



NEW TESTAMENT • PAULINE LETTERS

Philemon

A relationship transformed by the gospel.

AUTHORSHIP • Paul.

DATE & CONTEXT • Often dated AD 60–62; imprisonment location is debated.

The big picture

Paul appeals to Philemon concerning Onesimus, an enslaved man who has become a fellow believer. Instead of treating Onesimus as a problem to be managed, Paul identifies him as a beloved brother and offers to bear a cost himself. The brief letter challenges the social power of its setting through an appeal to love. Its reception requires honesty about slavery’s harm and the dignity of every person.

Words to carry

“Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved”

Philemon 1:16 • KJV • excerpt

Live it

- 01 Notice how power shapes one of your relationships.
- 02 Advocate for a person whose dignity is being diminished.
- 03 Take responsibility for a cost that could help repair a wrong.

Pause & reflect

When does reconciliation require more than kind words?

Original SELAH37 introduction. Read the text in context; historical dates and attributions are approximate.

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