

# Philemon

A painting of a woman holding a child, with the word 'Philemon' overlaid in large red letters. The woman is depicted in a warm, golden-brown tone, and the child is in a darker, reddish-brown tone. The background is a swirling, abstract pattern of blue and green.

**To Forgive  
or Not to  
Forgive**

**Key Word**

245

**Forgiveness**

**Philemon**

**Theme**

23

**Forgive Others and  
Seek Forgiveness**

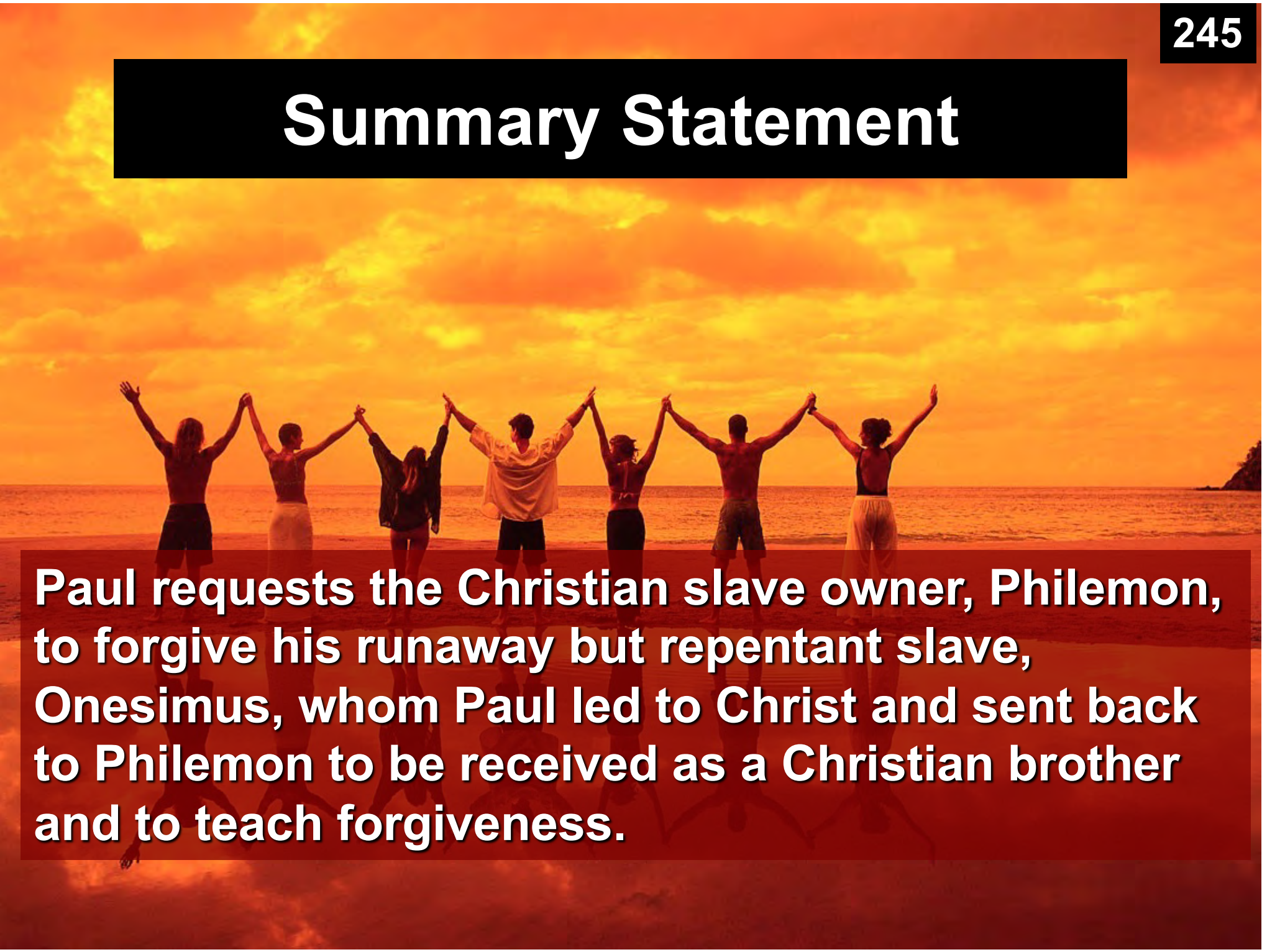
**Philemon**

# Key Verse

**“So if you consider me a partner, welcome him [Onesimus] as you would welcome me. If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me” (verses 17-18).**

**Philemon**

# Summary Statement



**Paul requests the Christian slave owner, Philemon, to forgive his runaway but repentant slave, Onesimus, whom Paul led to Christ and sent back to Philemon to be received as a Christian brother and to teach forgiveness.**

# Kingdom Statement

27f  
237

**Ironically, Rome imprisoned Onesimus for crimes against Emperor Nero and Rome imprisoned Paul for allegiance to King Jesus, but through Paul Onesimus discovered Jesus as the real King.**

**Philemon**

The house church concept looms large where Paul likely wrote the owner Philemon, mistress of the house Apphia, and their son, the key elder Archippus (1-2).

**Philemon**

# Redemption

27f

**Paul alludes to the atoning death of Jesus when applying the debt of Onesimus to Paul: “If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me” (17-18).**

**Philemon**

# Prophecy (Lord, Deity)

**Philemon placed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (5),  
from whom he received grace and peace (3).**

**Philemon**

## Forgive Others and Seek Forgiveness

<b>Greeting 1-3</b>		<b>Prayer &amp; Commendation 4-7</b>		<b>Appeal for Onesimus 8-21</b>			<b>Conclusion 22-25</b>
<b>Preface</b>		<b>Praise</b>		<b>Petition</b>			<b>Postscript</b>
<b>People Concerned</b>		<b>Philemon's Character</b>		<b>Onesimus' Conversion</b>			<b>Paul's Co-Workers</b>
<b>Authors 1a-b</b>	<b>Recipi- ents 1c-3</b>	<b>Thanks 4-5</b>	<b>Relation- ships 6-7</b>	<b>General Appeal 8-11</b>	<b>Reasons for Return 12-16</b>	<b>Specific Appeal 17-21</b>	<b>Preparations Greetings Blessing 22-25</b>

Rome to Colosse

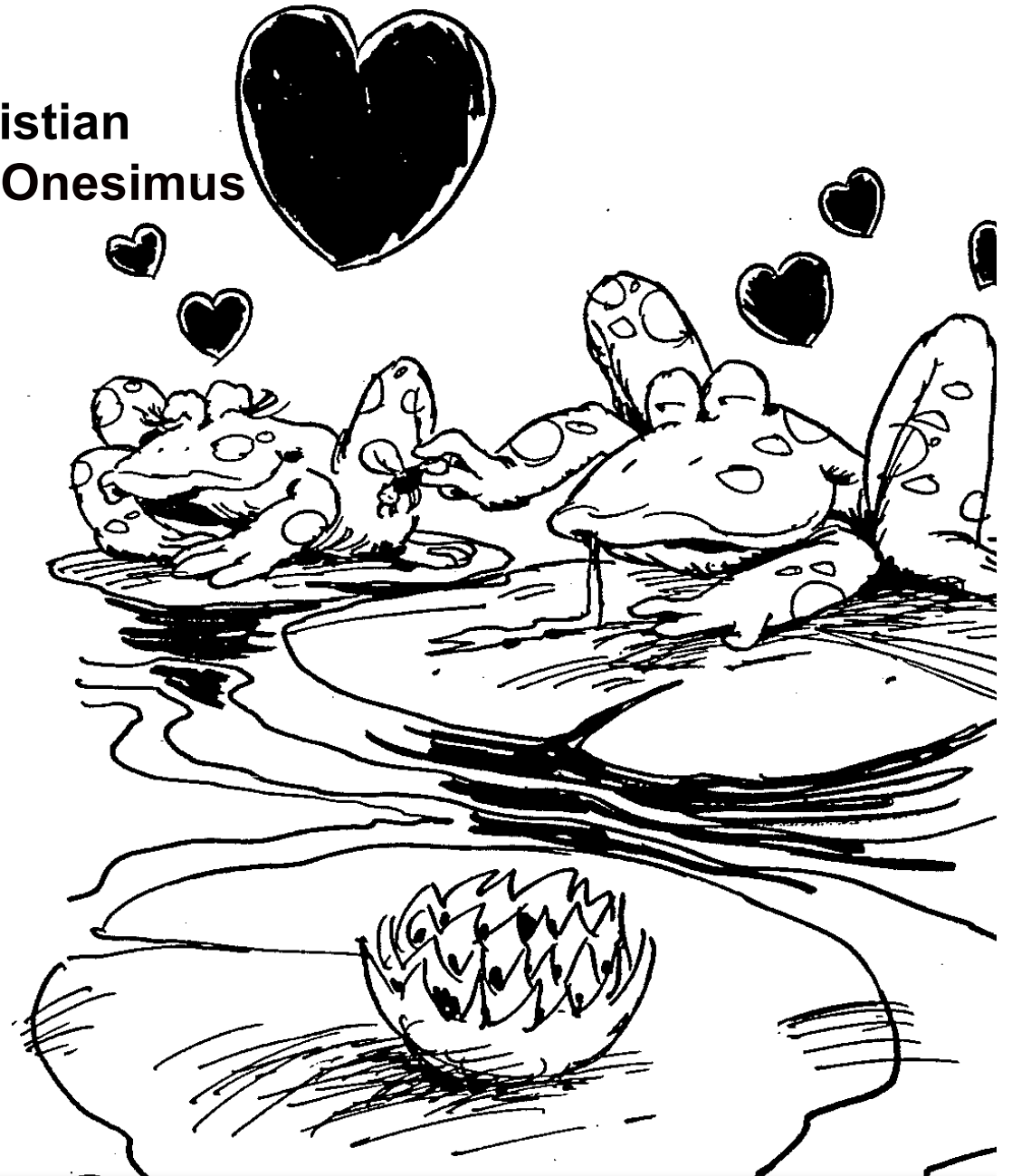
Fall AD 61

# Philemon

## Verses

- 1-7 **L**etter of Philemon's love
- 8-14 **O**nesimus becomes a Christian
- 15-20 **V**indication requested for Onesimus
- 21-25 **E**xpectation cited by Paul

# PHILEMON



A close-up photograph of a person's bare foot on a sandy surface. A thick, rusty metal chain is wrapped around the ankle and extends across the sand. The chain is made of large, interlocking links. The background is a soft-focus view of the sand and more of the chain.

**Be Forgiving**

***Philemon***

**Dr. Rick Griffith • Crossroads International Church Singapore  
BibleStudyDownloads.org**

# Conditional Forgiveness:



a. "I'll forgive you **if...**"

b. "I'll forgive—but I'll never **forget...**"

c. "I forgive you but don't expect me to change my **attitude.**"

**Philemon**

A black and white photograph of a hand holding a small, round pill with the word "Forgive" written on it. The hand is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the image, with the palm facing upwards. The pill is held between the thumb and index finger. The background is dark and out of focus.

*How to **forgive** those who  
offend us...*

**Philemon**

**I. Treat people  
in the best  
possible  
light (1-7).**

**Philemon**

II. *Forgive* so  
reconciliation  
transcends  
social  
barriers  
(8-21).



**Philemon**

# Main Idea

We can forgive  
**others** when we see  
how God has  
forgiven **us**.

Philemon

# Characteristics

## Philemon

Meaning of purple hyacinth:  
"I am sorry, please forgive me, sorrow"



Paul

1. P

2. P

3. P

4. T

5. P

6. F

7. F



is important:

(7-20).

ful to us

ful but good

oluntary not

6. Forgiveness reminds one that God is in control of painful events (vv. 15, 16).

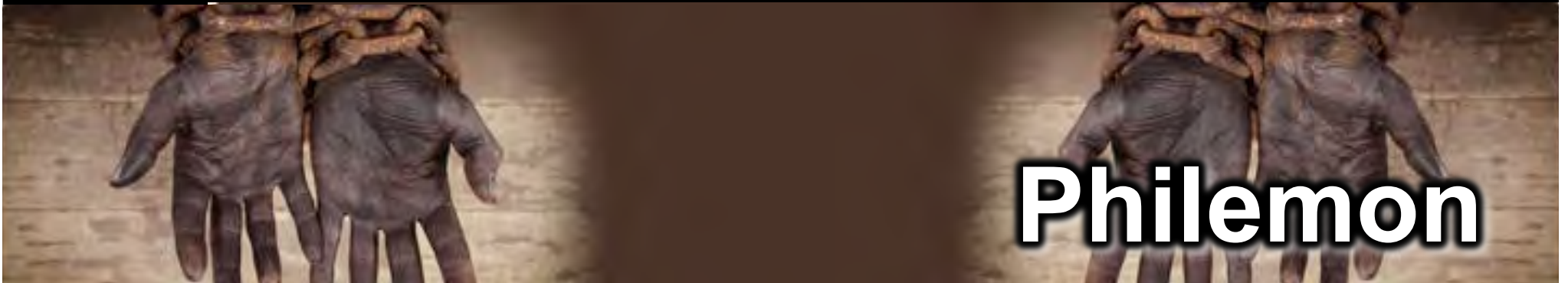
7. Forgiving others reminds us of how God forgave us (v.19b)

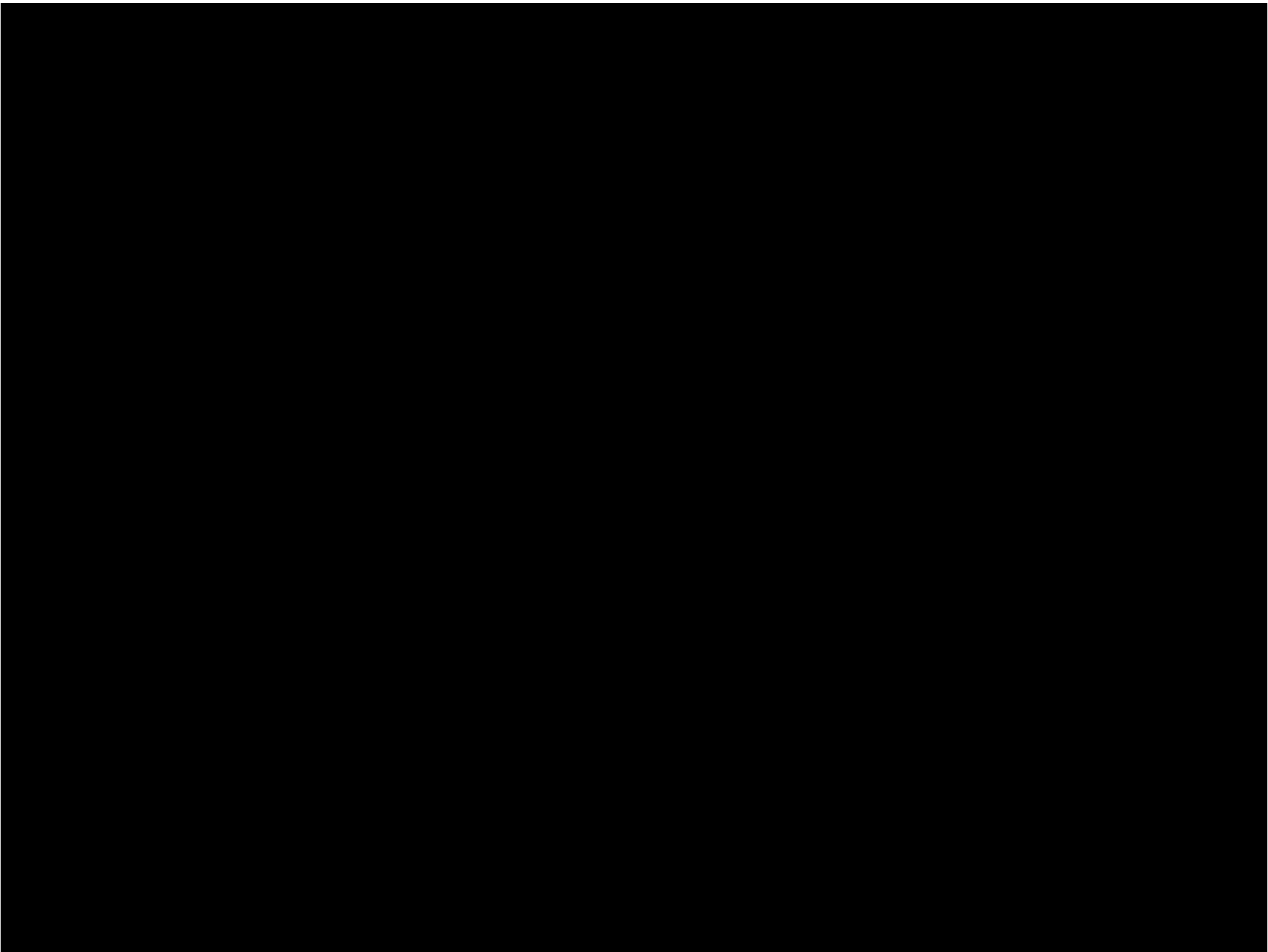
# • Application •

245

To whom do you best relate now?

