take Onesimus back. He was no longer a slave. Onesimus was a brother in Christ. Paul lived a generous life. He offered to pay what Onesimus owed (1:18). Is forgiveness hard or easy for us? What does the Bible say about forgiveness? Is forgiveness and reconciliation the same thing?

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What are the consequences of unforgiveness?

- Hindered **Prayers**.
- Strained **Relationships**.
- Divided **Churches**.
- Evangelistic **Barriers**.
- Personal **Bondage**.
- Spiritual **Disobedience**.

1. Are you **running** from God?
2. Are you eager to share **Jesus**?
3. Is your **involvement** building the Lord’s church?
4. Do you need to offer or receive **forgiveness**?
5. Do you need to **encourage** another believer?