



Complex instead of Complicated

Philemon

A Guide to Reconciling Complex Relationships in the Body of Christ

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The Cultural Context Causing the Complexity – Slavery

Philemon

- From Archeology

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- From Scribal Footnotes

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- From the text:

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- A Refresher - vs. 7

Philemon

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Life is not perfect – one of his slaves has run away.

Two key notes

- Slavery – Again it's a tough pill in this text, but by the end we will see it's not one we have to swallow

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- Onesimus may have fled because Philemon was mistreating him – or he felt he was being mistreated

A word to people who are over others:

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- With success comes the heightened need for Humility, Submission and Responsibility for Self-discipleship

Onesimus

He was a slave who ran away.

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Under first-century Roman secular law, he was classified as property (res) with no legal standing, and runaways (fugitivi) were legally considered criminals.

Onesimus

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Onesimus

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- The Penalties could be Extreme

Onesimus's Travel Options: Distances & Timetables from Colossae

Destination Option	Distance by Land (Roads)	Distance by Boat (Sea)	Estimated Timeframe (One-Way)
Option A: Rome (The Imperial Capital)	1,770 miles (2,849 km)	1,291 to 1,493 miles (2,078 to 2,403 km) (Depending on the sailing season)	• By Land: 96.4 days of continuous travel • By Sea: 20 to 22 days (Favorable conditions)

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Option C: Ephesus (The Nearby Metropolis)	106 miles (171 km) (Along the Maeander Valley)	N/A (Strictly an overland route)	By Land: 5.7 days (Just under a week)

Onesimus

- The Crime was Self-Theft:
- The Penalties could be Extreme
- There was a “Best Case Scenario” – The “Amicus Domini” Mediation Doctrine

Onesimus' Plans

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We don't know, because which it was didn't matter to Paul.

Paul

His Reconciler Mindset:

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- Champion a Kingdom Perspective – vs. 15+16
- Exercise Relational Mediation – vs. 17-22

Paul's Reconciliation Road Map

Subvert the Culture

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Cultural change and transformation happens when God's children live out their lives and carry out the Reconciliation Mission God has

Pursue the Reconciliation Mission

Ministry of Reconciliation

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- 2Corinthians 5:14-21

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God reconciled us to Himself and wants us to do that for others – just as we are beggars who know where bread is, we are also the forgiven who know where forgiveness is.

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A godly leader doesn't ask for a blank cheque, but deserves to be honoured and trusted for the balance in their account with you (and cared for.)

We Are Onesimus



We Are Onesimus

Sin is stealing yourself back from your Lord Jesus

We Are Onesimus

- Jesus – take the wheel!

We Are Onesimus

- Jesus – take the wheel!
- Jesus – give me back the wheel!

We Are Onesimus

We belong to Jesus!

We Are Onesimus

- Romans 14:8

We Are Onesimus

- Romans 14:8
- 1Corinthians 6:19-20

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- Romans 14:8
- 1Corinthians 6:19-20
- 1Corinthians 7:23

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- Romans 14:8
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- 1Corinthians 7:23
- 2Corinthians 5:14-15
- Galatians 2:20
- Psalm 100:3
- Isaiah 43:1

We Are Onesimus

Have you stolen yourself back from Jesus and added complication to a relationship with a brother or sister in Christ?

We Are Onesimus

- Matthew 5:21-24

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The Bible is clear on the love models for the relationships we have and we are responsible to know them and obey.

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Need help, find a reconciler!

As Paul said

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- Romans 12:18

As Paul said

To live peaceably with someone, you need to reconcile with them. There is a part that does not depend on you, but there is a part that does and taking care of that part is your self-discipleship responsibility.

As Paul said

Take a step in doing your part today – especially if it is accepting, confessing, and repenting your part to God.