

Blessed be the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, may we study the Bible, the Word of God which is the light of our path and the lamp that guides our feet. **(Psalm 119:135)**.

The Book of Philemon is a letter written by the Apostle Paul while he was in prison, to a man named Philemon. *(It should be noted that the epistle is just a letter)*, so the Apostle Paul wrote the **epistle / letter** to Philemon, and the epistle, under the inspiration of the Spirit, was included in the biblical canon because it contains great warnings and great lessons for Christians. And it is also one of the shortest books in the New Testament.

### **Now who is this Philemon?**

Philemon was one of the people who received Jesus through the gospel preached by Paul in the city of Ephesus, so Philemon met with the gospel and received Jesus, and began to serve him wholeheartedly, to the point of becoming a bishop of the church, which it was gathering in his own house **(Philemon 1:2)**. But in spite of that, this man was capable and he owned slaves in his house (servants).

And one of his servants named Onesimus, one day he ran away from him and stole some of his possessions, and fled with them to Rome. While he

route to Rome, he met Paul preaching the gospel, and the Word of God touched his heart and moved him to repentance.

And when he repented then Paul knew he was the slave of Philemon of Ephesus, a laborer in the field of God. And because Paul had convinced Onesimus that he truly repented, became a Christian, and stopped stealing and all that evil, and most of all he wanted to follow Paul in the gospel wherever he went and even in his imprisonment.

But Paul didn't Onesimus go with him, but being led by the wisdom of the Spirit he decided to travel him to his master and he didn't make him go with empty hands but rather he gave him an epistle as a testimony from Onesimus, that he has changed (*as a new creature*), and in the epistle there were also a few things to counsel Philemon concerning his servant Onesimus.

Because at that time, according to Roman law, if a slave escaped from his master, and was found, the law for him was death. So Paul knew this and that is why he decided to send Onesimus back to his master with the letter.

And in that document he touched on the following 3 main elements.

**1. He first asked that he receive him because he was repentant and changed.**

*Philemon 1:9 "Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.*

*10 I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:*

*11 Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:*

*12 Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:*

**2. After he receives him, he shouldn't make him as a slave rather than a brethren in Christ.**

*Philemon 1:16 "Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?"*

**3 And if he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, put that to my account.**

*Philemon 1:17 "If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.*

*18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account.*

*19 I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.*

*20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.*

*21 Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.*

In this epistle, the Bible teaches us how to live with our slaves, who we can now say the people we hired. And it also teaches us the responsibilities of every servant of God (***that he must be a mediator***).

You may be saved and believe in Jesus, and at home you have a

domestic worker, or a gatekeeper, or you work in an office and under you, there are employees you have hired,... remember when your servant, or your employee is saved and has the same Faith, know that he to you is like a brother, you should not treat him as your slave anymore...

Yes he can continue with his homework, or security but, consider him as your brother..that is, the work he does is very much in line with his salary, so much so that he feels like how he is paid for free, compared to the work he does.

Also his personality is the same as the work he does... It means when he does your job he feels like he is part of the job, to be loved, listened to, given time to relax, and not feel like an animal, or a slave who is hired to pay his wages at the end of the day, and you as his master must be as patient and forgiving as Philemon.

*Colossians 4:1 "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven".*

*And also if you are a slave you must be humble, and wise and prudent. Because the Bible also says in..*

*Colossians 3:22 "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:"*

This means that, even though your boss is your brother in Christ, you must not disrespect him or despise him. If you disrespect him, or despise him and make your boss sad you have already sinned against God.

Also in this book we learn, our responsibilities as servants of God, to be mediators, there we see the Apostle Paul, after converting Onesimus to his gospel, did not take him and start traveling with him, though Onesimus was ready and eager to be with Paul, but Paul saw fit not to go with him into the ministry, and yet he was still a slave to somebody else, so it was better that he first return to his master, and meet him,

and if his master would give him permission then he should return and go around with Paul in preaching.

But it is not wise to take him and even if he escapes from his master, it would not make a good impression.

Likewise even now, there are people who have robbed their bosses, and they have sincerely repented, but they do not want to go to the robbers... they just want to repent heartily, and most of all they are received in churches and even in ministry and given the opportunity to serve. Not knowing what their reputation is out there.

There are some who have been found in the world, and have heard the gospel and decided to repent, but before they had fled their wives, or husbands, or families... now before accepting such people in the ministry, it is better to first reconcile with their brothers, or their husbands... While we preached to them and helped them, just as Paul helped Onesimus return to his master in the epistle, so that when they came into the ministry they would not bring a bad image to those outside.

So as a pastor, or any servant of God, we must first examine the history of a person, before beginning with him the ministry work, even if he has



sincerely repented, that alone is not enough, he must repair the last few, which he has destroyed, so that no flaws in the gospel can be found. what he preached, or what they preached to those who preached to him.

God Bless us.

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