1. Philemon the offended?
2. Onesimus the offender?
3. Paul the reconciler?
4. The church as affirmers?





# True *Koinonia* (Fellowship)

- "Fellowship of your faith" (v. 6)
- Fellowship involves participation
- Participation in Christ involves sharing and involvement with each other
- True fellowship means mutually participating in Christ  
→ forgiveness and reconciliation
- True fellowship promotes the good of everyone
- It involves changing perceptions and acting accordingly

This letter has a good example of:

- 3 outstanding debts
- Powerful reversals
- Outcome



*Jeremy Chew, East Asia School of Theology, Singapore*



# 3 Outstanding Debts

## Onesimus' Debt:

- He owed Philemon whatever he stole
- He owed Philemon his life
- ***Advice: Return to owner for due punishment***

## Paul's Debt:

- He owed Philemon the value of each day's work lost
- ***Advice: Charge any debts Onesimus owed to my account; I will pay them***

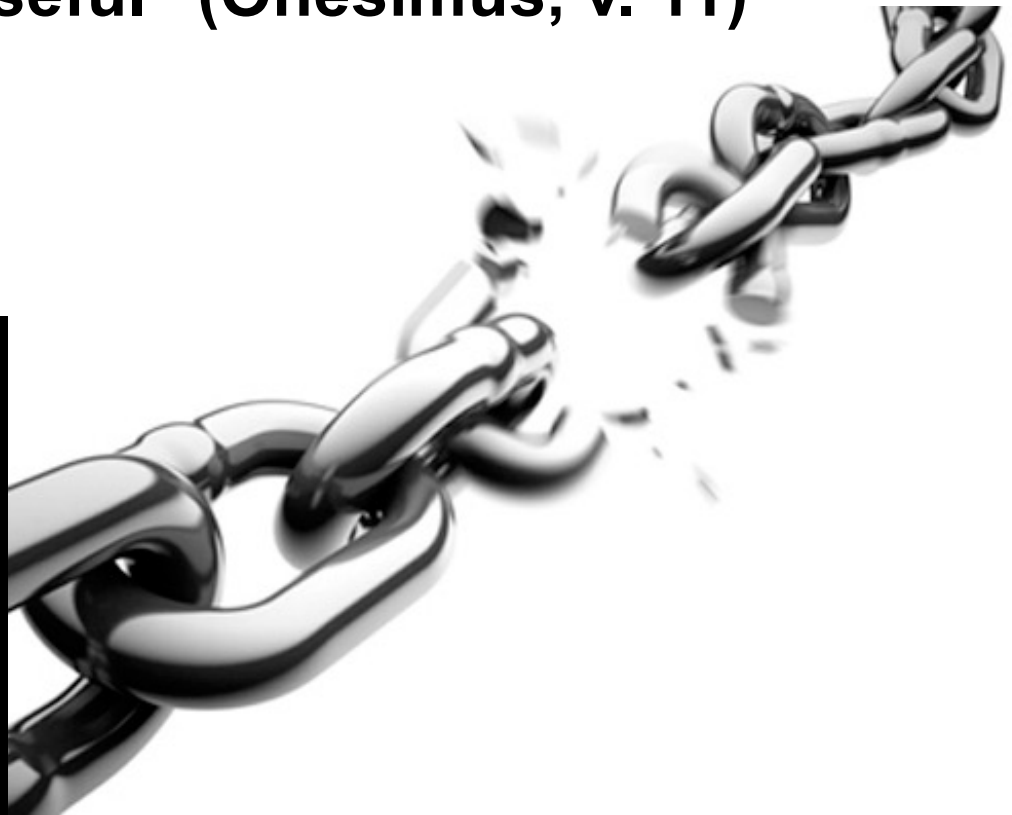
## Philemon's Debt:

- He owed Paul his new life in Christ (19)
- ***Advice: Welcome the runaway slave as a brother; but do better than that—return him to me***

# Powerful Reversals

- **Property** → **beloved brother**
- **Inferior** → **equal**
- **Useless** → **"useful"** (Onesimus, v. 11)

**Fellowship in  
Christ overturns  
all distinctions  
created by social  
structures**



# LES MISERABLES, Liam Neeson, 1998, was forgiven



**What reasons does Paul give in this letter to show why forgiveness is important?**

- 1. Forgiveness solidifies friendships (vv. 8-11, 17, 20).**
- 2. Restored relationships make people more helpful to us (v. 11).**
- 3. Forgiveness involves one's heart (v. 12).**
- 4. The sacrifice that forgiveness requires is painful but good for us (vv. 13, 18-19a).**
- 5. Forgiveness shows humility since it must be voluntary not forced (vv. 14, 21).**
- 6. It reminds us that God has His hand in the events which cause us pain (vv. 15, 16).**
- 7. Forgiving others reminds us of how God forgave us (v. 19b).**



# It's Your Blood

**It's Your blood that cleanses me,  
It's Your blood that gives me life,  
It's Your blood that took my place  
in redeeming sacrifice,  
Washes me...**

**Whiter than the snow, than the snow  
My Jesus,  
God's precious sacrifice.**

# Philemon

## Authorship

246

### External Evidence

The authenticity of Philemon was not questioned until objections were raised in the 4th century against its lack of doctrinal content. However, Jerome & Chrysostom vindicated the epistle & Pauline authorship has been universally held until the 19th century radical critics.

### Internal Evidence

Paul refers to himself three times as author (vv. 1, 9, 19).

# Philemon

## Characteristics

246-247

This "New Testament postcard" is the shortest letter of Paul's epistles.

The letter to Philemon probably provides the clearest example of the need to demonstrate forgiveness in the New Testament. Onesimus' return to his owner was in effect a life to ask for, but he still did it.

This writing illustrates the nature of imputation better than any other. Paul requests that all of Onesimus' sin be placed not upon Onesimus but upon himself. In like manner Christ took the sin of humanity upon Himself.

# Philemon

## Circumstances

246

Date (fall AD 61)  
Paul's 1st imprisonment in Rome is evident in parallels with the Colossian letter (cf. v. 23 with Col. 4:7-10)

Origin/Recipients  
Philemon (v. 1b), a Christian slave owner in Colosse, is the main addressee, but others in his church are included too (v. 2).

Rome

Colosse

## Occasion

During Paul's 1st imprisonment in Rome he led to Christ the fugitive slave of Philemon named Onesimus—who had done some injustices to & stolen from Philemon before he ran away. This letter to Philemon was sent with Onesimus to Colosse to convince Philemon to forgive Onesimus.

# Perspectives

- **Paul's short letter to Philemon demonstrates both the importance of forgiving offenders & also being forgiven as necessary decisions for walking with God.**
- **This views the letter from the perspective of both Onesimus and Philemon.**
- **The letter was not simply a personal correspondence to Philemon alone. It addresses others in the church and the uses the plural "you" in verse 25.**

A close-up photograph of a person's bare foot on a sandy surface. A thick, rusty metal chain is wrapped around the ankle and extends across the sand. The background is a bright, sandy beach.

**Be Forgiving**

***Philemon***

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**Corrie ten  
Boom**

# The Hiding Place



# Corrie ten Boom



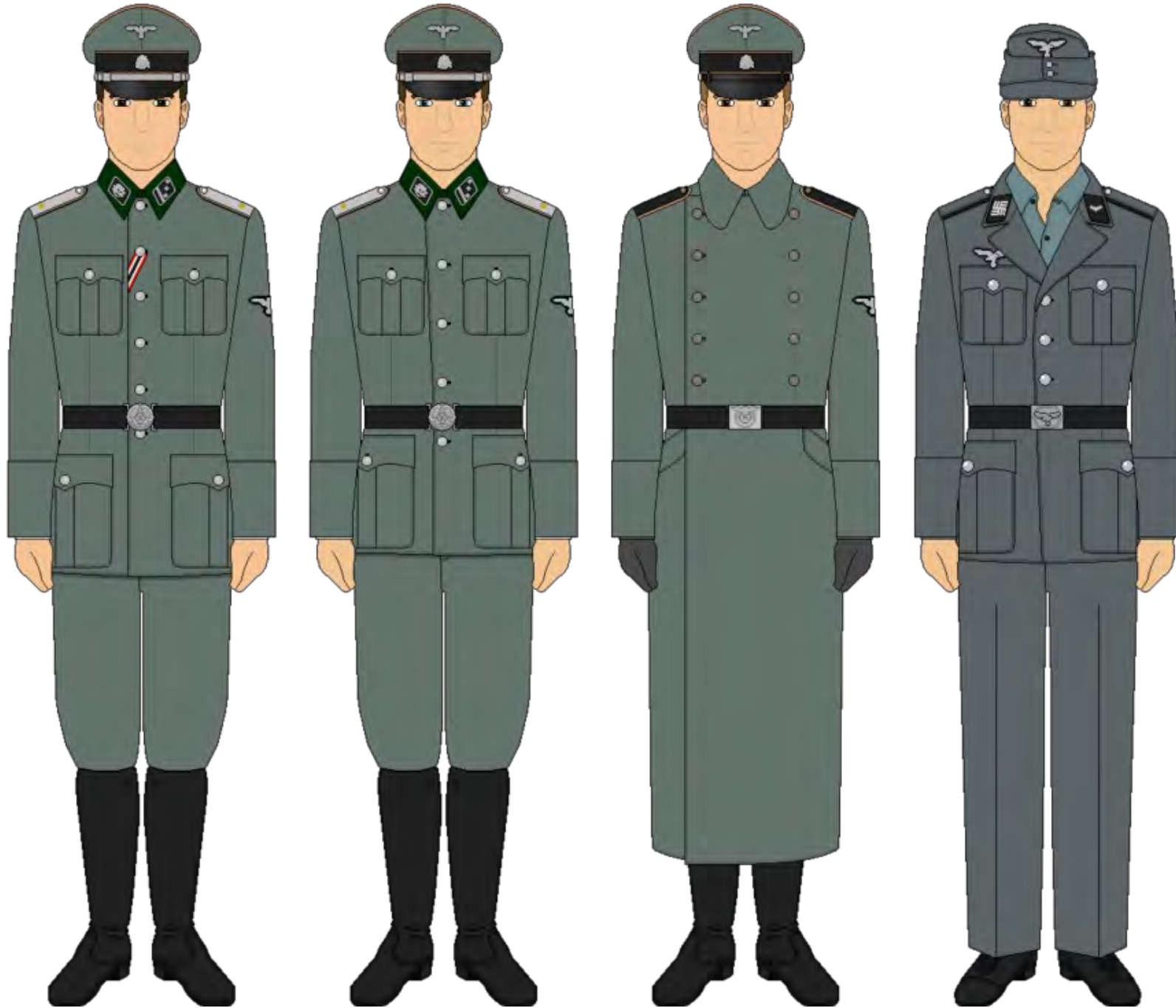


**The Guards**



**The Jews**

# German Guards

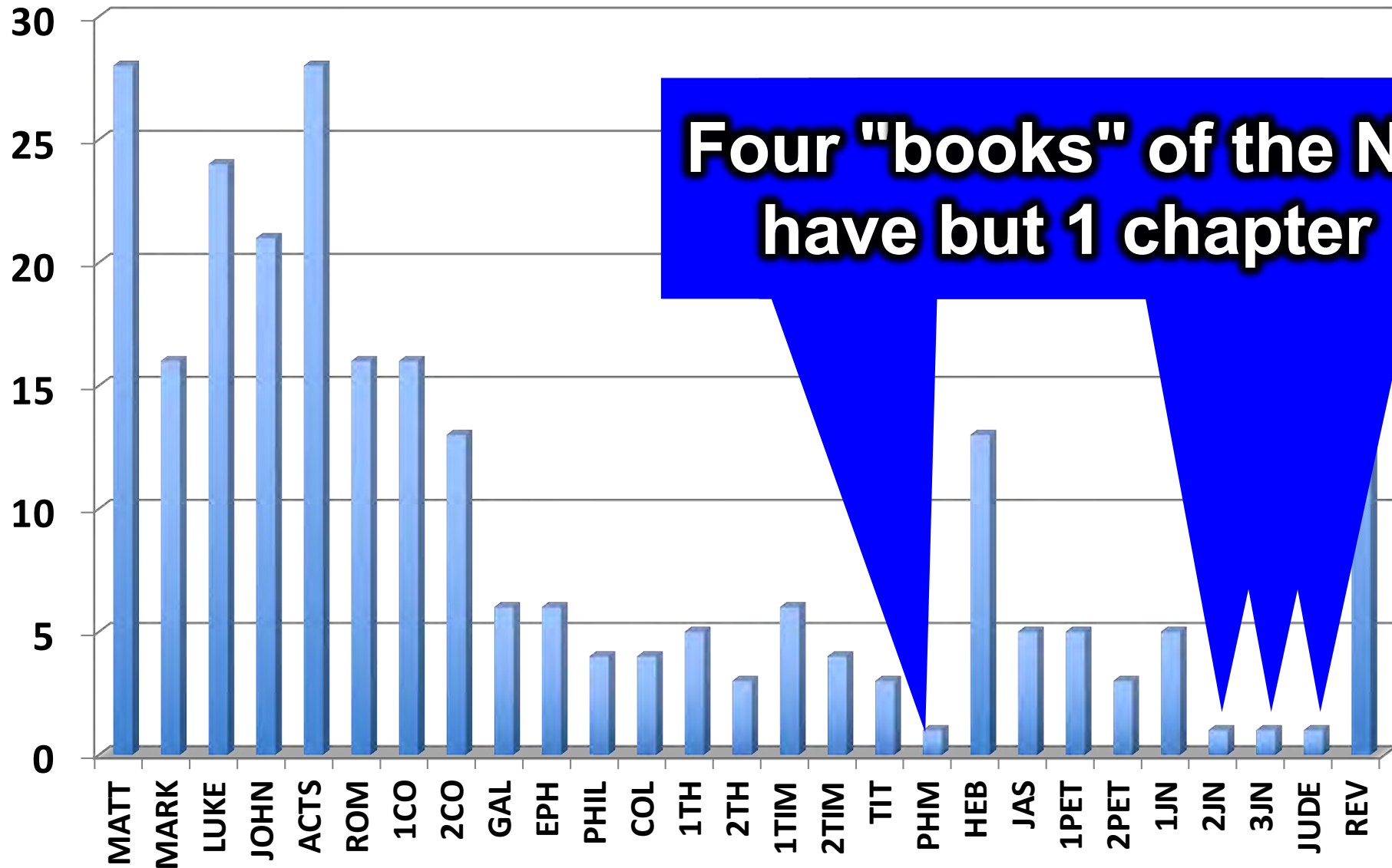




A black and white photograph of a hand holding a small, round pill with the word "Forgive" written on it. The hand is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the frame, with the palm facing upwards. The pill is held between the thumb and index finger. The background is dark and out of focus.

*How to **forgive** those who  
offend us...*

# Chapters in NT Books



Four "books" of the NT have but 1 chapter

# Verses in NT Emails

25

20

15

10

5

0

PHILEMON

2 JOHN

3 JOHN

JUDE

13

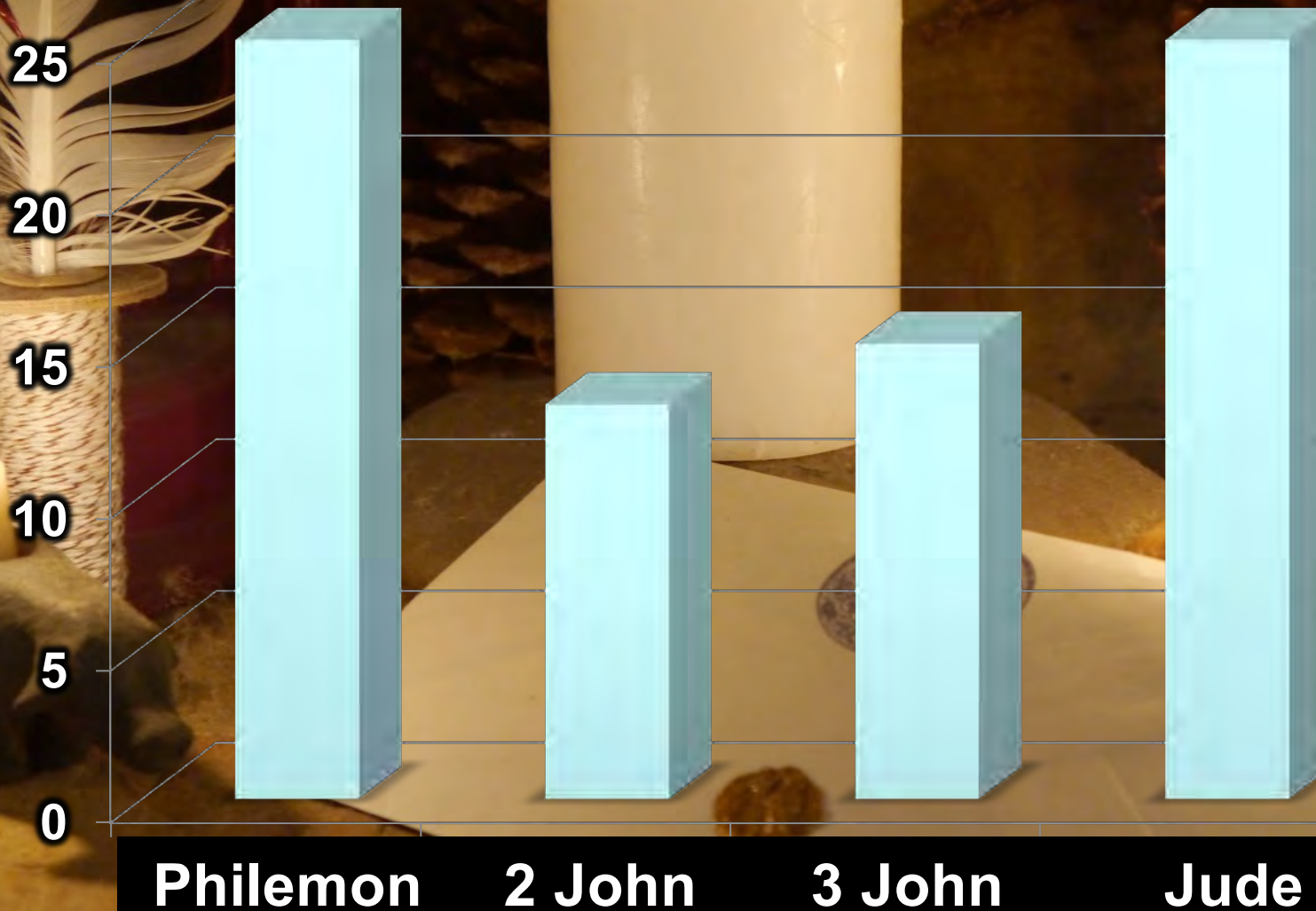
15

Words

245

219

# New Testament Emails



# Postcard to Philemon

# . Characteristics .

<sup>1</sup>Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,  
To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker, <sup>2</sup>to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church that meets in your home:

<sup>3</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Thanksgiving and Prayer

<sup>4</sup>I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, <sup>5</sup>because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. <sup>6</sup>I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. <sup>7</sup>Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints.

## Paul's Plea for Onesimus

<sup>8</sup>Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, <sup>9</sup>yet I appeal to you on the basis of love. I then, as Paul—an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus— <sup>10</sup>I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. <sup>11</sup>Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me.

<sup>12</sup>I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. <sup>13</sup>I would have liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. <sup>14</sup>But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced. <sup>15</sup>Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good— <sup>16</sup>no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.

<sup>17</sup>So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. <sup>18</sup>If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. <sup>19</sup>Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self. <sup>20</sup>I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. <sup>21</sup>Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask.

<sup>22</sup>And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers.

<sup>23</sup>Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. <sup>24</sup>And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.

