

# PHILEMON: PAUL THE MASTER EXHORTER

Paul is a master exhorter. There are 25 verses in Paul's letter to Philemon. Yet there are at least 26 ways he exhorted Philemon to make the right and Christian choice. Each of these items would have influenced a good outcome.

01. Paul included Archippus a mission-pastor in Colosse to read this letter. His influence was notable (v.2).
02. Paul intended this letter to be read by the house church meeting in Philemon's home (v.2)
  - The instruction would hold Philemon accountable in the matter of forgiveness
03. Since Philemon loved all saints, he surely should include Onesimus, now a saint (v.5)
04. Philemon refreshed others spiritually, so now he should refresh Onesimus as well (v.7)
  - Paul is complimenting Philemon's attitude and ministry toward other believers
05. Philemon's love, demonstrated to all the saints, should now include Onesimus (v.8, "therefore")
06. Paul based his request not on his own authority but on Philemon's Christian character (v.8, "what is fitting")
07. The love of Paul and Philemon for each other as believers should encourage Philemon to make the proper choice (v.9)
08. Paul's age included much suffering which likely aged Paul faster should encourage him (v.9)
09. Since Paul was currently in prison for the sake of the gospel, it should motivate Philemon (v.9)
10. Paul pleads on behalf of his spiritual son, Onesimus (v.10)
11. Onesimus was no longer "just a slave" he is now Philemon's spiritual brother (v.10)
12. As Christians we should forgive as we have been forgiven (v.12, "receive")
13. Paul is asking Philemon to receive Onesimus just as if he were receiving Paul (v.12)
  - How could Philemon refuse Paul?
14. Paul knew Onesimus would serve him well and wanted that, but duty prevented Paul from simply keeping him (v.13)
15. If you will voluntarily send Onesimus back to me, that would be great (v.14)
16. Onesimus left for Rome a slave, but he would return to Colossae a spiritual brother (v.15)
17. Onesimus was a mere slave, but he is now also a spiritual brother to Philemon (v.16)
18. Since you count me as a partner, I want you to receive him just like you would receive me (v.17)
  - If Philemon rejected Onesimus, it would be like rejecting Paul (v.17)
19. Paul says if Onesimus stole or did something wrong, to put it on his account (v.18)
20. Paul led Philemon to saving faith, and it is a debt he could never repay (v.19, "you owe me")
21. Philemon and Onesimus were spiritual brothers, but also had the same spiritual father, Paul (v.19)
22. Philemon who refreshed others could hardly refrain from doing the same for Paul (v.20, "refresh")
23. Paul is confident Philemon would do more than simply forgive Onesimus, he would do it enthusiastically (v.21)
24. Because Paul planned to come personally it would encourage Philemon to follow Paul's instructions (v.22)
  - Philemon did not want to be ashamed when he met Paul face-to-face
25. Many, including Philemon, were praying for Paul's release so how could he refuse to release Onesimus? (v.22)
26. Paul had forgiven John Mark which is a living example of how Philemon should treat Onesimus (v.24)

