



## Four Fundamentals of Real Fellowship

Lesson 3 • Philemon 1-3

*Real fellowship in Christ breaks **THROUGH** barriers to refreshing relationships with one another.*

### The Four Fundamentals of Real Fellowship

#### Fundamental #1 Real Fellowship Can Never Be **FORCED** on One Another.

*"Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus...To Philemon our beloved and fellow worker..." (v. 1)*

Paul is a prisoner **FOR** Christ: *He is a prisoner not because he did anything wrong, but because he is doing what is right!*

Paul is a prisoner **OF** Christ: *He is a prisoner not so much of Rome but of the Lord Jesus Christ!*

1. Real fellowship must be **FREELY CHOSEN** by one another. (vv. 8-10)
2. Breakthrough fellowship is freely chosen by those who are **BELOVED**. (vv. 9, 1)
  - Paul had the **AUTHORITY** to command Philemon to do what God demands!
  - Paul chose to use the **APPEAL** of COMPASSION to motivate Philemon to freely choose what God desires!

#### Fundamental #2 Real Fellowship Is Always a Result of **RELEASING** Our Rights.

*"Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother..."*

*Real Fellowship Is Always a Result of...*

1. Releasing our **RIGHTS** to the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Releasing our **DESIRE** for real fellowship and refreshing relationships with others to the Lord.
3. Releasing our **NEED** for others to do what is right in obeying God.

#### Fundamental #3 Real Fellowship Is Always **PERSONAL** but Never **PRIVATE**.

*"Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our beloved friend and fellow laborer, to Apphia our sister, Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:" (vv. 1-2)*

1. Philemon was personally **RESPONSIBLE** for the breakthrough with Onesimus.

### Observe All the Singular “YOU”

- 10 I **appeal to you** for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment,
- 12 I have sent him back **to you** in person, that is, *sending* my very heart,
- 15 For perhaps he was for this reason separated **from you** for a while, that **you would have him back** forever,
- 17 If then **you regard** me a partner, **accept him as you would** me.
- 20 Yes, brother, let me benefit from **you** in the Lord; **refresh** my heart in Christ.
- 21 Having confidence in **your obedience**, I write **to you**, since I know that **you will do** even more than what I say.
- 23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, **greet**s you, **24** as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers.

2. Philemon was also personally **ACCOUNTABLE** for real fellowship to the rest of the church.

### Observe All the Plural “Y’ALLS”

- 3 Grace to **you** and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 22 At the same time also **prepare** (singular!) me a lodging, for I hope that through **your prayers** I will be given to you.
- 25 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with **your** spirit.

## Fundamental #4 Real Fellowship Is Never Possible Apart from Divine **RESOURCES**.

*"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." (v. 3).*

1. Divine Resources: **GRACE** and **PEACE**.

- Grace is that undeserved gift from God that gives us the power and desire to do His will – *including breaking through the barriers to real fellowship with one another!*
- Peace is the result of receiving God’s grace and enables us to experience the rest, the rejoicing, and the refreshment that comes from breakthrough fellowship with God and others through the Lord Jesus Christ!

2. Divine Relationship: God the **FATHER** and the **LORD** Jesus Christ.

- The Fatherhood of God provides the needed **RESOURCES** to release our rights and risk accepting others who have wronged us!
- The Lordship of Jesus Christ provides the needed **RELATIONSHIP** to receive God’s resources and experience the refreshment of breakthrough fellowship with one another! (vv. 6, 25)

*In the little Epistle to Philemon, Onesimus, who is a runaway rebel, is restored to his master’s home no longer as a slave but as a beloved brother. The epistle graphically illustrates that which God does in salvation through Jesus Christ. God created man to be in subjection to Himself and through him to subject all creation to the Creator. Early in created history man rebelled against the Creator. The history of the creature—and the history of the world—is the history of rebellion against God. No rebel would voluntarily surrender to the one against whom he is rebelling. And unless a God of mercy and grace subdued the rebel, subjected him to Himself, and brought him to Himself through the salvation that is in Jesus Christ, he would continue as a rebel.*

*Christians look at the cross of Calvary, not to watch the suffering of Christ, but because that is where sinful men belong. Their Christ was passing the very debt that man had incurred. When He cried, “It is finished,” He was saying to God that the debt had been paid to the fullest. It is that One who invites all to Himself. Paul could say, “I, Paul, the prisoner, beseech you.” Christ says, “I, the crucified One, invite you to Myself.” Man as a rebel against God is invited to come to God in response to the plea of God’s prisoner.*

*– J. Dwight Pentecost, An Exposition of Philemon*