<sup>25</sup>The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Shortest letter of Paul's epistles (25 verses)

**"This letter is from Paul, a prisoner for preaching the Good News about Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy. I am writing to Philemon, our beloved co-worker, <sup>2</sup>and to our sister Apphia, and to our fellow soldier Archippus, and to the church that meets in your house" (vv. 1-2 NLT).**



**"May God our Father and the Lord Jesus  
Christ give you grace and peace"  
(v. 3 NLT).**

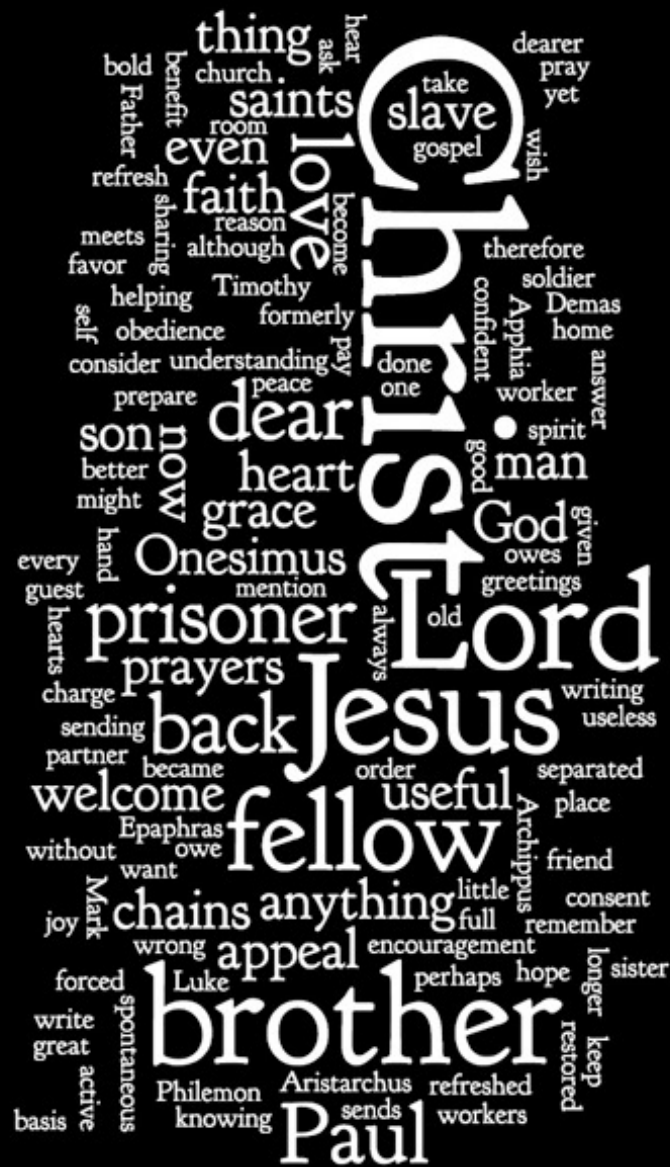


**"I always thank my God when I pray for you, Philemon, <sup>5</sup>because I keep hearing about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God's people"  
(vv. 4-5 NLT).**



**"And I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand and experience all the good things we have in Christ. <sup>7</sup>Your love has given me much joy and comfort, my brother, for your kindness has often refreshed the hearts of God's people" (vv. 6-7 NLT).**

"That is why I am boldly asking a favor of you. I could demand it in the name of Christ because it is the right thing for you to do. <sup>9</sup>But because of our love, I prefer simply to ask you. Consider this as a request from me—Paul, an old man and now also a prisoner for the sake of Christ Jesus"



(vv. 8-9 NLT).

**"I appeal to you to show kindness to my child, Onesimus. I became his father in the faith while here in prison.**

**<sup>11</sup>Onesimus hasn't been of much use to you in the past, but now he is very useful to both of us.**

**<sup>12</sup>I am sending him back to you, and with him comes my own heart" (vv. 10-12 NLT).**



**"I wanted to keep him here with me while I am in these chains for preaching the Good News, and he would have helped me on your behalf.**

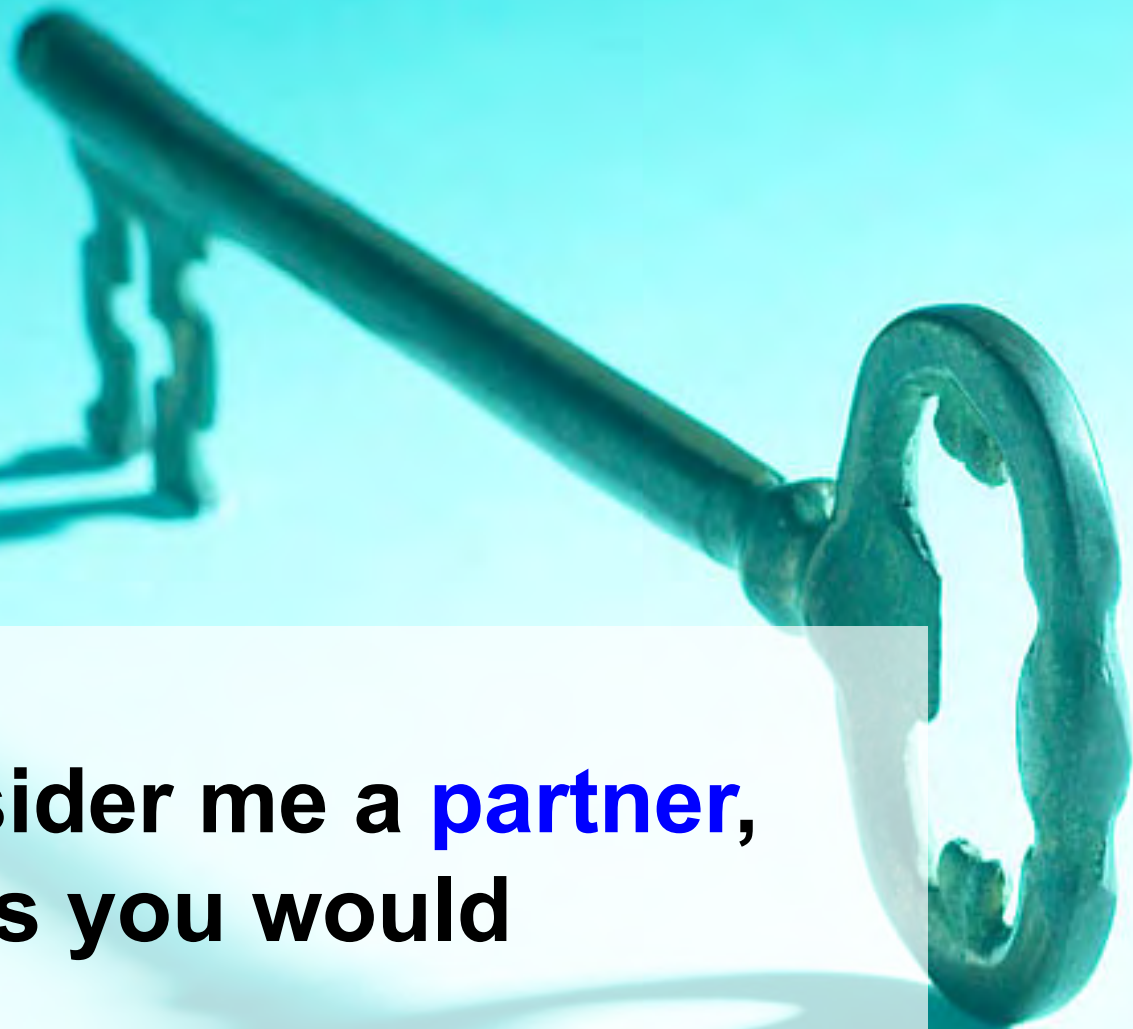


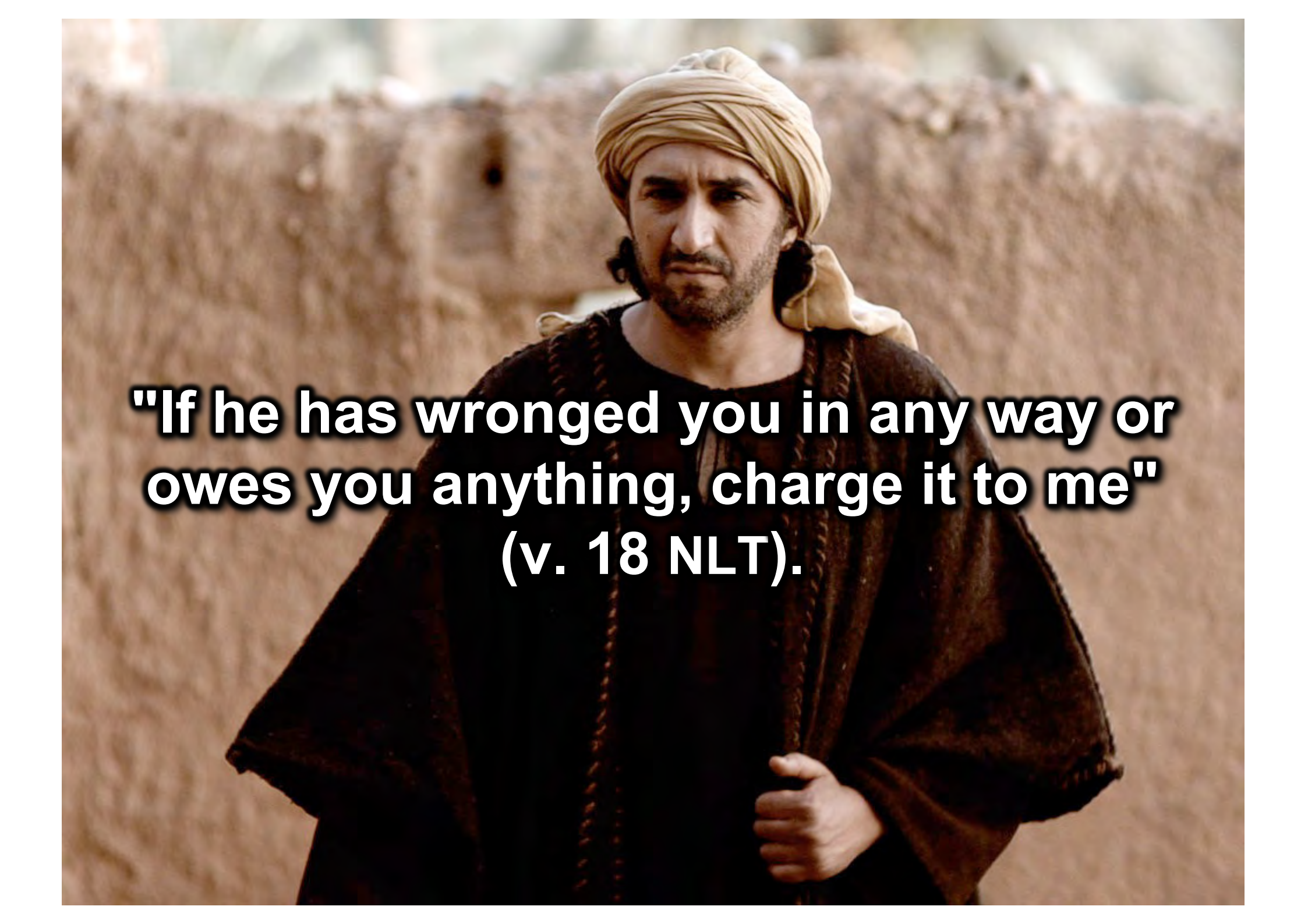
**<sup>14</sup>But I didn't want to do anything without your consent. I wanted you to help because you were willing, not because you were forced" (vv. 13-14 NLT).**

**"It seems you lost Onesimus for a little while so that you could have him back forever. <sup>16</sup>He is no longer like a slave to you. He is more than a slave, for he is a beloved brother, especially to me. Now he will mean much more to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord"  
(vv. 15-16 NLT).**

## Verse 17

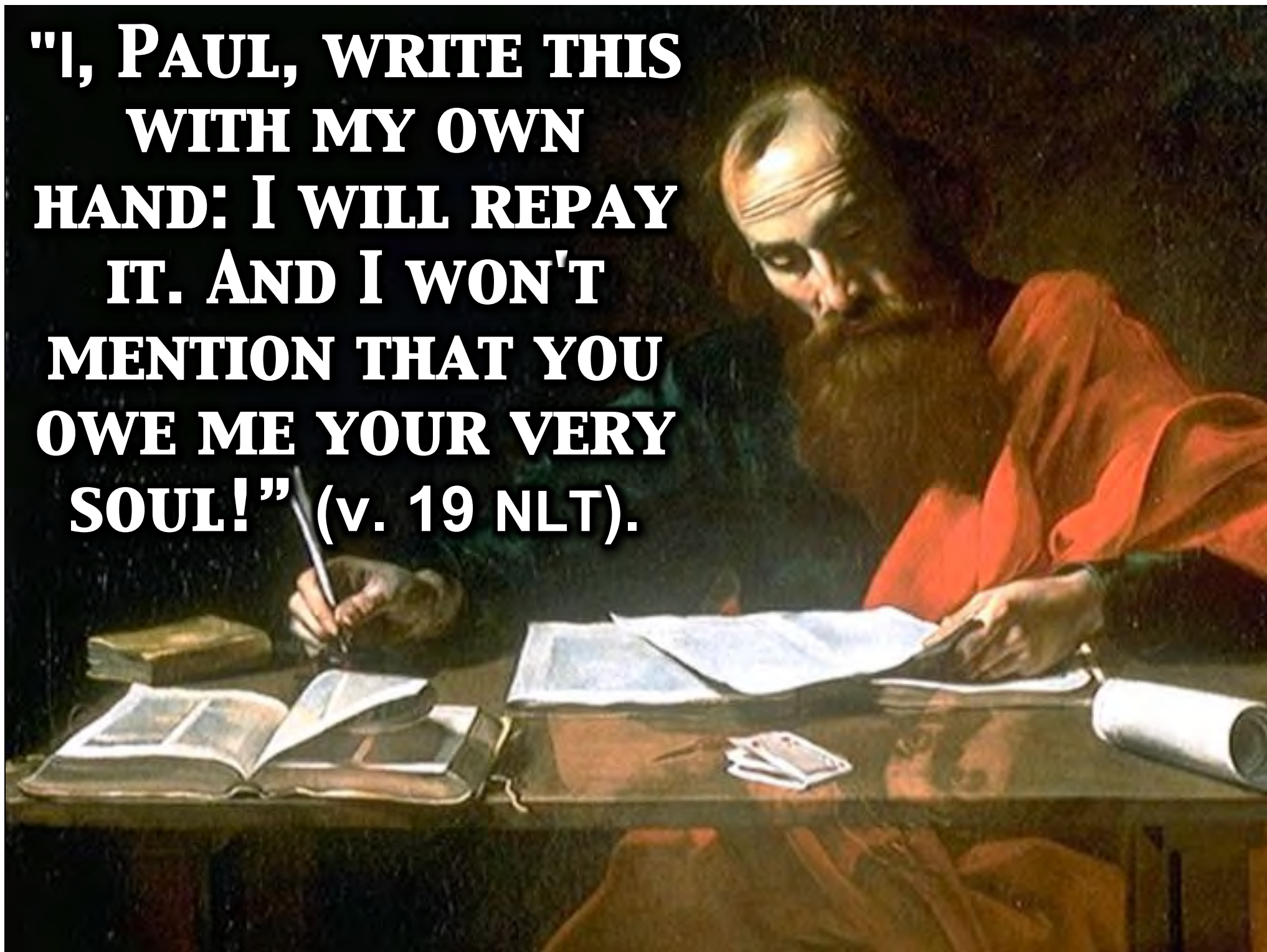
"So if you consider me a **partner**,  
welcome him as you would  
welcome me."

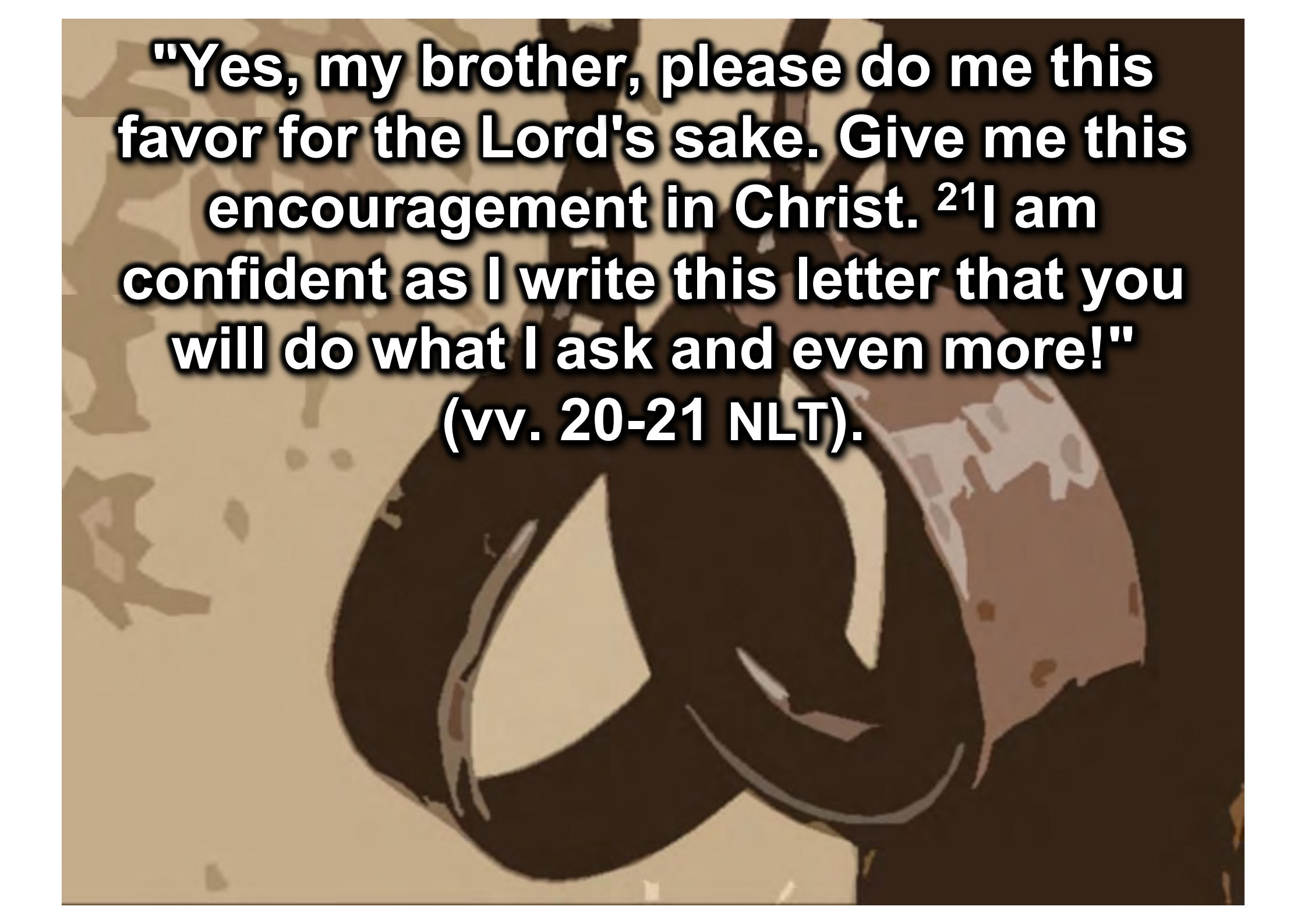


A man with a beard and a light-colored turban stands in front of a stone wall. He is wearing a dark, textured robe. The background is a blurred stone wall.

