

**FAITH'S FOUNDATION**  
**Session: Three Hundred and Thirteen:**  
**Philemon: "Real Christianity"**  
***"Life-Changing Faith"***

**Foundational Observation:**

True Christian faith always has both an upward and an outward reach (vs. 5).

**Foundational Principles:**

**Nothing is so radically transforming as *REAL CHRISTIANITY!***

**Foundational Verses:**

Philemon 1:1-25 NIV, (Formatting added for emphasis)

- 1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,  
    To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker,
- 2 to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier  
    and to the church that meets in your home:
- 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 4 **I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers,**
- 5     because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints.
- 6 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.
- 7 Your love has given me great joy and encouragement,  
    because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints.
- 8 Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do,
- 9     **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 —
- 10 I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains.
- 11 Formerly he was useless to you,  
    but now he has become useful both to you and to me.
- 12 I am sending him — who is my very heart — back to you.
- 13 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.
- 14 But I did not want to do anything without your consent,  
    so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced.
- 15 Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while  
    was that you might have him back for good—
- 16     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.
- 17 So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me.
- 18 **If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me.**
- 19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand.  
    **I will pay it back — not to mention that you owe me your very self.**
- 20 I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord;

refresh my heart in Christ.

- 21 Confident of your obedience, I write to you,  
knowing that you will do even more than I ask.
- 22 And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me,  
because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers.
- 23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings.
- 24 And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.
- 25 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

**Understanding “Life-Changing Faith”**  
**(The bold-print questions below are for application)**

- 1. Formerly, Paul was Saul of Tarsus, a Christ-hating, Christian-persecuting Jewish zealot. Philemon was a successful gentile converted to Christ in the city of Colossae. Onesimus was a runaway slave of Philemon’s household who Paul led to Christ in Rome. How do these statements emphasize the transforming power of Christ?

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**How is Christ making a difference**

**in your life?** \_\_\_\_\_

- 2. Looking at verses 4, 9, and 19, what outline can you give to Philemon and how does that underscore the transforming power of Christ?

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- 3. Read verses 4-7. In what ways did Paul express his love for Philemon? \_\_\_\_\_

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What was he praying for Philemon and for what reason (vs. 6)? \_\_\_\_\_

**How can you apply this to a challenging relationship today?** \_\_\_\_\_

- 4. Identify and list as many facets or factors of Paul’s appeal in verses 8-17 as you can find. How would these facets of an appeal impact you? \_\_\_\_\_

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**How could you use this appeal as a pattern?** \_\_\_\_\_

- 5. How does Paul’s assurance of repaying Onesimus’s debt guide us in dealing with people problems today? \_\_\_\_\_

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**What can you learn from this example?** \_\_\_\_\_

- 6. **In verses 15-16, Paul teaches Onesimus will return with greater value to Philemon. Why?** \_\_\_\_\_

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