

Philemon

Paul is requesting Philemon reconcile, restore and forgive Onesimus.

- Paul addresses Philemon's wife, Apphia, because she may have been the one in charge of Onesimus' daily activities
- Paul addresses the church because they will:
 - Need to understand why Philemon is accepting and forgiving Onesimus.
 - Need to also accept Onesimus' restoration
 - Be used by Paul to hold Philemon accountable (Philemon really will not have an option unless he is going to now publicly reject Paul's advice and Onesimus' confession, conversion and return.)
 - Watching a illustration of actual theological application: What good is forgiveness and restoration with God if those who are in fellowship with God cannot do the same for others?
 - Be given a perfect illustration of the process of Salvation: Onesimus=Sinful Man; Paul=Christ; Philemon=God.

This is Paul's shortest letter – 335 words in the Greek

- longer than most letters from this time period
- more typical of first century letters than any of Paul's other letters.
- The letter to Philemon is a well thought out letter. It is crafted and not quickly written. The wording is intentional.
- The book includes love, wisdom, tact, even humor.

Paul establishes a secure system to ensure Onesimus' acceptance and prepares a safe environment for Onesimus to make his return.

1. Apphia is prepared to understand, agree and support Philemon.
2. Paul accepts the responsibility for the financial loss. Philemon has no legal charges to file.
3. Onesimus freely returns with Paul's letter accepting responsibility. Philemon no longer has a run away slave.
4. This private letter is addressed also to the church for public reading. Philemon is the one put on the spot, not Onesimus.
5. Archipus, the pastor, is addressed and able to hold Philemon accountable.
6. Paul says "Prepare a guest room for me," which indicates he himself will eventually be making an appearance and will observe first hand if Philemon restored Onesimus.
7. Paul indicates full confidence that Philemon agrees with the intention of the letter.
8. Paul refers to Onesimus as "who became my son."
9. Paul refers to Onesimus as "who is my very heart."
10. Paul refers to Onesimus as "useful both to you and to me."
11. Paul asks for Onesimus to be restored, but hints at giving him his freedom or sending him back to serve Paul.
12. Paul refers to Philemon's partnership, prayers, faith, love, work of refreshing the saints and hosting the church in his house.
13. Paul contrast himself as a prisoner in chains in prison with Philemon's freedom of ministry to serve the saints in his luxury villa along with his wife.