**"If he has wronged you in any way or  
owes you anything, charge it to me"  
(v. 18 NLT).**

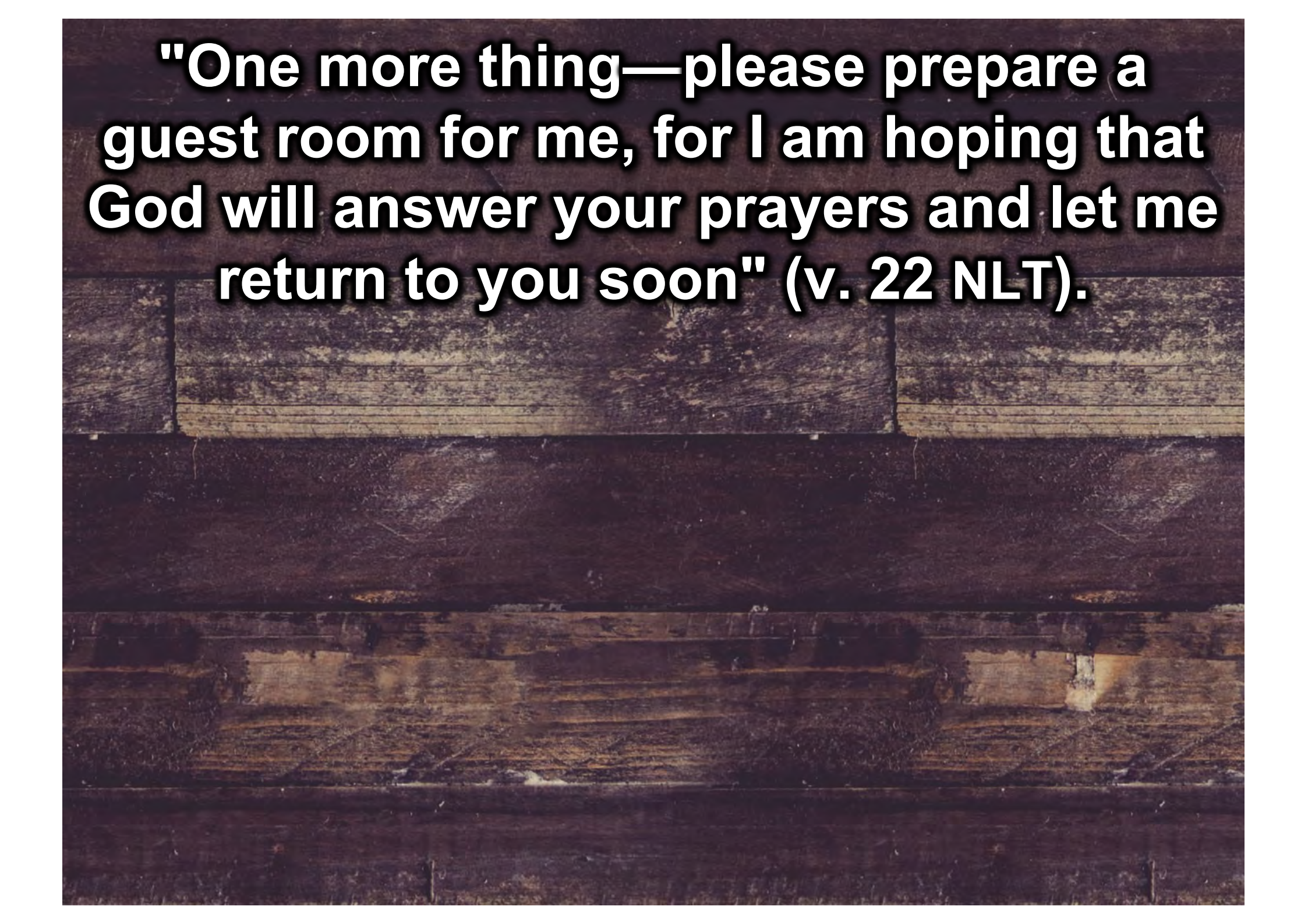
**"I, PAUL, WRITE THIS  
WITH MY OWN  
HAND: I WILL REPAY  
IT. AND I WON'T  
MENTION THAT YOU  
OWE ME YOUR VERY  
SOUL!" (v. 19 NLT).**





**"Yes, my brother, please do me this favor for the Lord's sake. Give me this encouragement in Christ. <sup>21</sup>I am confident as I write this letter that you will do what I ask and even more!"  
(vv. 20-21 NLT).**

**"One more thing—please prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that God will answer your prayers and let me return to you soon" (v. 22 NLT).**



**"Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. <sup>24</sup>So do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my co-workers" (vv. 23-24 NLT).**



**"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ  
be with your spirit" (v. 25 NLT).**



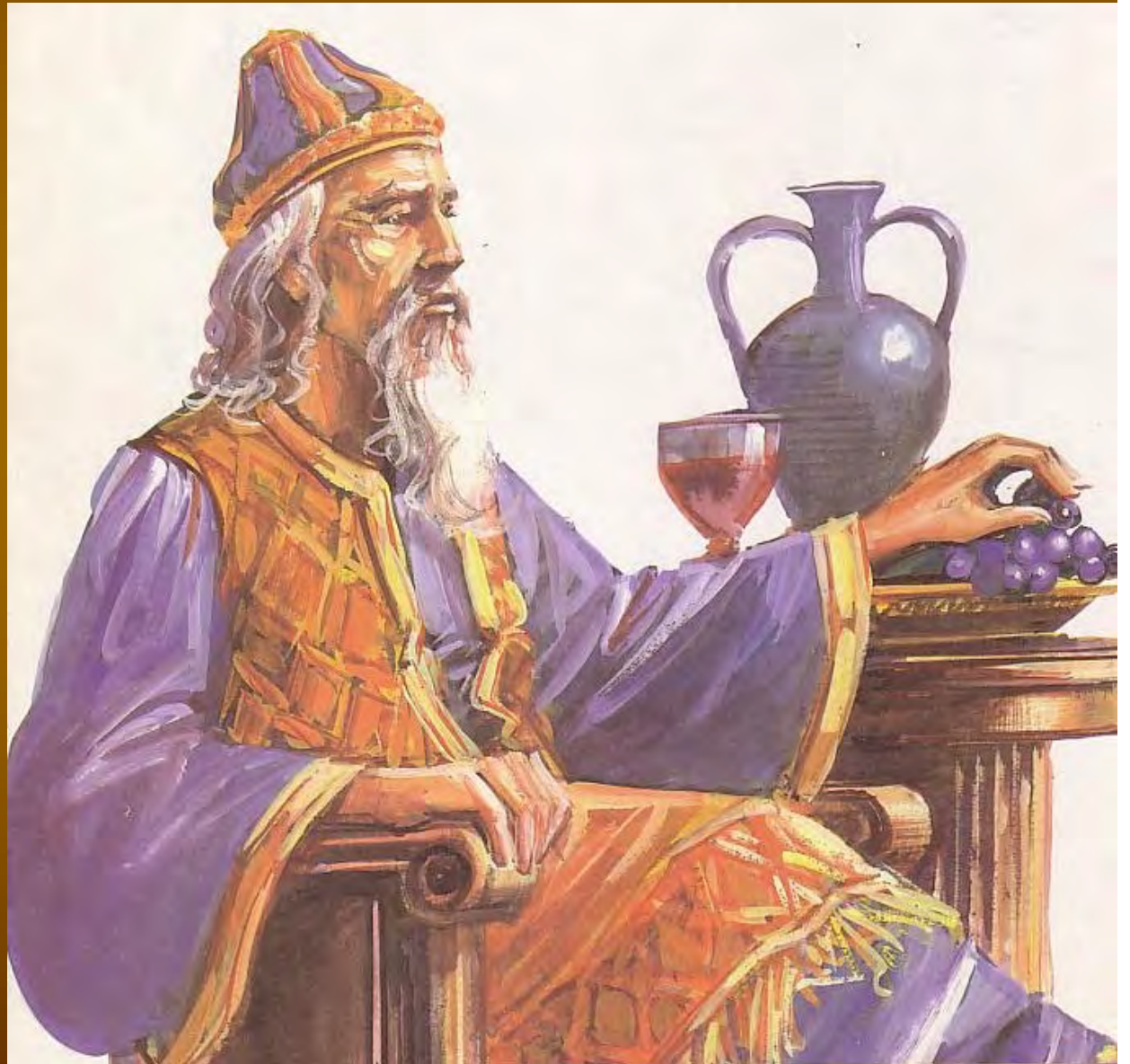
A black and white photograph of a hand holding a small, round pill with the word "Forgive" written on it. The hand is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the frame, with the palm facing upwards. The pill is held between the thumb and index finger. The background is dark and out of focus.

*How to **forgive** those who  
offend us...*

**Philemon 1-7**

# Philemon's Dilemma at Colosse

- What should the slave owner Philemon do with his repentant but returning slave Onesimus (now a Christian)?
- What are the implications for slave owners and employers?



**I. Treat people  
in the best  
possible  
light (1-7).**

**Philemon**

"This letter is from Paul, a **prisoner** for preaching the Good News about Christ Jesus, and from our **brother** Timothy. I am writing to Philemon, our **beloved co-worker**, <sup>2</sup>and to our **sister** Apphia, and to our **fellow soldier** Archippus, and to the church that meets in your house" (vv. 1-2 NLT).



# . Authorship .

**Paul**

**Verse 1**

**Paul .....**

**Verse 9**

**..... Paul .....**

**Verse 19**

**..... Paul.....**



**. Date .**

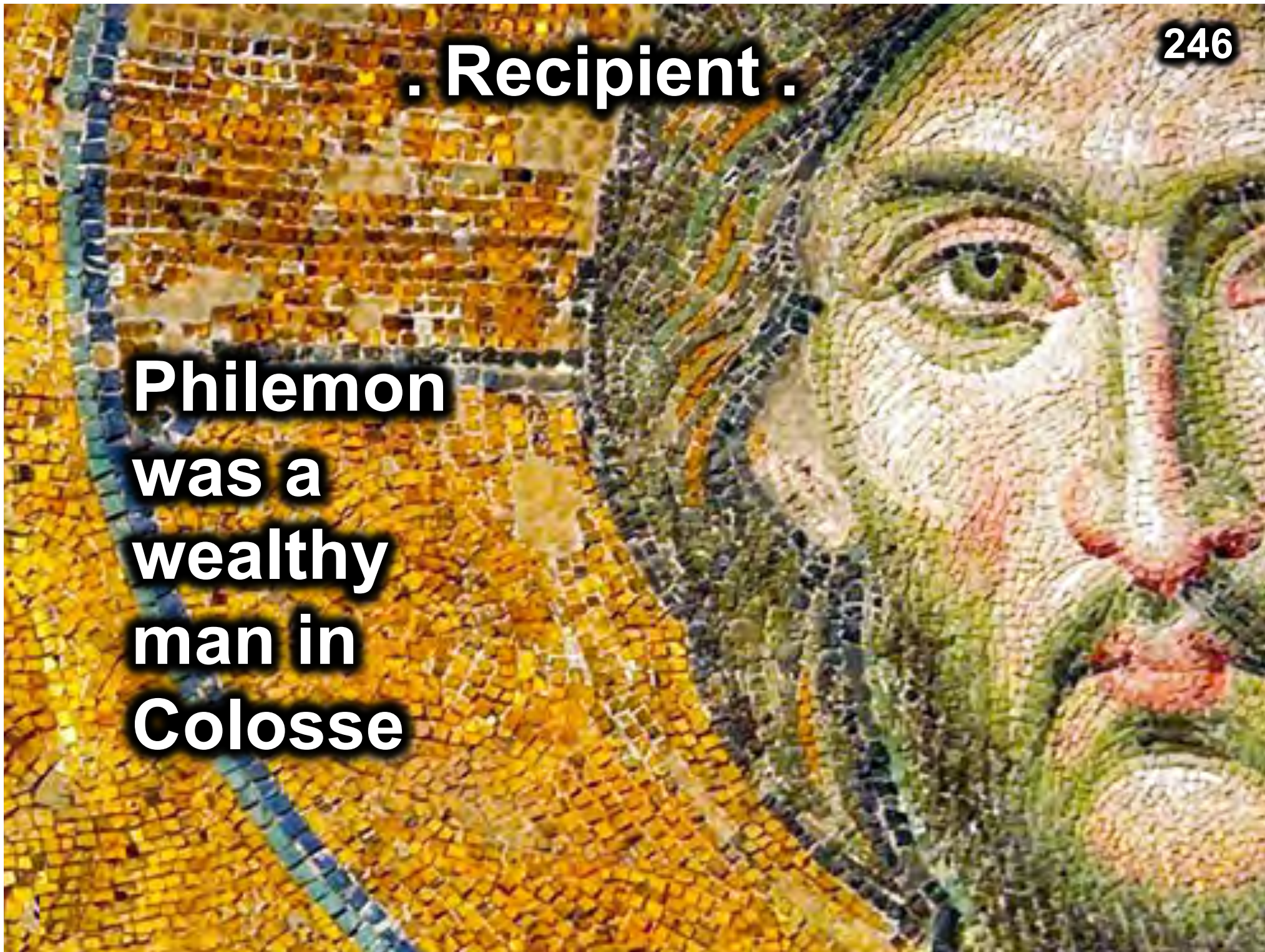
**246**

- **During Paul's imprisonment in Rome**
- **Fall AD 61**



**. Recipient .**

**Philemon  
was a  
wealthy  
man in  
Colosse**



# . Recipients .

## Primary addressee: Philemon

A wealthy Christian slave owner in Colosse

Verse 1b – "To Philemon **our dear friend and fellow worker**"

## Others: Church members

Verse 2 – "to Apphia **our sister**, to Archippus **our fellow soldier** and to the church that **meets in your home**"



**"May God our Father and the Lord Jesus  
Christ give you grace and peace"  
(v. 3 NLT).**



**"I always thank my God when I pray for you, Philemon, <sup>5</sup>because I keep hearing about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God's people"  
(vv. 4-5 NLT).**



**"And I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand and experience all the good things we have in Christ. <sup>7</sup>Your love has given me much joy and comfort, my brother, for your kindness has often refreshed the hearts of God's people" (vv. 6-7 NLT).**

**. Occasion .**

**Philemon  
owned a  
slave  
named  
Onesimus**



A black and white photograph of a hand holding a small, round pill with the word "Forgive" written on it. The hand is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the frame, with the palm facing upwards. The pill is held between the thumb and index finger. The background is dark and out of focus.

*How to **forgive** those who  
offend us...*

**I. Treat people  
in the best  
possible  
light (1-7).**

**Philemon**

**Philemon 8-21**

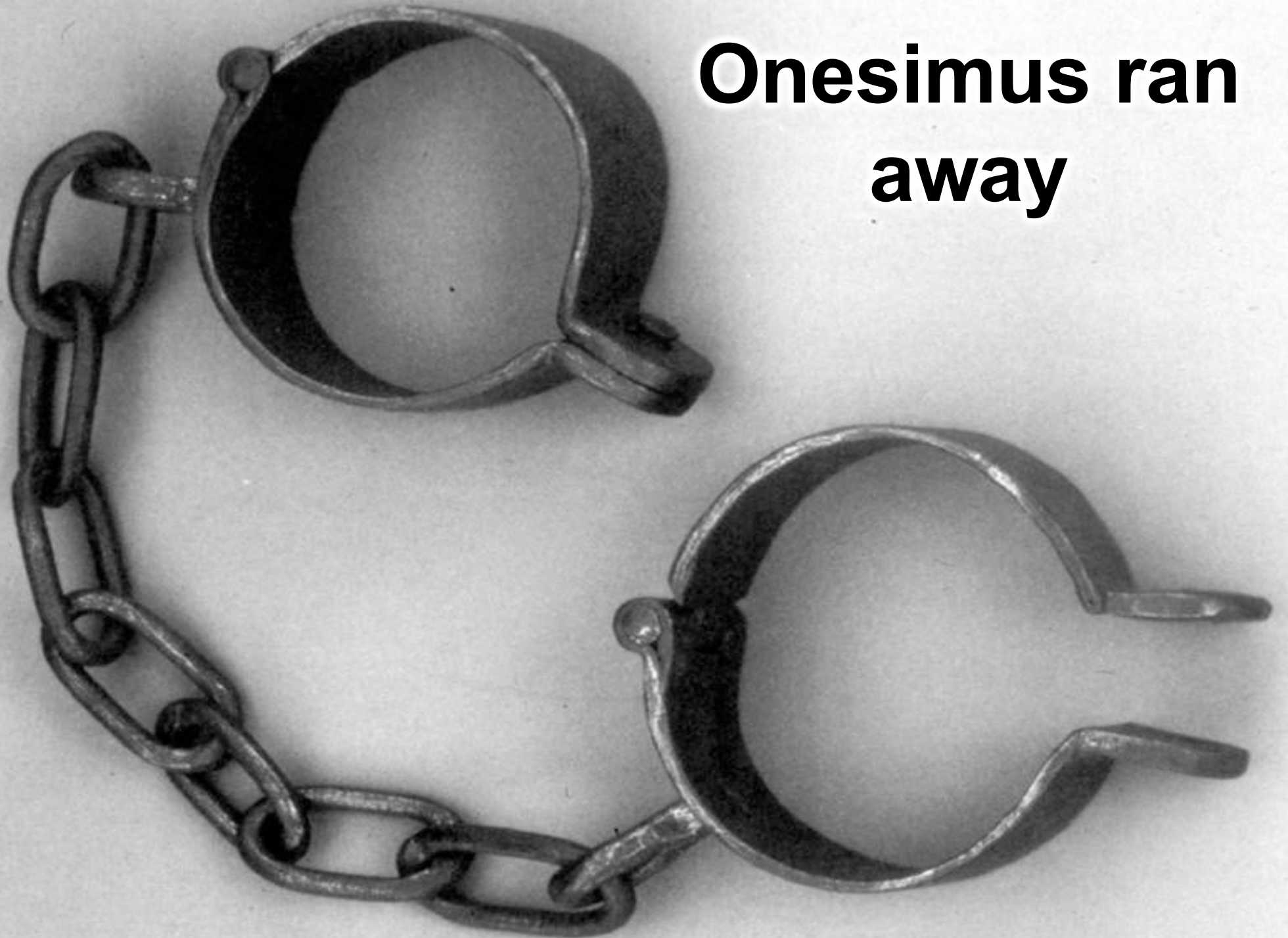
II. *Forgive* so  
reconciliation  
transcends  
social  
barriers  
(8-21).



**Philemon**



**Onesimus ran  
away**



# Onesimus had done injustice to and stolen from Philemon



# Slavery in the Roman Empire



## New Slaves Just In

\* Prisoners of war – from all corners of the Empire, and beyond! Educated Greek slaves, strong barbarians from Germany and Britain, also slaves from Egypt, Africa, and India.

