



Discussion Questions • Philemon 17-25 NIV

1. Read Philemon 1-25. Then re-read Philemon 17-25.
 - a. What is Paul instructing Philemon to do? What verses would you use to support your answer?
 - b. Which of these two instructions in Philemon 17-25 is more central to the letter of Philemon?
 - i. What is your rationale for this answer?
 - c. Does Paul believe that Philemon will *welcome Onesimus* back? Why or why not?
2. Paul believes that Philemon will respond to this instruction with obedience (v. 21). For many of us, we function with a view that Christians are unable to act *Christianly*. We have so many examples of Christians acting like hypocrites, and acting in ways that we think Christians ought not behave.
 - a. Why would Paul expect Philemon to respond with forgiveness towards Onesimus?
 - b. Are there other passages of Scripture, particularly other letters Paul has written, that would provide a rationale for why Paul expects Christians to act like Christians?
 - c. We all have examples of Christians acting like hypocrites. But take a minute to think through the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians.
 - i. Are there Christians in your life that you have seen a track record in their lives of acting “*Christianly*”? Tell some examples of Christians who you know that have a great example of “fruit” coming from their lives.
3. Read Acts 15:36-41. About ten years before writing this letter to Philemon, Paul had broken relationship with Mark, and yet here he is in Philemon calling Mark his “fellow worker.” Paul has modeled forgiveness and restoration. He has practiced what he preaches.
 - a. Forgiveness is a central theme in the letter from Paul to Philemon. It is easy to identify other Christians who “don’t act Christianly”, but act hypocritically.
 - i. Is it possible that we are equally hypocritical in refusing to extend forgiveness to those who wronged us, or to confess our sins to those we have wronged?
 - ii. Are there situations in your life where you have not extended forgiveness (either privately in your heart, or publicly within a conversation) to someone who has wronged you?
 - iii. Are there situations in your life where you have not confessed or repented of doing wrong to others?

OPTIONAL: What is one thing you are willing to change in your life as a result of what you have learned from the discussion?

Wrap Up and Prayer

Pray for each other as you apply what you have learned regarding forgiveness and repentance, along with other requests.