

## The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to PHILEMON

### “A True Friend!”

Written by: Paul

Date: A.D. 60

Theme: “Love Exemplified”

**Introduction:** Paul’s letter is to a Christian brother and friend named Philemon, (means *one who is kind*), who is the owner of a runaway slave by the name of Onesimus (means *profitable or useful*), who has recently received Christ. Onesimus is encouraged to return to Philemon and do what is right, just as Philemon is encouraged to receive him in Christ love and grace. Here we see the Christian faith beginning to set free enslaved hearts, for the Roman Empire was filled with some 60 million slaves, it was a way of life. But now this culture must face the cross of Christ’s humility, love and forgiveness. The gospel is truly “good news” for those enslaved to sin or man; Jesus came to set the captives free! One commentator writes, “The problem concerns the institution of slavery, traffic in human lives, and what the Christian’s response must be. The problem is not only personal and private as in this case; it is a public problem which the whole Christian community and the world at large must face and solve.”

### I) A TRUE FRIENDSHIP (v1-7)

- (v1-4) **T** - Thanking God in prayer for friends.
- (v5) **R** - Reflects Christ and reaches out to others.
- (v5) **U** - Unity – “all the saints.”
- (v6-7) **E** - Evangelize and encourage.
  - Jesus teaches on how to be His Friend - John 15:12-17
  - Abraham was known as the “Friend of God”- James 2:23-24- *And the scripture was fulfilled which says, Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. You see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.*

### II) A FAITHFUL FRIEND (v8-25)

- (v8-21) **Forgives** - Matthew 18:21-35
- (22-25) **Co-labors for Christ!**
  - **What is a Laborer for Christ?**
    - L- **LOVES** God & others!
    - A- You are an “**ACTS**” Christian!
    - B- **BEAR** one another’s burdens!
    - O- **OBEDIENT** to the Word of God!
    - R- **REFRESHES** the Saints!
    - E- **EDIFY, ENCOURAGE, EXHORT!**
    - R- **RESTORES** the fallen!
    - S- **SOUL-winner!**