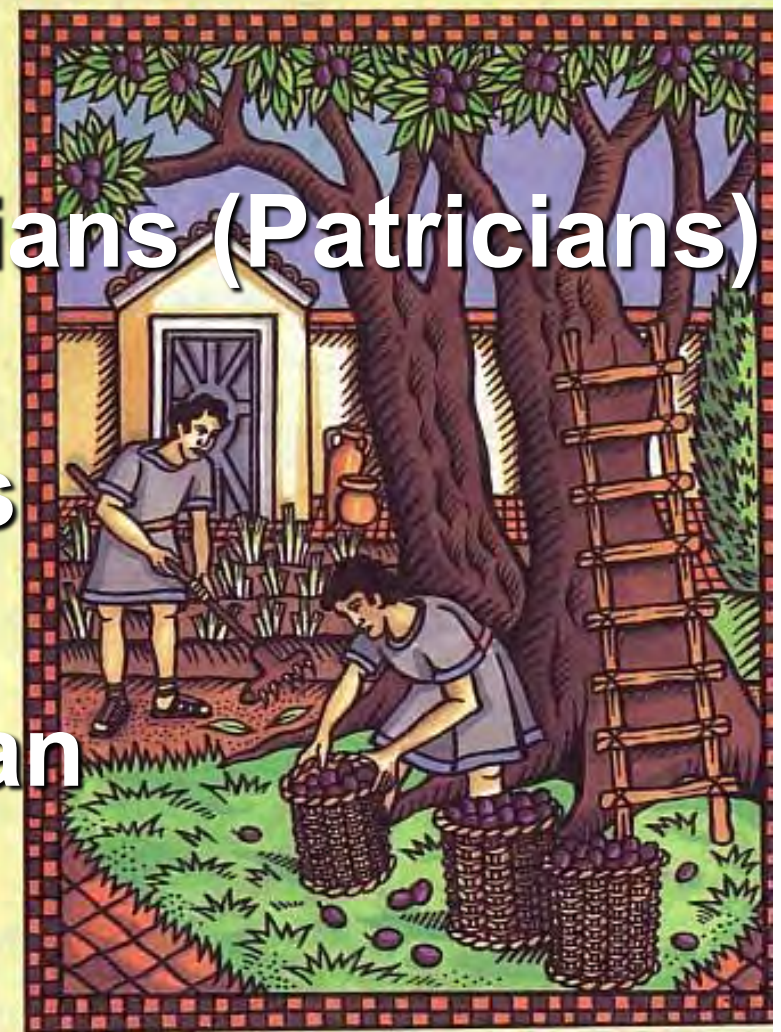
\* New batch of criminals – most have been reserved by the government to work in the mines, sweep the roads, and perform other public duties, but some are available for private buyers.

All of our slaves have their age and condition clearly listed. And we guarantee to warn you of any limps, varicose veins, or other sicknesses.

THE SLAVE MARKET,  
TRAJAN'S FORUM, ROME

# Social Classes

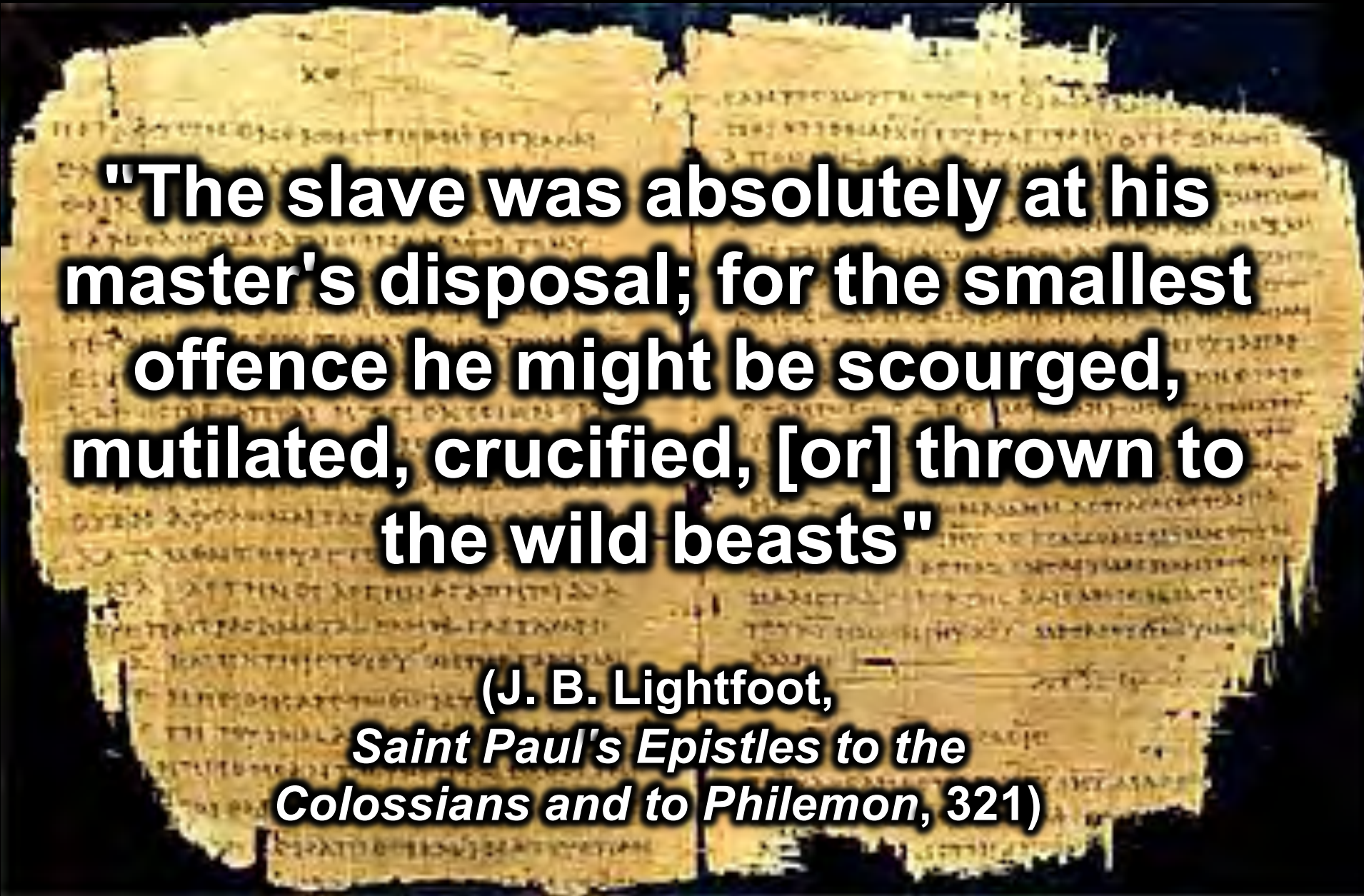
- Equestrians (Patricians)
- ↓
- Plebians
- ↓
- Freedman
- ↓
- Slaves



**HARD-WEARING:** Strong fit slaves are useful for the hundreds of heavy jobs around the house and yard.

# Slavery in the Roman Empire

246

A fragment of ancient papyrus with a quote overlaid. The papyrus is yellowed and has irregular, torn edges. The background is dark, making the papyrus stand out. The quote is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font with a black outline.

**"The slave was absolutely at his master's disposal; for the smallest offence he might be scourged, mutilated, crucified, [or] thrown to the wild beasts"**

**(J. B. Lightfoot,  
*Saint Paul's Epistles to the  
Colossians and to Philemon, 321)***

# Roman Empire Populations

Citizens  
7%

Half of  
the 55  
million  
total  
were  
slaves!

Non-Citizens  
93%

Millions of People

# . Rome .

**Onesimus made his way to Rome, where Paul led this fugitive slave to Christ**



**"my child whom I have begotten  
in my imprisonment" (v. 10)**

**. Occasion .**



# Philemon

**Paul convinced Onesimus to return to his master, Philemon, even writing the letter that Onesimus himself would carry.**

"I appeal to you to show kindness to my child, **Onesimus**. I became his father in the faith while here in prison.

<sup>11</sup>Onesimus **hasn't been of much use** to you in the past, but now he is very useful to both of us.

<sup>12</sup>I am sending him back to you, and with him comes my own heart"  
(vv. 10-12 NLT).



**"I wanted to keep him here with me while I am in these chains for preaching the Good News, and he would have helped me on your behalf.**



**<sup>14</sup>But I didn't want to do anything without your consent. I wanted you to help because you were willing, not because you were forced" (vv. 13-14 NLT).**

# . The Reunion .



**One  
wonders  
what  
Philemon  
thought  
when he saw  
Onesimus  
once again**

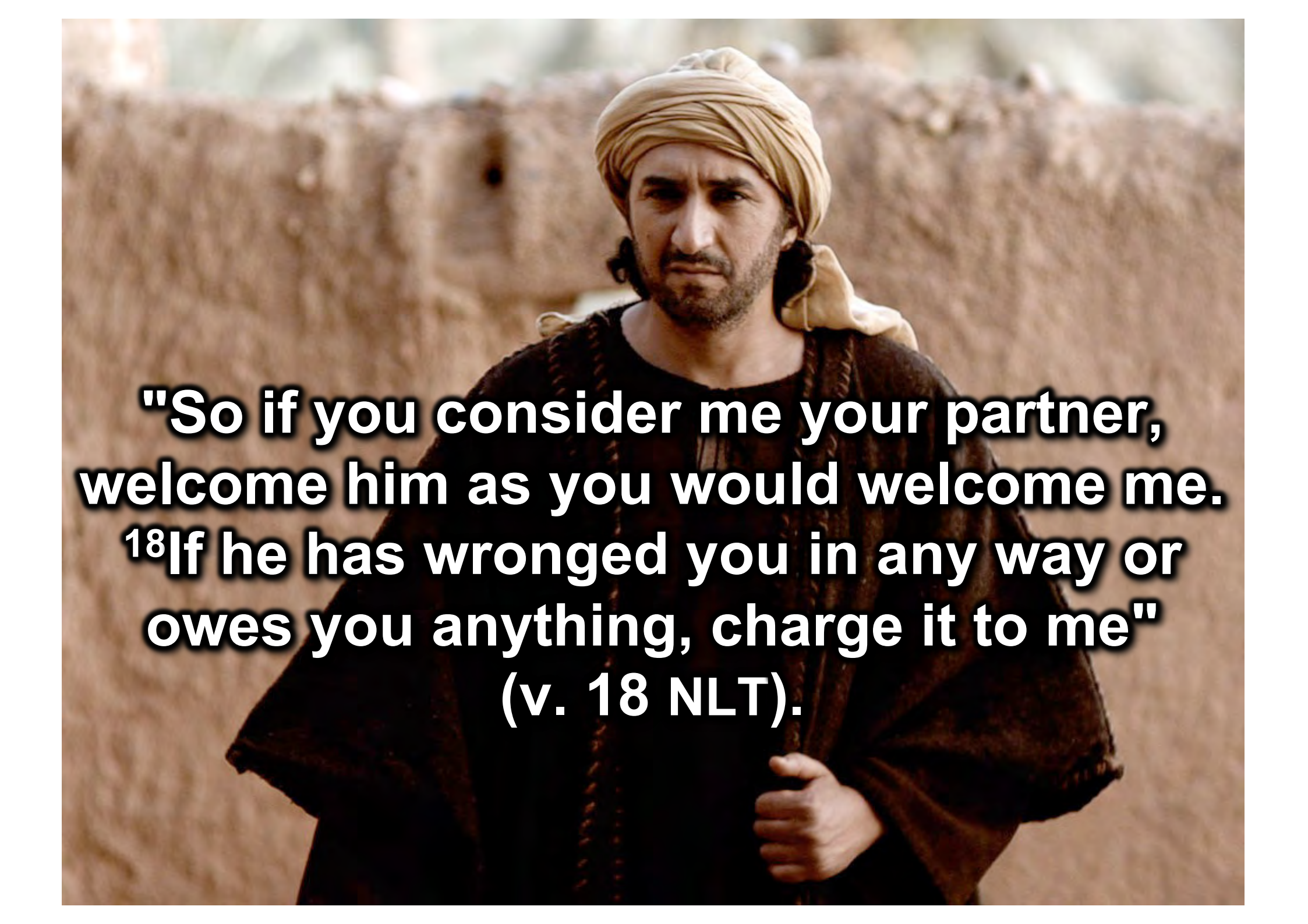
**"It seems you lost Onesimus for a little while so that you could have him back forever. <sup>16</sup>He is no longer like a slave to you. He is more than a slave, for he is a beloved brother, especially to me. Now he will mean much more to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord"  
(vv. 15-16 NLT).**

# . Repentance .

**Paul sought to convince Philemon to forgive Onesimus**

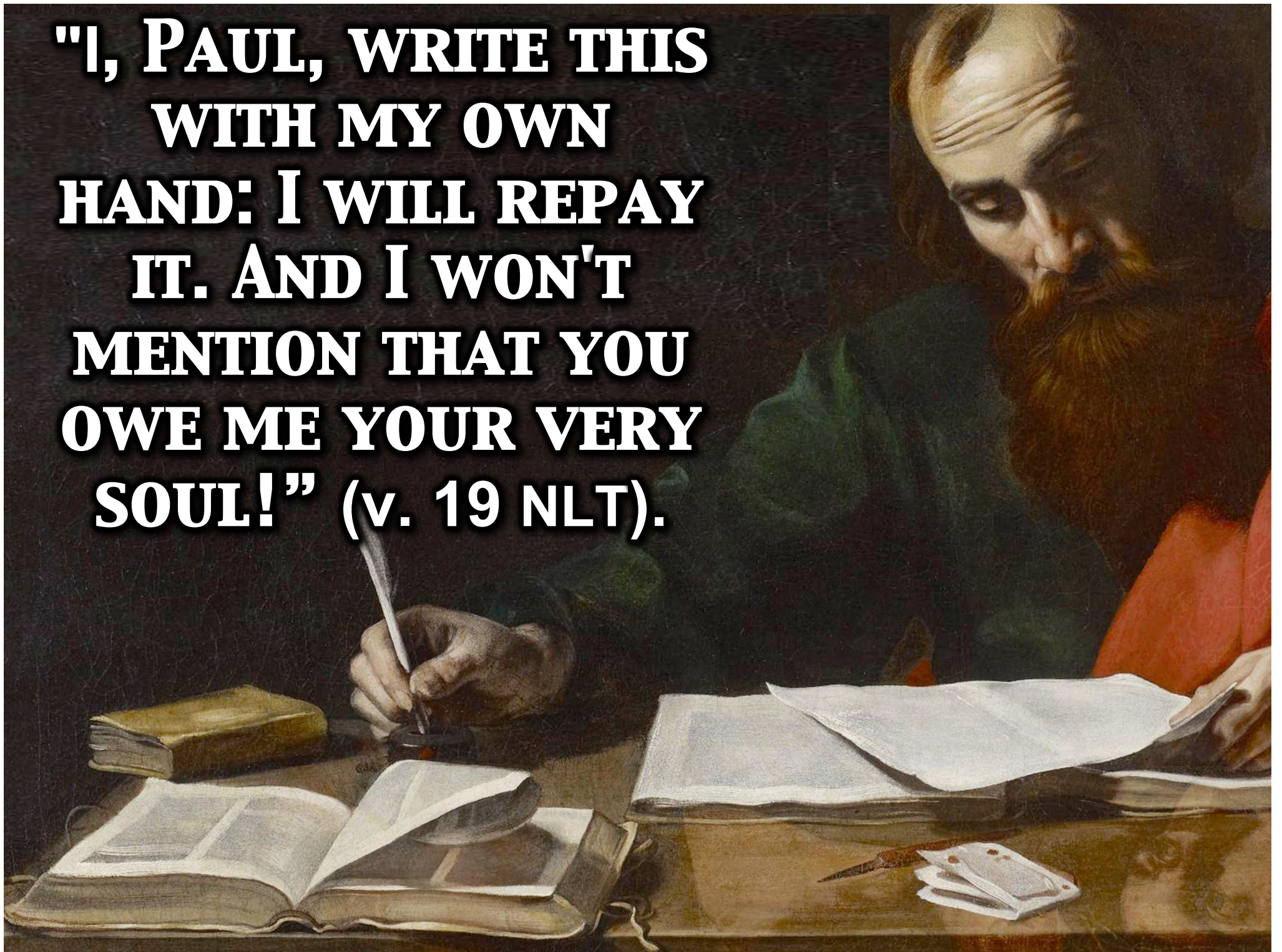
I am sorry,  
Master...

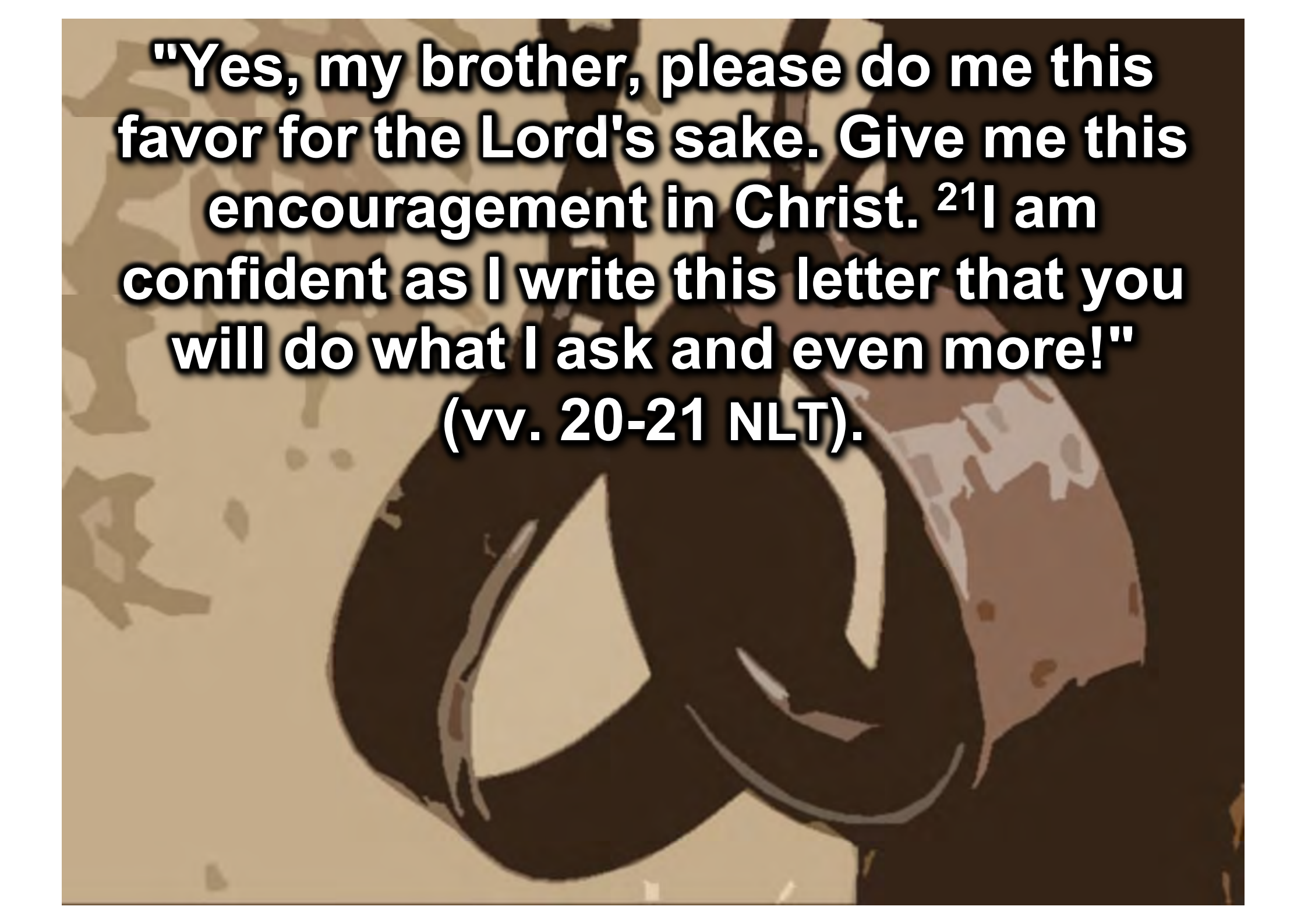


A man with a beard and a light-colored turban stands in a desert environment. He is wearing a dark, textured robe. The background shows a large, earthen structure, possibly a wall or a building under construction, with a warm, golden light suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

