



Studies from Philemon

bridgeBUILDERS

Love That Goes Above and Beyond the Law

Main Text Focus:

Philemon v9: Paul chooses to appeal
“for love’s sake” rather than command.



Biblical Principles for effective Bridge-Building

Principle 1: Operate from Love, Not Law (8–9)

Paul could command
("Boldness in Christ" = apostolic authority)
but chooses to appeal "For love's sake"

The Appeal is in Christ, otherwise it is in vain



Biblical Principles for effective Bridge-Building

Principle 1: Operate from Love, Not Law (8–9)

Love has nothing to do with the question of “if”
we will act. Love is about HOW we will act.



Biblical Principles for effective Bridge-Building

Principle 1: Operate from Love, Not Law (8–9)

Paul wants to fix this but can't. He is dependent upon both of them to do the right thing.

He is trusting Onesimus to return to Philemon
He is trusting Philemon to forgive and receive Onesimus



Statement of Truth:

Love pleads,
while Law demands



Biblical Principles for effective Bridge-Building

Principle 2: Believe that God **Changes** People (v10-11)

Onesimus (meaning: “useful”) was formerly **useless** (runaway, thief) but now **useful** to Paul and can be to Philemon. Paul employed a literary play on his name.



Question:

Do you really believe that God
changes people?

KEY WORDS: **BUT NOW v11**



Biblical Principles for effective Bridge-Building

Principle 3: Expect the **best** from people (v12-14)

Paul was encouraging Onesimus to go back to Philemon and make it right. Paul is also expecting Philemon, to act in a nature that is consistent with Christ and forgive his newfound brother, restore his newfound brother, and release his newfound brother.



Biblical Principles for effective Bridge-Building

Principle 4: Be willing to make a sacrifice (v13-14)

To be an agent of reconciliation will always require a sacrifice upon the bridge builder.



Biblical Principles for effective Bridge-Building

Principle 5: Point to a Sovereign Purpose (v15–17)

Things in life have a purpose beyond what we see, touch, smell and taste - remember to maintain an eternal perspective.



