

**Before we Choose
to Follow Jesus,
We are All
Slaves to Sin**

What does it mean to be a slave to something?

Something that consumes your thoughts/ passions
(**Genesis 4** – Cain's jealousy and anger)

Sinners without repentance or grace
(**John 8** – Jesus tells crowd they are slaves to sin)

Everyone is a slave to something or someone
(**Romans 6** – we're either slaves to sin or servants of God)

Understanding the short epistle of Philemon

Written by Paul, likely, while under house arrest in Rome around A.D. 61

At that time, slaves represented around 30% of the population.

Philemon lived in Colossae and was likely somewhat wealthy

Philemon hosted church at his home and was likely married to Apphia

Onesimus was Philemon's slave and had recently run away

Onesimus appears to have stolen (money?) from Philemon

Onesimus was introduced to Jesus by Paul and sent to back to Philemon

Philemon 1:1-3 (NIV2011) ¹ Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker—

² also to Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier—and to the church that meets in your home:

³ Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul is in prison while he awaits his trial (he wrote Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians also while in prison). Timothy is faithfully helping. How is God using you during difficult circumstances?

Notice the order: 1. Grace; and 2. Peace. You'll never have supernatural peace without first having grace. Until grace is received, we are still slaves to sin. The true source of grace is God through Jesus' sacrifice.

Philemon is a dear brother in Christ. Archippus is listed as a faithful servant of Jesus in the Colossian letter. Apphia is believed to be Philemon's wife.

When you consider your sin, do you realize how great a gift grace is?

Philemon 1:4-6 (ESV) ⁴ I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, ⁵ because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and for all the saints, ⁶ and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.

Do you lift up your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ both in our congregation and others?

This is something we can all pray for. In every word and action, we are sharing our faith whether we realize it or not. Notice how encouraging Paul is to Philemon. Coming soon, in the letter, he'll be asking for a big favor...

Do you thank God for those who faithfully serve the Kingdom of God and effectively demonstrate Jesus' love?

Remember Onesimus, Philemon's runaway slave, is now truly free as he delivers this letter. **Are you presently enslaved?**

What are you a slave to?

Alcohol or drug addiction

Being busy or a job

Pursuit of wealth/ envy

Stealing/ swindling

Worry/ Anxiety

Sexual sin

Your kids' schedule/ limitations

Gossiping or dishonesty

Self esteem/ attention

Unforgiveness

Will you choose to be a bond-servant to the King of kings?

John 8:32 (HCSB) You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

John 8:36 (NASB) So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.