**"So if you consider me your partner,  
welcome him as you would welcome me.  
18If he has wronged you in any way or  
owes you anything, charge it to me"  
(v. 18 NLT).**

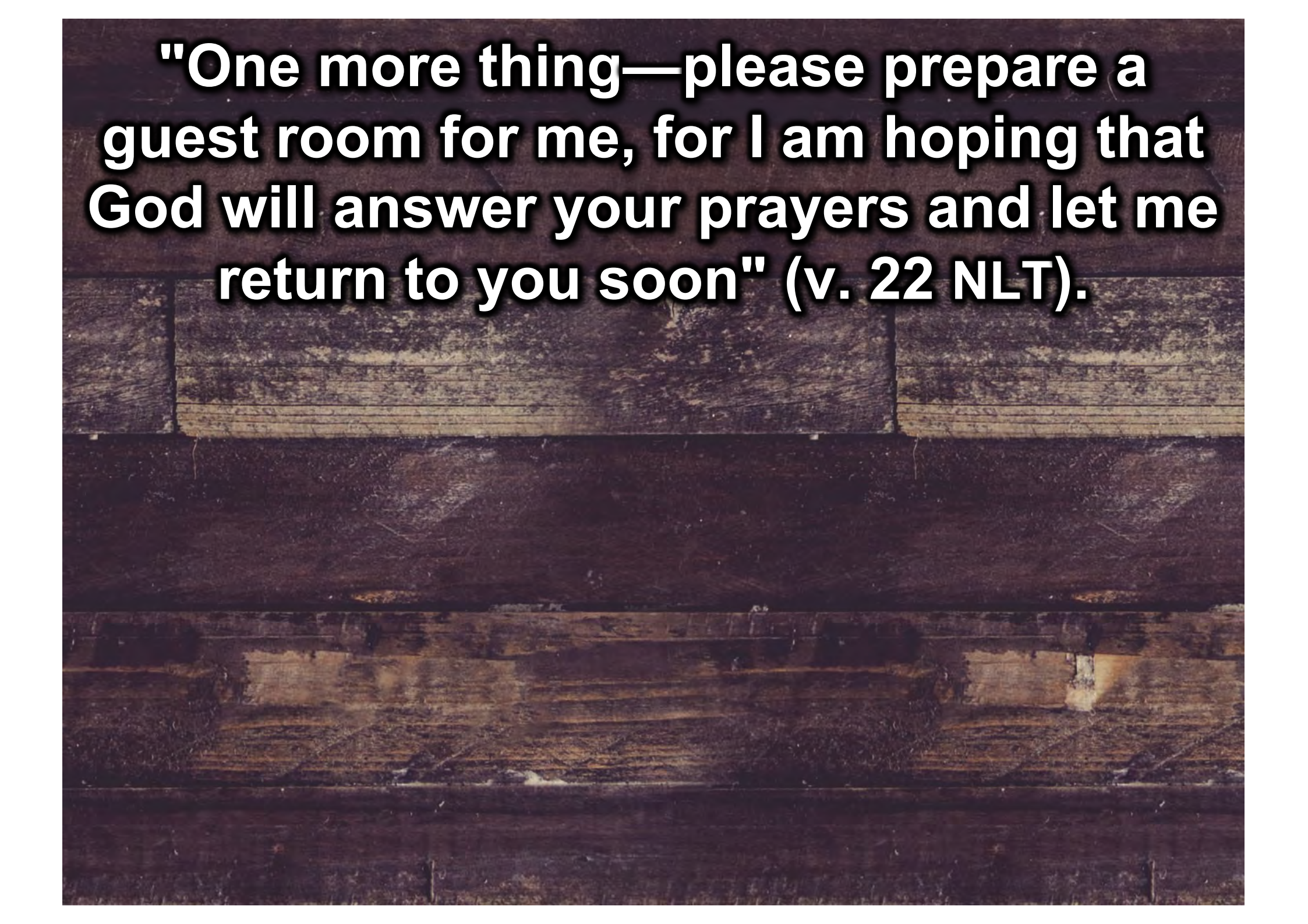
**"I, PAUL, WRITE THIS  
WITH MY OWN  
HAND: I WILL REPAY  
IT. AND I WON'T  
MENTION THAT YOU  
OWE ME YOUR VERY  
SOUL!" (v. 19 NLT).**





**"Yes, my brother, please do me this favor for the Lord's sake. Give me this encouragement in Christ. <sup>21</sup>I am confident as I write this letter that you will do what I ask and even more!"  
(vv. 20-21 NLT).**

**"One more thing—please prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that God will answer your prayers and let me return to you soon" (v. 22 NLT).**



**"Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. <sup>24</sup>So do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my co-workers" (vv. 23-24 NLT).**



**"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ  
be with your spirit" (v. 25 NLT).**



# III. Philemon teaches four principles on forgiveness.



A. True forgiveness is **granted freely**,  
not under compulsion (14).



**"But I didn't want to do anything without your consent. I wanted you to help because you were willing, not because you were forced" (v. 14 NLT).**



# . Forgiveness.

Clear example of the need to demonstrate forgiveness in New Testament



**If you sinned 3 times a day...**

**= 1000 sins each year**

**X 40 number of years**

---

**= 40,000 sins so far!**

**B. True forgiveness is the **natural** demonstration of our partnership in the gospel (17).**

**Verses 17-18**

**"So if you consider me a **partner**, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me."**

**KEY VERSE**

"This letter is from  
Paul...

I am writing to  
**Philemon**, our beloved  
co-worker, <sup>2</sup>and to our  
sister **Apphia**, and to  
our fellow soldier  
**Archippus**, and to the  
**church** that meets in  
your house"  
(vv. 1-2 NLT).



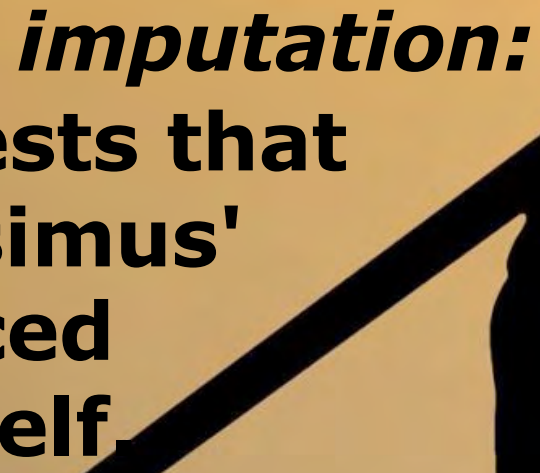
**"One more thing—please prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that God will answer **your (plural)** prayers and let me return to **you (plural)** soon" (v. 22 NLT).**

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with **your (plural)** spirit" (v. 25 NLT).



**C. True forgiveness is **unconditional** without putting requirements on the other person (18-19).**

*Illustrates imputation:*  
Paul requests that all of Onesimus' sin be placed upon himself.

A silhouette of a person carrying a cross on their back, set against a warm, golden sunset background. The person is walking towards the right, and the cross is positioned behind their shoulders. The background shows a dark horizon line with rolling hills or mountains.

**Verse 18:**

**"If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me."**

# Conditional Forgiveness:



a. "I'll forgive you **if...**"

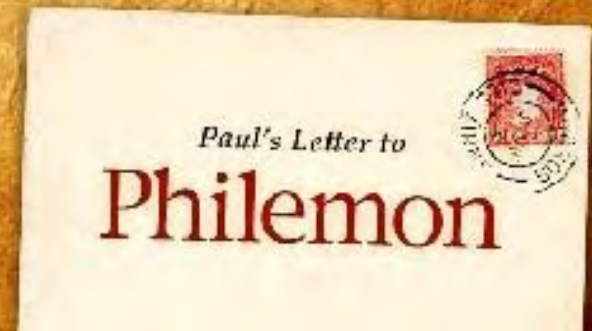
b. "I'll forgive—but I'll never **forget...**"

c. "I forgive you but don't expect me to change my **attitude.**"

**Philemon**

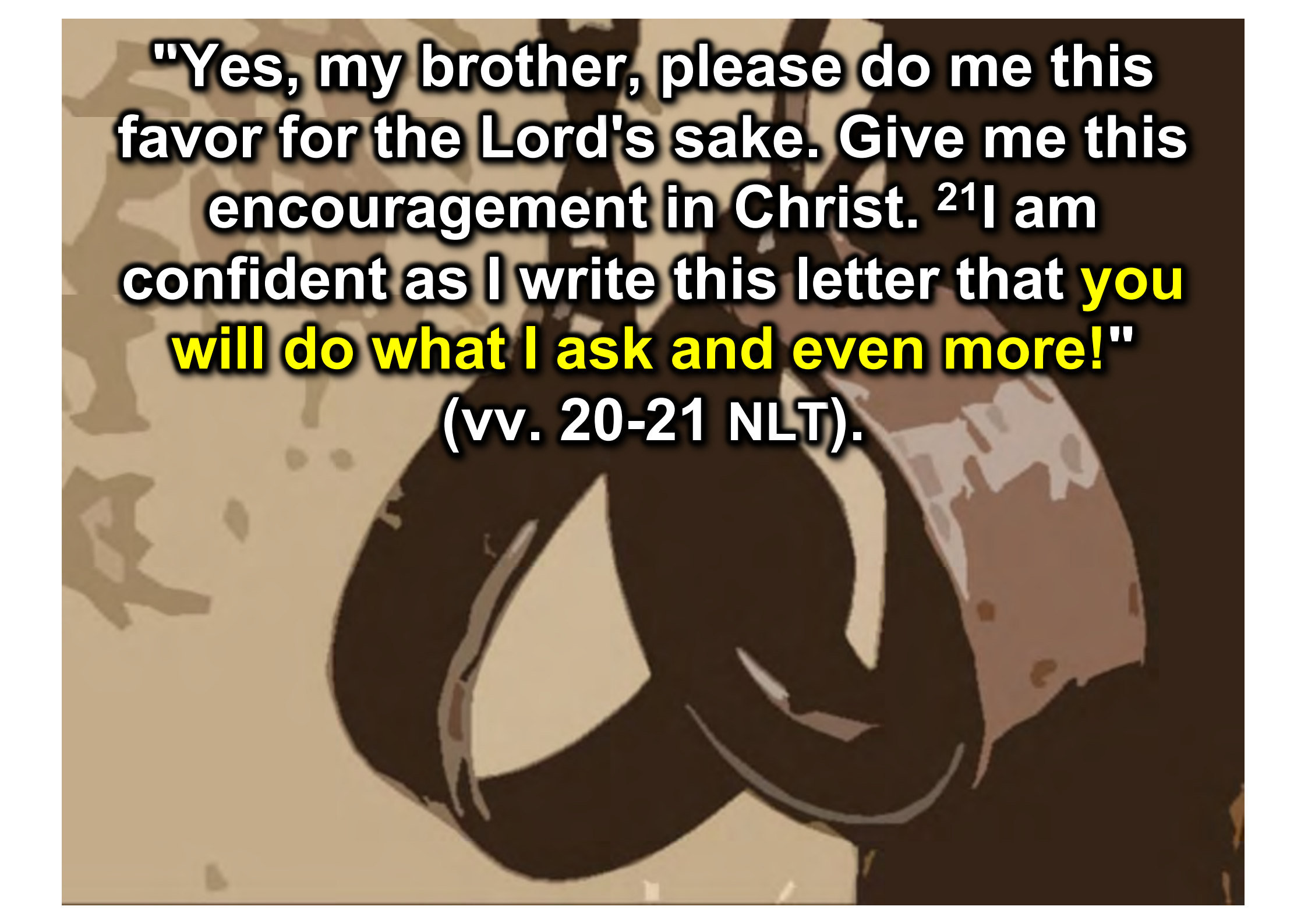
**"Forgiveness is...  
surrendering my right to hurt you  
for hurting me"**

**—psychologist Archibald Hunt**



D. True forgiveness **"goes the second mile"** (21).





**"Yes, my brother, please do me this favor for the Lord's sake. Give me this encouragement in Christ. <sup>21</sup>I am confident as I write this letter that **you will do what I ask and even more!**"  
(vv. 20-21 NLT).**

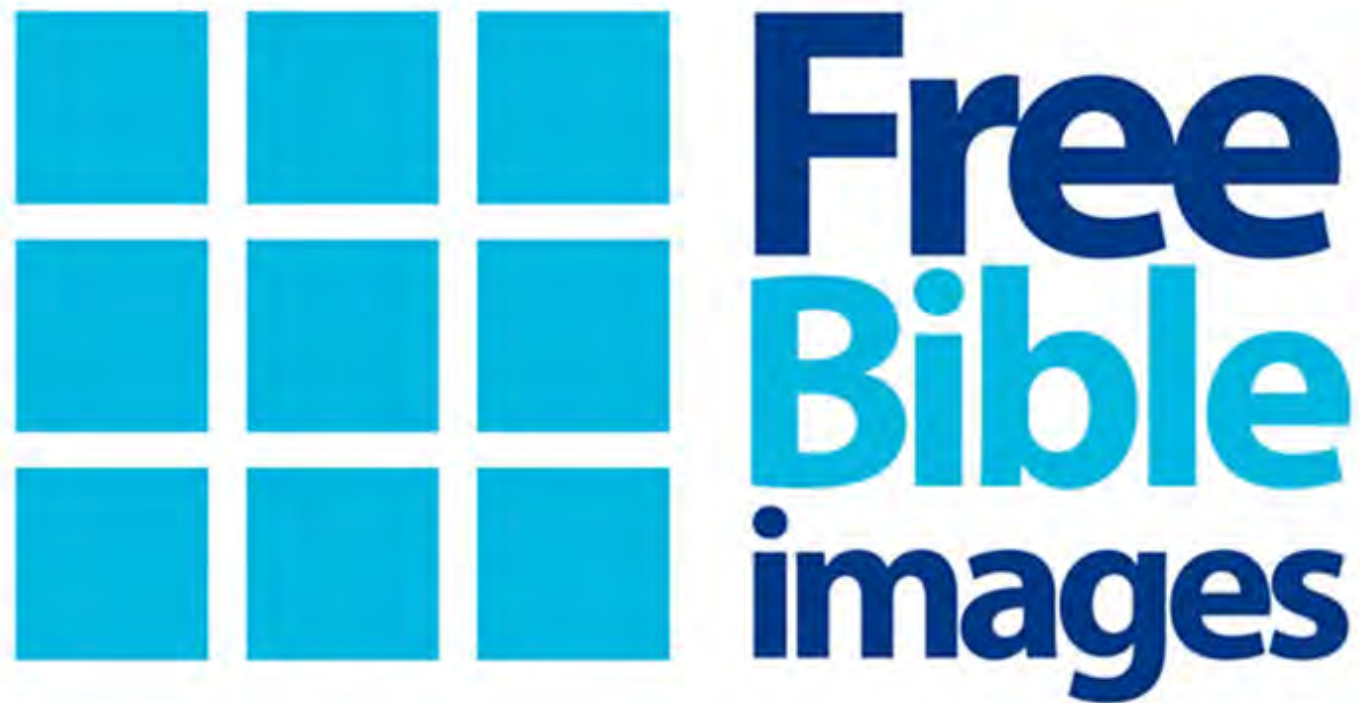













THE WORD IN PICTURES

[www.freebibleimages.org](http://www.freebibleimages.org)

A black and white photograph of a hand holding a small, round pill with the word "Forgive" written on it. The hand is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the frame, with the palm facing upwards. The pill is held between the thumb and index finger. The background is dark and out of focus. The text "How to forgive those who offend us..." is overlaid on the bottom half of the image in a white, bold, italicized font.

***How to forgive those who  
offend us...***

# Main Idea

A crown of thorns, made of dry, sharp, light-colored branches, is draped over a wooden cross. The cross is made of two vertical wooden beams. The background is dark and textured, possibly a wall or a backdrop. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the wood and the sharp points of the thorns.

**We can forgive  
others when we see  
how God has  
forgiven us.**

**I. Treat people  
in the best  
possible  
light (1-7).**

**Philemon**

II. *Forgive* so  
reconciliation  
transcends  
social  
barriers  
(8-21).



**Philemon**

# Whatever happened to Onesimus?

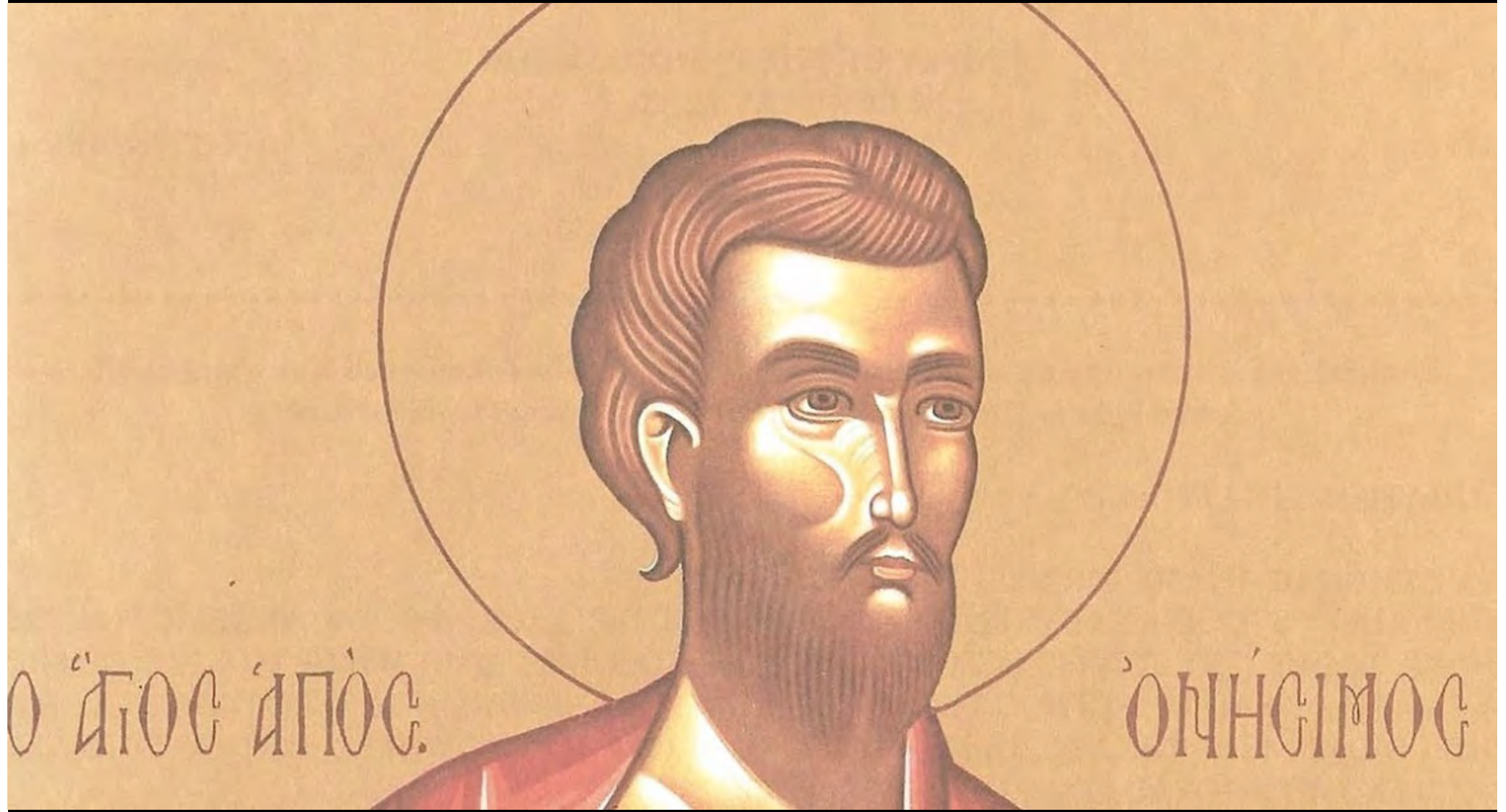
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## Did Philemon Forgive Onesimus?

