

Philemon

1 ¹ This letter is sent from Paul, prisoner of Jesus Christ, and from our brother Timothy, to Philemon, our good friend and co-worker; ² to our sister Apphia, to Archippus who fights alongside us, and to your house church. ³ May you have grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ I always thank my God for you, remembering you in my prayers, ⁵ because I hear of your trust in the Lord Jesus and your love for all believers. ⁶ I pray that you will put the generous nature of your trust in God into action as you recognize all the good things we share in Christ. ⁷ Your love, my dear brother, has brought me much happiness and encouragement. You have really inspired those of us who believe!

⁸ That's why even though I'm brave enough in Christ to order you to do your duty, ⁹ I would rather ask you this favor out of love. Old Paul, now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus, ¹⁰ is appealing to you on behalf of Onesimus who became my adopted son during my imprisonment. ¹¹ In the past he was of no use to you, but now he's useful to both you and me! ¹² I send him to you with my fondest wishes.^a ¹³ I'd have preferred to keep him here with me so that he could have helped me as you would have done while I am in chains for telling the good news. ¹⁴ But I decided not do anything without your permission. I didn't want you to be forced to do good, but to do so willingly. ¹⁵ Maybe you lost him for a while so that you could have him back forever! ¹⁶ He's not a servant anymore, because he's more than a servant. He's a specially-loved brother, particularly to me, and even more to you, both as a man and as a fellow-believer in the Lord.^b

¹⁷ So if you consider me as a colleague working together with you for the Lord,^c welcome him as if you were welcoming me. ¹⁸ If he has done you any wrong, or owes you anything, charge it to my

^a**12.** Literally, “heartfelt affections.”

^b**16.** Literally, “in the flesh and in the Lord.”

^c**17.** “A colleague working together with you for the Lord.” The word in Greek is “partner,” but this needs explaining because of modern usage.

account. ¹⁹ I Paul am signing this with my own hand: I will repay you. Of course I won't mention what you owe me, including your very self! ²⁰ Yes, brother, I'm expecting this favor from you in the Lord; please make me happy in Christ.

²¹ I'm writing about this to you because I'm convinced you'll do as I ask—in fact I know you'll do even more than I've asked! ²² In the meantime please have a room ready for me, for I hope to be able to return to see you soon in answer to your prayers. ²³ Epaphras who is here in prison with me sends his greetings, ²⁴ as do my co-workers Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke. ²⁵ May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you.