

Reconciled

A STUDY IN PHILEMON

Above and Beyond
Philemon 21-25
November 24, 2019

Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. - **Philemon 21**

I. PAUL'S CONFIDENCE IN PHILEMON

- Whatever Paul is asking from Philemon, he's confident that he will go beyond his expectations in fulfilling his wishes (vs. 21).
- Paul wants Onesimus freed at best, accepted and welcomed at least (vs. 17).
- Philemon is not a slave. He can make his own choices. Paul lovingly asks him to consider his options with his appeal now made known (vss. 17-20).
- Paul wants Philemon to know that he can expect to see (and possibly host) him in the future (vs. 22).
- Paul concludes the letter in his typical fashion. Epaphras, John Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke send greetings (Col. 1:7, 4:12; Acts 12:12, 15:39; 2 Tim. 4:11; Acts 19:29, 27:2; 2 Tim. 4:10; Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11).

II. AN ABOVE AND BEYOND FAITH

- As Christ-followers, we are not called to the lowest level of obedience (Matt. 22:36-37; 1 Tim. 6:11-16).
- The law was a shadow. Christ is the reality. Serve him now in freedom and confidence (Col. 2:16-23).
- We have great freedom in Christ. We have true and genuine choices to make. We must not use that freedom to indulge our sinful natures (2 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 5:1, 5:13-14).
- In our freedom, obedience is key. Those who love Jesus keep his word, those who do not, refuse to keep his word (John 14:23-24).
- Paul expects Philemon to go above and beyond in obedience. Christ expects nothing less from us (Acts 9:15-16; 1 Cor. 10:23-24; Rev. 2:1-5).

KNOW: In our walk with Christ, we should not look for the lowest level of obedience necessary for salvation, but for the highest level of faith and love for Christ leading to joyful obedience.

DO: Go above and beyond in your walk with Christ.

Suggested Reading:

The Radical Disciple by John R.W. Stott (LifePoint Library #284.4)

Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families

Please Read Philemon

1. How does Paul conclude this letter to Philemon? Do you see any implications from the conclusion?
2. Why, do you think, is Paul confident of Philemon's willingness to do more than Paul asks?
3. Could you say honestly that your faith and commitment to Christ are more pronounced today than they were a year ago?
4. What have you learned from our 4-week study in Philemon? What questions remain for you?