1. Philemon preserved this epistle & allowed it to be circulated & copied—this would be highly unlikely if he didn't forgive Onesimus!
2. Paul expressed great confidence that Philemon would do more than even forgive Onesimus (v. 21)—perhaps free him?
3. Ignatius addressed the bishop in the nearby church in Ephesus about AD 115—and his name was Onesimus!

# Bishop Onesimus (AD 115)





# **Corrie ten Boom**

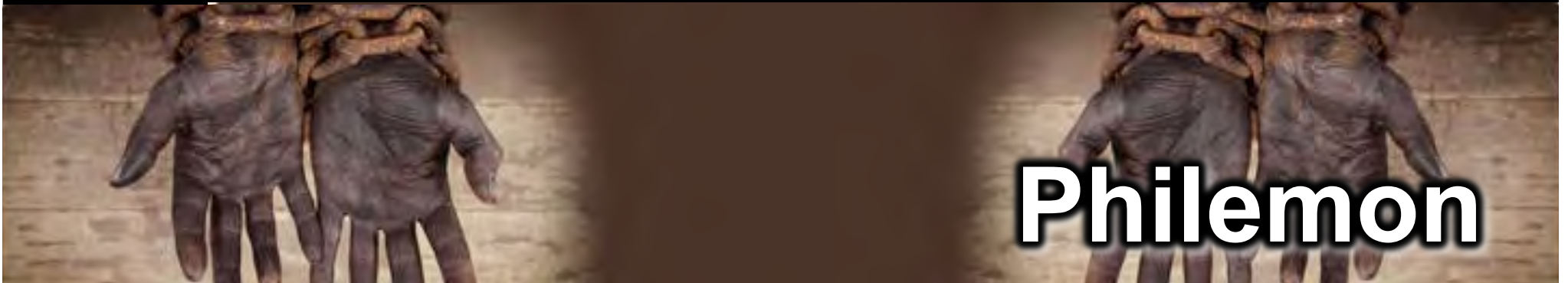
**"Forgiveness is  
setting the  
prisoner free,  
only to find out  
that the  
prisoner was  
me."**

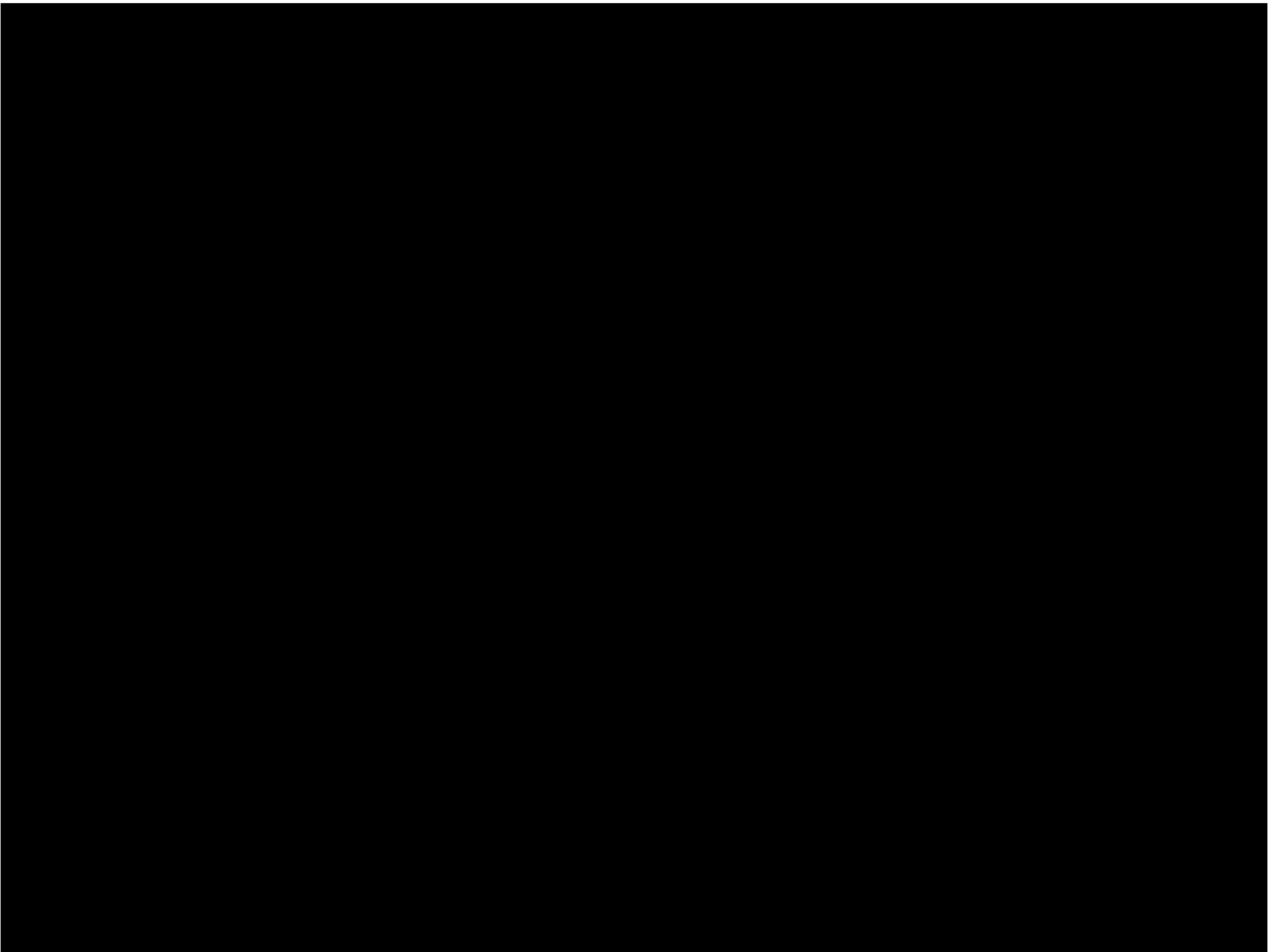
# • Application •

245

To whom do you best relate now?

1. Philemon the offended?
2. Onesimus the offender?
3. Paul the reconciler?
4. The church as affirmers?





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# . Characteristics .

Meaning of purple hyacinth:  
"I am sorry, please forgive me, sorrow"



Paul

1. P

2. P

3. P

4. T

5. P

6. F

7. F



is important:

(7-20).

ful to us

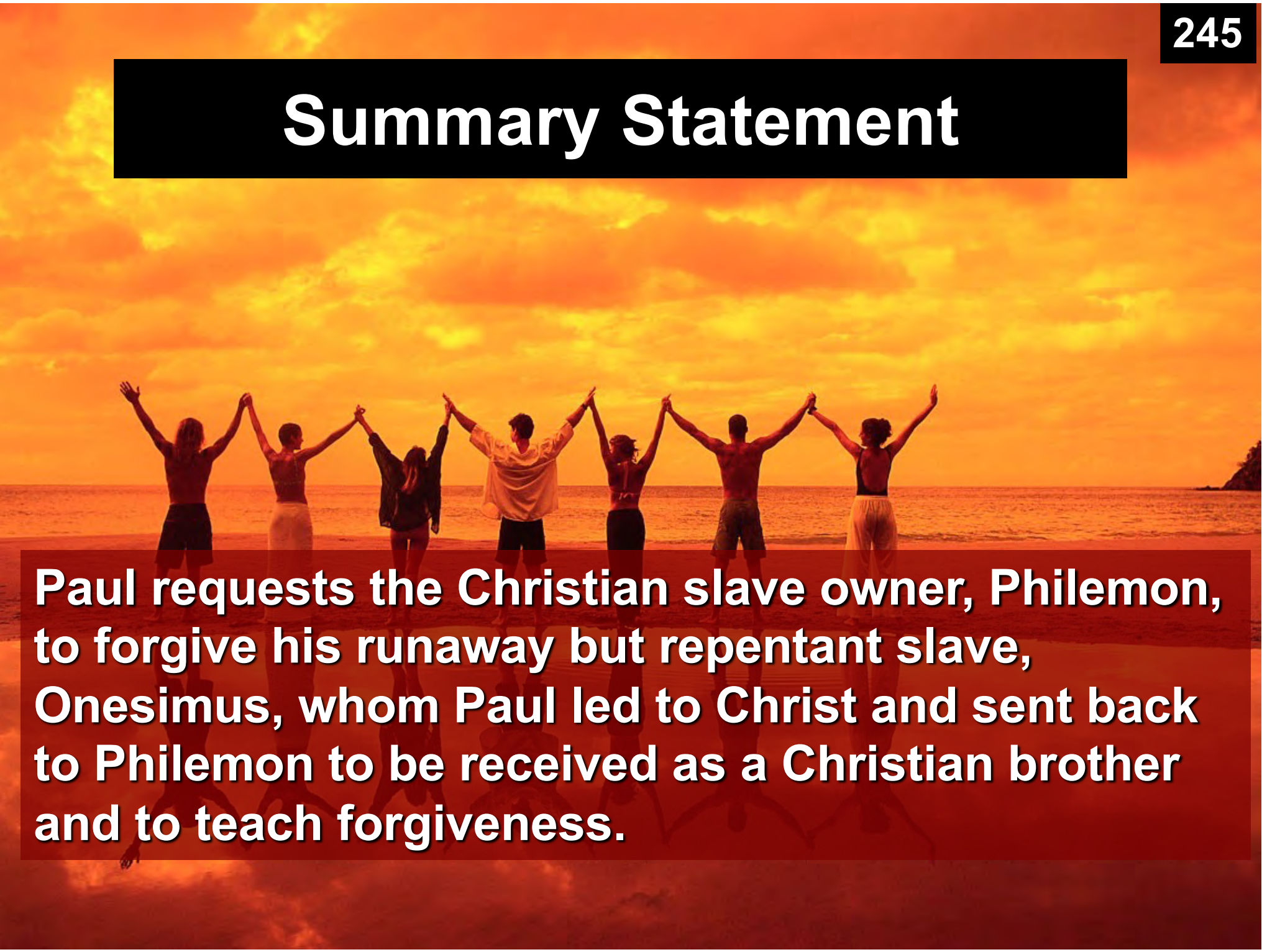
ful but good

oluntary not

6. Forgiveness reminds one that God is in control of painful events (vv. 15, 16).

7. Forgiving others reminds us of how God forgave us (v.19b)

# Summary Statement



**Paul requests the Christian slave owner, Philemon, to forgive his runaway but repentant slave, Onesimus, whom Paul led to Christ and sent back to Philemon to be received as a Christian brother and to teach forgiveness.**

# Does Christ break social chains?



**Does this letter teach slaves to overthrow their owners?**



# The Usual Application

It teaches  
the duty of slaves  
to their masters  
and of masters  
to their slaves.

**THE  
HISTORICAL  
VIEW**

# A New Approach



**It "destroys slavery"**

**But Paul taught masters to treat slaves in a godly manner rather than him seeking to overthrow slavery. This is consistent with his teachings in his other epistles.**



# Characteristics

**Paul and other NT writers recognize the existence of the slave and master relationship**

**Peter's advice on slavery**

✓ **1 Peter 2:18-25**

**Paul's advice to slaves**

✓ **Eph. 6:5-8**

✓ **Col. 3:22-25**

✓ **1 Tim. 6:1-2**

**Paul's advice to slave owners**

✓ **Eph. 6:19**

✓ **Col. 4:1**

# **. Characteristics .**

**Christians must show love as the basis of all their relationships:**

- ✓ Love regardless of the Christian status or otherwise of the other party.**
- ✓ In the church all believers are sons and daughters of God and therefore brothers and sisters to one another.**
- ✓ A slave is lifted from being a slave to being "more than a slave" — a brother who is loved.**

# . Keyword .



**purple hyacinth**

# Philemon

245

## Forgive Others and Seek Forgiveness

<b>Greeting</b> 1-3		<b>Prayer &amp; Commendation</b> 4-7		<b>Appeal for Onesimus</b> 8-21			<b>Conclusion</b> 22-25
<b>Preface</b>		<b>Praise</b>		<b>Petition</b>			<b>Postscript</b>
<b>People Concerned</b>		<b>Philemon's Character</b>		<b>Onesimus' Conversion</b>			<b>Paul's Co-Workers</b>
<b>Authors</b> 1a-b	<b>Recipients</b> 1c-3	<b>Thanks</b> 4-5	<b>Relationships</b> 6-7	<b>General Appeal</b> 8-11	<b>Reasons for Return</b> 12-16	<b>Specific Appeal</b> 17-21	<b>Preparations</b> <b>Greetings</b> <b>Blessing</b> 22-25

**Rome to Colosse**

**Fall AD 61**

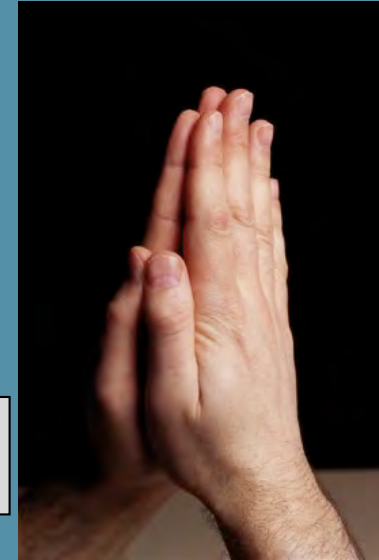
# Synthesis

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**1-3 Greeting**



**4-7 Prayer / commendation**

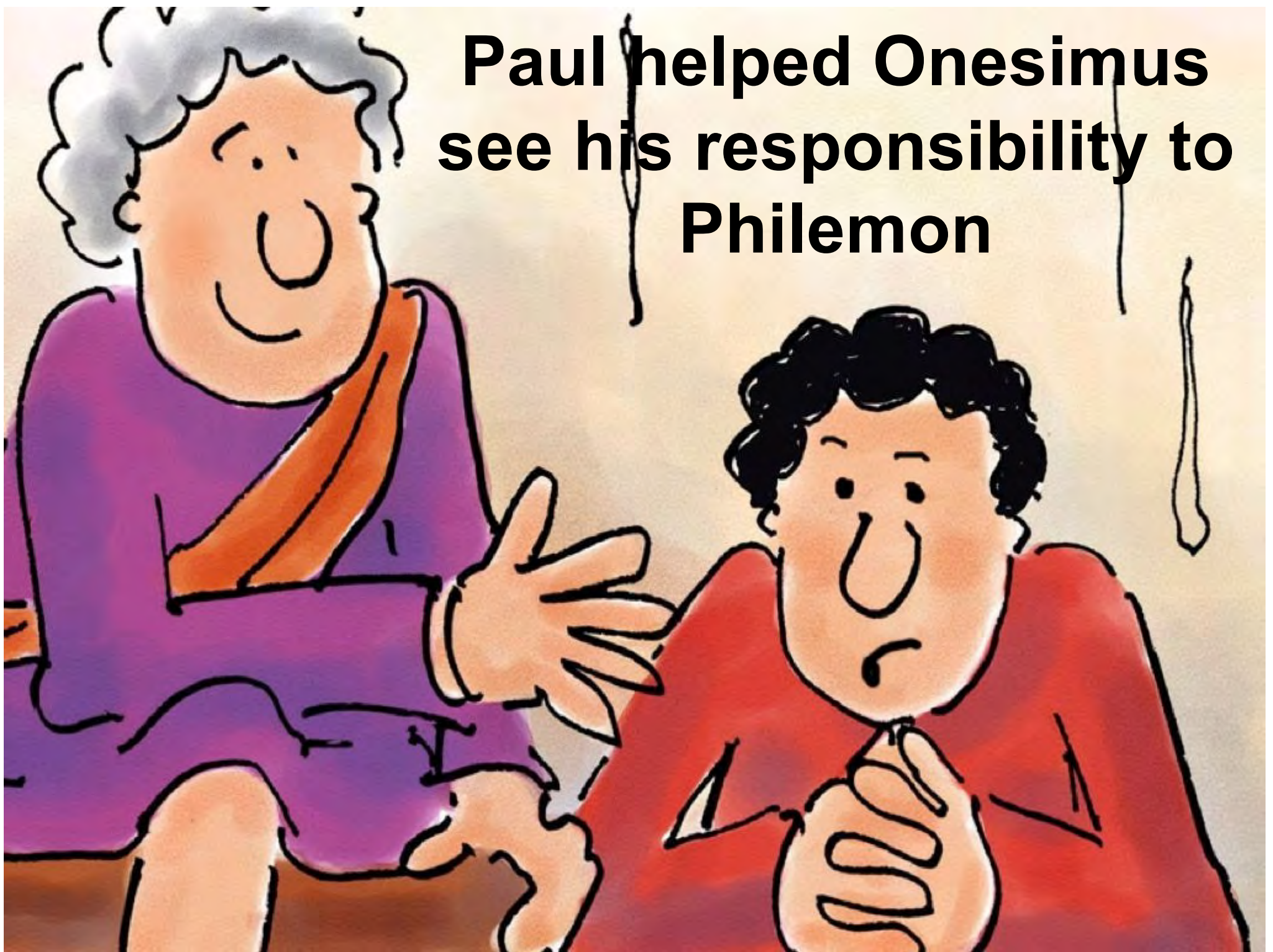


**8-21 Appeal for Onesimus**

**22-25**

**Conclusion**

**Paul helped Onesimus  
see his responsibility to  
Philemon**



# Basic Steps to Gain a Forgiving Spirit



The Via Appia, "Queen of Roman roads," which was the road from Rome that Onesimus took back to Colossae for Philemon's forgiveness

1. Realize that God is working through the actions of your offender
2. Thank God for the benefit He plans through each offense
3. Discern what character qualities God wants to develop in you through the offense
4. Expect to suffer for doing right as a normal part of Christian living

***Bill Gothard, IBLP***

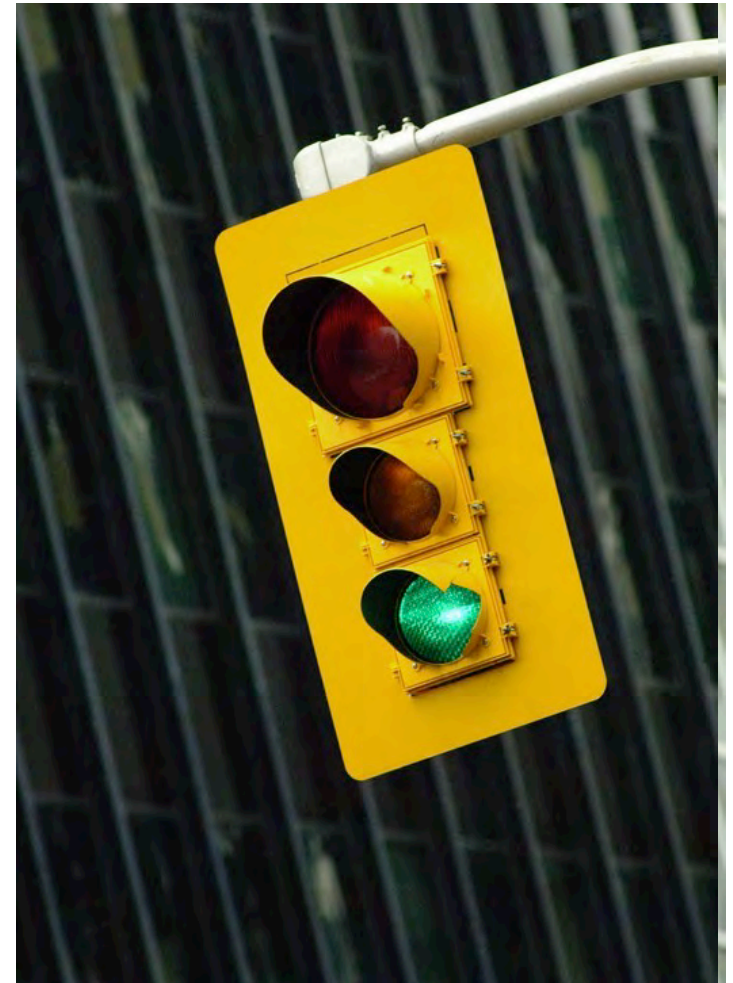
# How do I ask forgiveness?

