

## Willing to Forgive

Has there ever been a time in your life when you needed to forgive someone?

### **OFFERING FORGIVENESS TAKES THE RIGHT KIND OF PERSON.**

Paul was confident (v.21) that Philemon was the kind of person willing to forgive. What kind of person is willing to forgive? What kind of person was Philemon?

As Paul describes Philemon, he gives us 9 qualities.

**Quality #1** - Philemon was appreciated by others. v.4

*<sup>4</sup> I thank my God always when I remember you*

Paul was one of the godliest men on earth in those days. Paul had a special relationship with God, and Paul said to Philemon, “I want you to know, I continually thank my God for you.” Philemon had made an impact on Paul. Are you living life in such a way that others are so appreciative of you, they thank God for you?

There's something here we can learn from Paul, and that is: Maturity in the Christian life is shown when we can thank God for people who are more impressive than us.

**Quality #2** - Philemon was remembered in the prayers of others. v.4

*when I remember you in my prayers,*

Paul was in prison while writing this, but he wasn't sitting there bitter and angry. He was busy praying for other people. Philemon was the kind of guy that other people remembered. They thought about him. He wasn't a man worth forgetting.

**Quality #3** - Philemon was known for his love. v.5

*5 because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints,*

Philemon had a reputation. Paul continually heard things about Philemon. When people talked about Philemon, they said he is a loving man. Loving people are usually willing to forgive others. Paul was confident that Philemon was a gracious man because he'd heard of his love.

**Quality #4** - Philemon was known for his faith. v.5

*5 because I hear... of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints,*

Even though Philemon appears to be a successful wealthy man, he was not known for his position in life. He was known for his faith. That's what stood out to people when they observed Philemon.

There's no record that Philemon was an elder in the church of Colossae. There's no record that he was a deacon. There's no record that he was a pastor or a missionary. You don't have to be an elder, a deacon, a pastor, or have some leadership role in your local church to gain a reputation as a man of faith.

**Quality #5** - Philemon pursued fellowship with others.  
**v.6**

*6 and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective*

This is a very difficult verse of the Bible. Some say it's about evangelism - sharing your faith with others. Some say it's about financial giving - sharing your faith in Jesus through your financial generosity. But others say it's about a common connection - a fellowship that you can share with other Christians.

I believe this text is about the fellowship that Christians have with one another because of a common faith in Jesus. That word shared in the ESV is the Greek word

*koinōnia*, often translated as fellowship. Fellowship is being a partner - being on the same team. Fellowship has the idea of two people who are different, but coming together and working together for the same purpose.

When Philemon became a Christian, he instantly became connected to people who otherwise wouldn't have anything in common with him.

I believe Paul was praying that Philemon's pursuit of Christian fellowship would be effective in his life to the point where Philemon would want to have fellowship with someone like even Onesimus.

**Quality #6** - Philemon wanted to experience the wonderful blessings available in Christ. v.6

*pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.*

If Philemon could one day forgive Onesimus and go on to have a close connected Christian fellowship with him, Philemon would know by experience the blessings offered to us in Christ.

**Quality #7** - Philemon brought joy to others. v.7

*For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother,*

Forgiving people are the kind of people who bring joy to others, especially to those close to them.

**Quality #8** - Philemon brought comfort to others. v.7

*I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother*

Forgiving people are a comfort to others. Philemon, being such a loving man, a true brother in the Lord to Paul, was an encouragement to Paul. Are you an encouraging person? Or are people intimidated by you? Do you build people up? Or put people down? Do you help people? Or do you hurt people?

**Quality #9** - Philemon brought refreshment to others. v.7

*because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.*

When people talked to Paul about Philemon, they mentioned that he was like a breath of fresh air. He was like a cold drink of water on a hot summer day. He gave people rest in their hearts, mind, and soul.

Every Sunday morning Philemon would open his home and the believers would worship together, pray together, and study together. It was in Philemon's house that the believers in Colossae were built up and encouraged each week. Philemon's house was a special place to them - a place of rest, a place of strength, a place to get refreshed.

At some point in your life, you're going to need to forgive someone. Will you be ready? Philemon was the kind of man ready to forgive - willing to forgive. Offering forgiveness takes the right kind of person. Philemon had all the qualities of a forgiving person. Do you?