



The Drone Series

A 52-Week Journey Through the Bible

Soaring through the pages of the Bible and embarking on an inspiring weekly journey from **Genesis to Revelation!** Dive into transformative insights that will uplift your spirit and deepen your understanding. Experience the power of scripture like never before!

We understand that spiritual growth can be a deeply personal journey, and we invite you to join us as we explore a different book of the Bible each week. It's a wonderful opportunity to reflect and find inspiration together. We encourage you to invite a friend to join us, whether in person or online, so we can support each other on this meaningful path.

Background Matters

Paul was a prisoner of the Roman Empire, but actually his imprisonment was because of his witness for the Savior. Paul called himself “a prisoner of Christ Jesus” (Phile. 9). Epaphras was his “fellow prisoner” (v. 23).

Adding the words **and Timothy our brother** strengthened the weight of Paul’s sympathy and love. Timothy’s name was also joined with Paul’s in the salutations to five of Paul’s other epistles (2 Cor., Phil., Col., 1 and 2 Thes.).

The readers (v. 1b–2).

V.1b. About all that is known of Philemon in the New Testament is disclosed in the words, **To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker**. He was loved by Paul (“dear friend” is the rendering of *agapētō*, lit., “loved” or “beloved”; cf. v. 16); and Paul considered Philemon on his level as a “fellow worker” (cf. the pl. “fellow workers,” v. 24).

Philemon was a well-to-do Christian of the Apostolic Age, in whose home at Colosse the church met. “Fellow worker” does not necessarily suggest that Paul and Philemon labored together; more likely, Philemon worked to build up the church in Colosse while Paul served in



nearby Ephesus (see “Destination” under the Book of Philemon’s *Introduction*). Paul also addressed Philemon as “brother” in verses 7 and 20.¹

Apphia our sister was most likely the wife of Philemon. She may have possibly served in a semi-official position in the church in their home.²

Paul then gave his recommendations regarding the runaway slave Onesimus. Throughout this plea the apostle’s words were courteous, and yet they bore a note of authority and earnestness. He revealed a double truth. Onesimus was now a *son* in the faith to Paul (v. 10), and Onesimus was now a *brother* to Philemon (v. 16). The latter forms a Christian reply to the horrible institution of slavery. Onesimus, in the lowest social status in the Roman world—a slave with no rights—was on a spiritual plane equal with his owner Philemon and with the leading apostle!

Therefore introduces the application of Paul’s prior words (vv. 4–7). Philemon’s love, demonstrated to all the saints, should now include Onesimus. As an apostle Paul said he **could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do**, but he refrained. The word “bold” is *parrēsian*, rendered “courage” and “confidence” in Hebrews (3:6; 10:19, 35).

a plea for love’s sake (v. 9)

Paul’s **appeal** was **on the basis of love**, probably Philemon’s love (cf. vv. 5, 7). To receive back and forgive Onesimus would be a laudable expression of Philemon’s love to both Onesimus and Paul. Further motivation for heeding Paul’s plea was that Paul was both **an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus** (cf. v. 1). Being an “old man” (*presbytēs*) meant that Paul had authority (since older men in those days were considered wise and thus authoritative) and also that Paul’s position as an *imprisoned* old man greatly restricted what he himself could do for Onesimus. Also, the reminder that Paul was imprisoned might appeal to Philemon’s sympathy. Thus Onesimus’ restitution depended on Philemon. Paul’s calling himself an old man undoubtedly was in contrast to Onesimus rather than to Philemon.³

This Week’s Drone Series focuses on the Book of Philemon, highlighting two significant themes from this epistle: thanksgiving and reconciliation. Philemon was a prominent Christian during the Apostolic Age whose residence in Colosse served as a meeting place for the church. Notably, the letter addresses the complex issue of slavery, specifically relating to Onesimus, who had been a runaway slave. This gentile congregation gathered in the home of Pastor Philemon and potentially his wife, Apphia, who may have been wronged by Onesimus prior to his

¹ Edwin C. Deibler, “Philemon,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 770.

² Edwin C. Deibler, “Philemon,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 770.

³ Edwin C. Deibler, “Philemon,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 772.



transformative encounter with the Apostle Paul. For this discussion, the analysis will remain focused on the letter's primary themes rather than broader cultural dynamics of the Roman period. But let's embrace the topics of Thanksgiving and Reconciliation for the sake of spiritual growth.

Thanksgiving and Reconciliation: A Godly Viewpoint

Philemon 1:1–22

Topics:

Encouragement, Friendship, Prayer, Relationships, Slavery, Thankfulness, Words

Study Guide 43 *This study guide presents daily assignments that are specifically crafted to enhance your **growth in the Word**. Embrace each moment to meditate and reflect, and watch as your spiritual maturity flourishes through your dedicated efforts.*

Open It, Mondays. Open your heart and mind to the truth of the Word.

1. *What role have someone's words of encouragement played in your life?

Explore It, Tuesdays, keep the rhythm of personal study moving.

2. What do we know about the church from this brief introduction? (1:2)

3. What two godly qualities did Paul desire for his readers? (1:3)

4. *What was always a part of Paul's prayers? (1:4)



5. *What had Paul heard about the readers of this letter? (1:5)

6. *How did Paul pray for his audience? (1:6)

7. What had Philemon done for the other Christians in the region? (1:7)

8. *When should we ever tell someone that we are praying for him or her

Explore It, Wednesdays, keep the rhythm of personal study moving.

9. *How can compliments and encouragement influence someone's life?

10. *Who in your life needs a word of compliment or encouragement at this time?

11. What type of attitude did Paul project toward Philemon? (1:8–9)

12. *How did Paul describe his relationship with Onesimus? (1:10–11)

13. *Why was Paul sending Onesimus back to Philemon? (1:12–16)

14. What happened to Onesimus during the time he had been away from Philemon and with Paul? (1:15–16)



15. ***How did Paul want Philemon to greet Onesimus when he returned? (1:17)***

16. Of what debt did Paul remind Philemon? (1:19)

Get It Thursdays, keep the rhythm of personal study moving.

17. *What response from Philemon did Paul anticipate? (1:20–21) Why?

18. For what future event did Paul hope? (1:22)

19. Why do you think this short letter related to a specific relationship problem is included in the Bible?

20. What risks did Onesimus take by going back to Philemon?

21. *What role should we play in helping people be reconciled to others with whom they have had conflicts?

22. *What do you think was Philemon's response when Onesimus returned to him? Why?

Drive it Home, Fridays, keep the rhythm of personal study moving.



23. What broken relationship or promise from your earlier life are you willing to take steps to rectify this week?

24. *What can you do this week to help other people settle their disputes or separations?

25. Who needs your affirmation this week to better understand the changes God is working in his or her life?

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