**Never say, "I'm sorry"  
(period/full stop).**

**Say, "Will you forgive me for  
\_\_\_\_\_"**

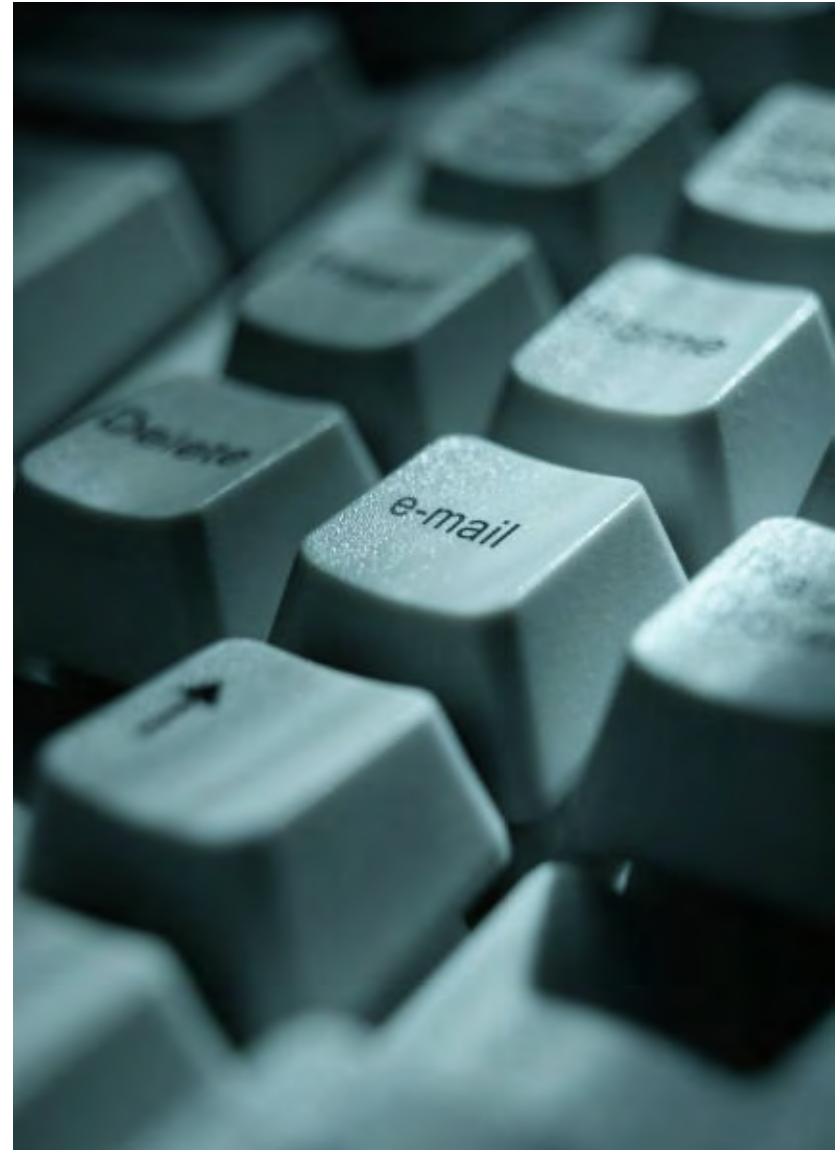
**(specify your offense).**

**Philemon 11, 18**



# How do I ask forgiveness?

- **Not by phone**
- **Not by letter**
- **Not by fax**
- **Not by text message**
- **Not by facebook**
- **Not by Twitter**
- **Not by email**
- **Not by mediators...**



# How do I ask forgiveness?

But by one simple  
word...

**Go**



# How do I ask forgiveness?



**Onesimus traveled  
1400 km to speak to  
Philemon in person**

# How do I ask forgiveness?

**Demonstrate humility  
without concern for  
saving face.**

**Philemon 1, 8-9, 14 (cf.  
Gal. 6:1b, 3-4)**



# How do I ask forgiveness?



**Remember that your response is not a private issue, but public, involving many people.**

**Philemon 1-2, 25 (plural)**

# How do I ask forgiveness?

**Make the request for forgiveness as public as the offense.**

- a. Public sins require public apology (1 Tim. 5:20)**
- b. Private sins require private apology (Matt. 18:15)**



# Restoring Relationships

## General Principle

Romans 12:18

"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

**For the Offender: GO!**

**Matthew 5:23-24**

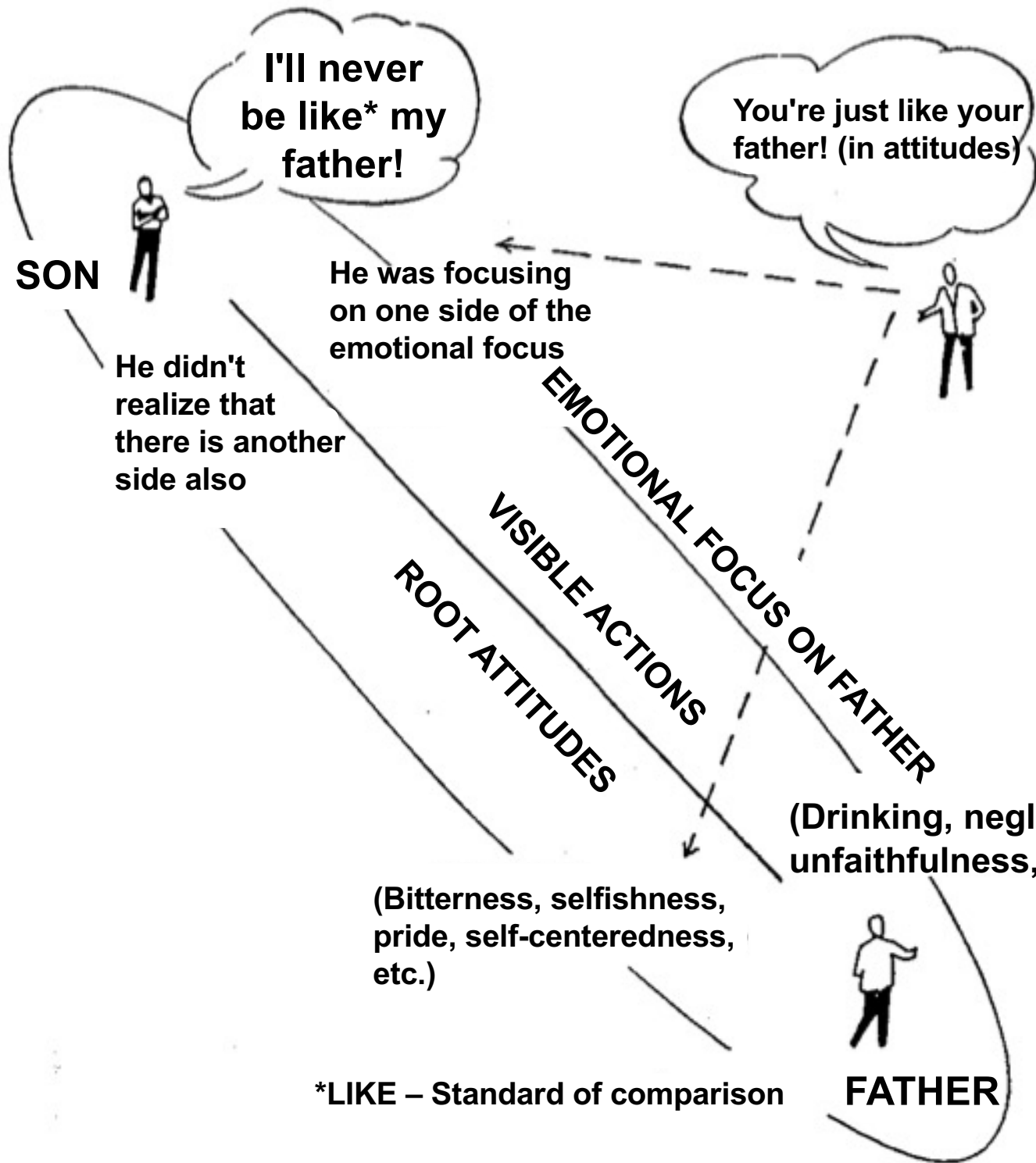
**James 5:16**



**For the Offended: GO!**

**Matthew 18:15**

**Galatians 6:1**



# How We Become Like Those We Resent

Bill Gothard, *Institute in Basic Life Principles*

**(1-3) Paul introduces himself as author with Timothy, addresses Philemon, his wife, his son & his house church, & wishes them God's grace & peace to set the tone for his following appeal for Onesimus.**

**(4-7) Paul prays for & commends the love & faith of Philemon in genuine thanksgiving to encourage Philemon to demonstrate these same qualities towards Onesimus, his runaway but repentant slave.**

**(8-21) Paul makes a general appeal to Philemon for mercy to be granted to Onesimus, cites reasons for sending him back to Philemon & makes a specific request that Onesimus be fully pardoned for his wrongdoing.**

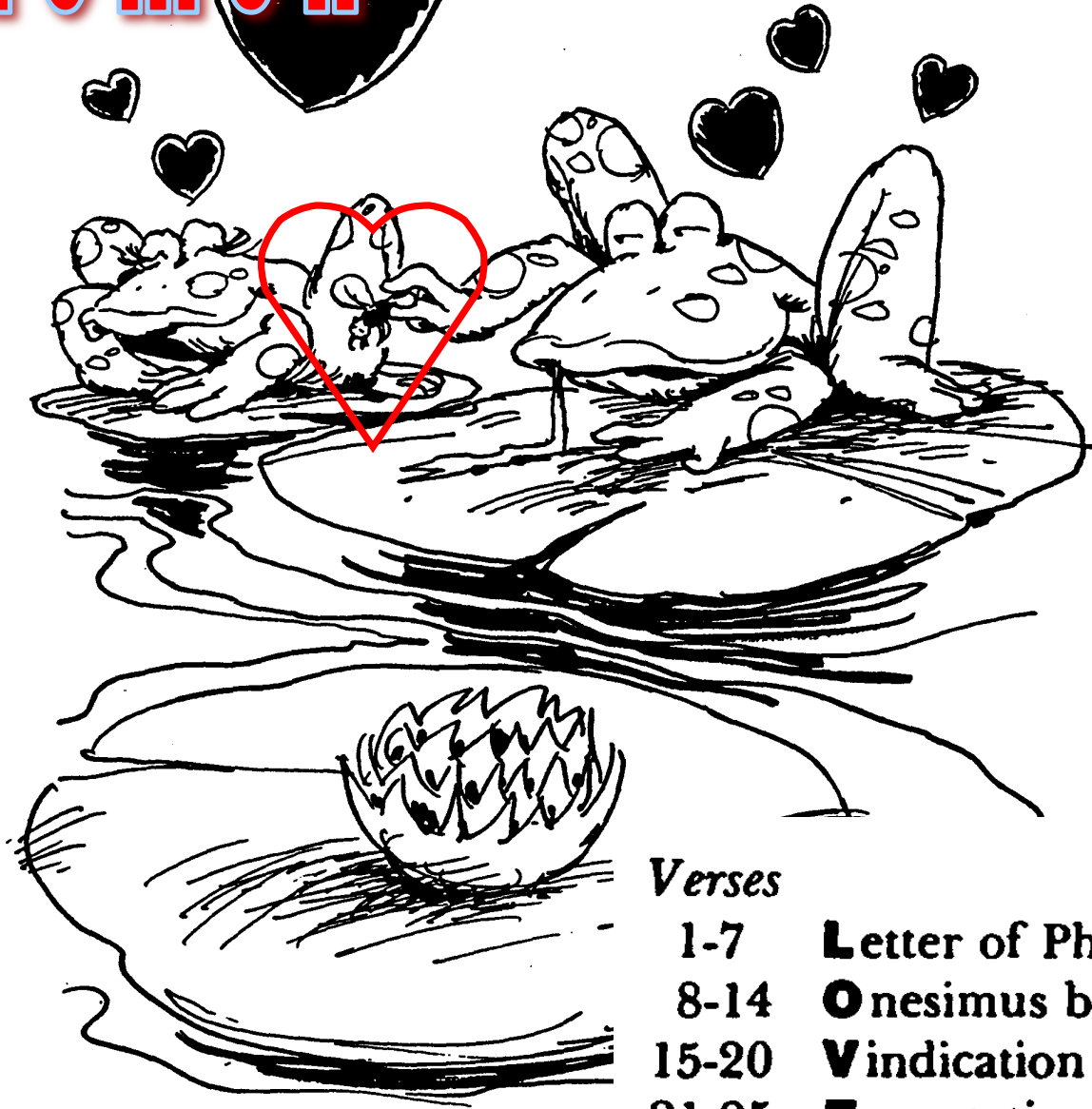
**(22-25) Paul requests preparations for his anticipated visit, sends greetings from co-workers & blesses the church to reinforce the public nature of Philemon's decision & to remind of God's power for fulfilling his appeal.**

# Philemon Group Members

- **William Heng**
- **Priskali Achum**
- **Carolyn Chiew**
- **Vincent Lim**
- **Eric Chong**
- **Ng Wee Hua**
- **Victor**
- **Yeo Pin Pin**
- **Andrew Lim**

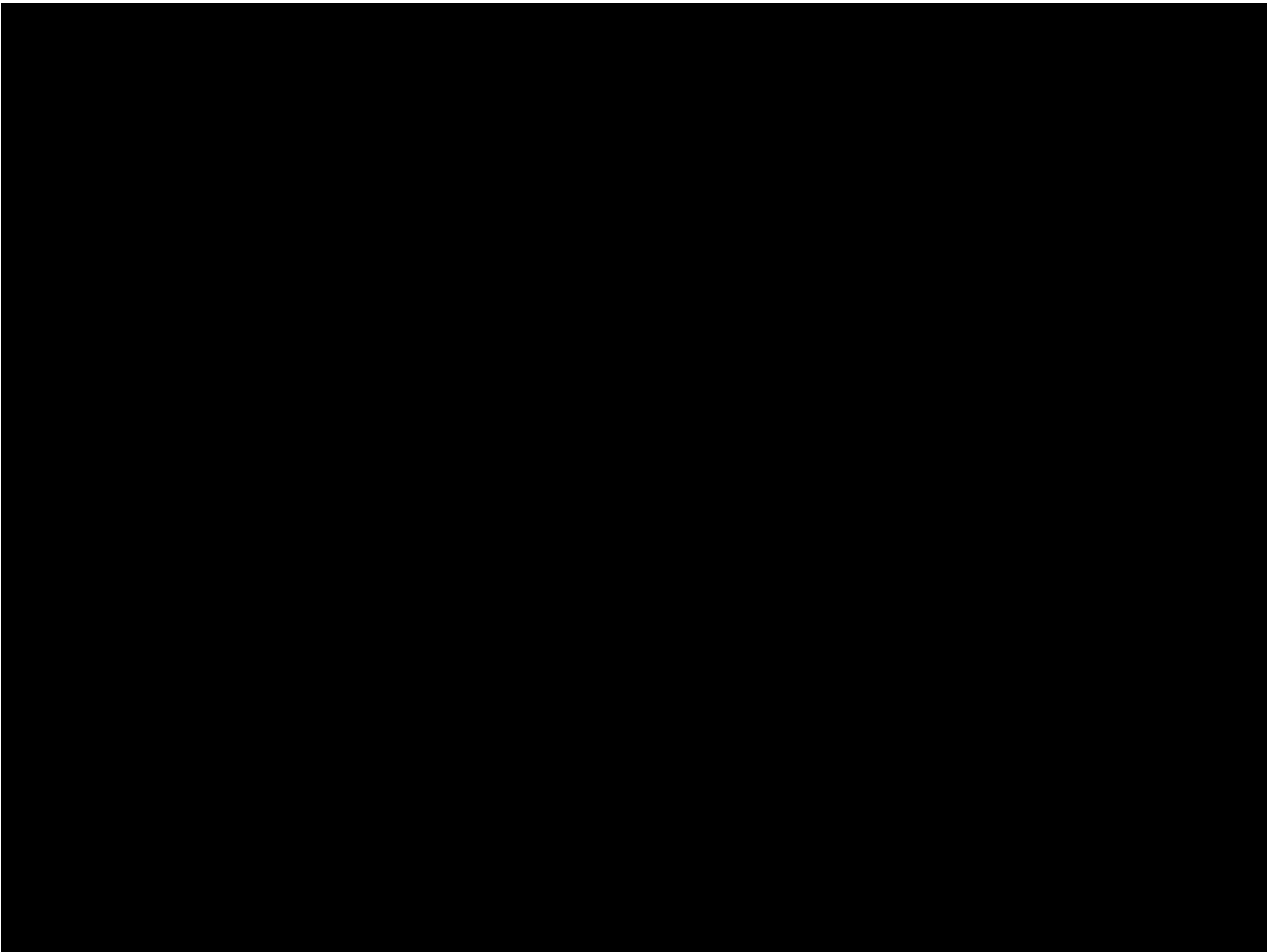


# Philemon

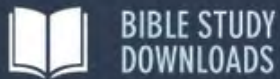


## *Verses*

- 1-7 **L**etter of Philemon's love
- 8-14 **O**nesimus becomes a Christian
- 15-20 **V**indication requested for Onesimus
- 21-25 **E**xpectation cited by Paul



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