

“Philemon's Dilemma” by Kirk Hunt

For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

Philemon 1:7 (KJV)

I expect that Philemon saw Onesimus before reading Paul's letter. Whether measured in seconds, or hours, it would seem like an eternity to the men in the room. Would Philemon *react* against an escaped slave, or *respond* to a Christian brother?

The *Epistle* put Philemon on the horns of a dilemma. Would he live up to his (Roman) world-wide reputation as a generous, compassionate Christian? Could Philemon still do the right thing, facing the man who robbed him twice?

Circumstances can, and do, demand proof of our Christianity. Do you truly forgive? Are you authentic about reconciliation with a brother or sister?

Intellectual exercises in forgiveness are easy. Concrete episodes of reconciliation are rarely neat and simple. The facts, figures and emotions flood us in excruciating detail.

“Are you or aren't you?” “Do you walk the talk?” “Do you or don't you?” The questions may be undiplomatic, but the answers are critical.

Sooner, or later, someone or something will test your character as a Christian. Has it been all talk, or are you really a man or woman of God? What's your answer to your personal Onesimus?

Think: Choose to be the Christian you talk about.

Pray: “Father-God, help me respond Your way, no matter the circumstances.”

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