



CWR/PTM

CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

THESSALONIANS,
TIMOTHY, TITUS
& PHILEMON

Week 4

Stupid Arguments

2 Timothy 2:14-26

OPENING
up to the Word

Have any of your friends or family suffered from cancer? Do you know anyone with *spiritual* cancer—destroying their spiritual vitality?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What restrictions does Paul place on Christian debate to keep it constructive?
2. What heresy was being spread like a cancer by Hymenaeus and Philetus? How did it counter basic Christian doctrine?
3. How is the foundation of Christianity sealed (2:19; see Nu 16:5)?
4. In the first century, household articles ranged from gold and silver to wood and clay. What uses were made of the two categories? Although all these have some value, which are given greater honor? Which does Paul call Christians to become? To be cleansed from?
5. Compare what is to be shunned with what is to be pursued (2:22-26). Can we do this solely on our own strength or does God create these positive qualities in us?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Do debates happen in your family? If so, are they constructive? Do they end in (a) friction, (b) understanding, (c) growth, (d) division?
2. Consider the ongoing debates among Christians about doctrine and behavior. Which ones impact you or your family?
3. How can you use Paul's advice to help opponents or friends to stand on a solid foundation?
4. Examine the list of qualities of servants. Which are your strengths? Weaknesses? What two specific actions can you take to reduce your weaknesses?

WINDOW
on the Word

***Gnostics** believed that the resurrection was not true. They believed Jesus was a good person, but not fully God, so he was only human and was not resurrected. They believed the doctrine of the resurrection was an allegory of the changed person at baptism.*

2 Timothy 3:1-9

Have you ever admired a sports or music figure, only to later become disillusioned by their unchristian attitude and behavior?

1. Did Paul see himself as living in the “last days”? Or did he believe they were in the distant future?
2. List the characteristics of wickedness in 3:2-8.
3. Which of these are rooted in lust? In greed? In self-centeredness?
4. Had Paul already warned Timothy that many of these traits would find their way into the church (2Ti 4:1-5)?

1. Watch the news today. How many of these characteristics of evil are evident?
2. Consider your two favorite TV shows. Is evil clearly distinguished from good? Or is evil considered good?
3. Have any of these characteristics found their way into your life?
4. What would bring true joy into your life? (a) more stuff, (b) more fun, (c) more fame, (d) more religion, (e) more grace.

*According to various traditions, **Jannes and Jambres** (v. 8) were two magicians in Egypt who opposed Moses (Ex 7:11, 22). They represent all who stand in opposition to the truth.*

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word

Equipped for Every Good Work

2 Timothy 3:10-17

OPENING
up to the Word

Who has inspired you the most? A parent? A teacher? A coach? What traits made your mentor so helpful to you?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Paul was Timothy's mentor. What are some of the most important things mentors can impart to their students?
2. What was the outcome of Paul's commitment to take the gospel to gentile communities? What should Timothy have expected from his commitment?
3. What things must Timothy "continue in" in order to stand strong in the face of persecution?
4. What four specific benefits does God's inspiration of the Bible, the written revelation of God, accomplish (3:16)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Do you mentor anyone in a formal sense? Whom do you informally mentor? (a) children, (b) grandchildren, (c) students, (d) employees.
2. The ultimate and divine Word of God is Jesus (Jn 1:1). How do you feel Jesus reveals the Father in and through the written word of God?

WINDOW
on the Word

*In the first century, teachings from Christian experience and from the **Holy Scriptures** (what we call the Old Testament) were important for informing the church about its relationship with God. When Paul says Scripture is **inspired by God**, he used the Greek word theopneustos which can be translated "God-breathed." God inspired his servants in their writing to give us the Bible, which shows us God—his amazing grace and his unconditional love—ultimately revealed in the person of Jesus.*

The Crown of Righteousness Awaits

2 Timothy 4:1-8

Ever win a crown or a prize? Perhaps as the king or queen of the prom—or in a beauty pageant or sports event?

1. When Paul charged Timothy to preach the word, what purposes did he give for his preaching (4:2)?
2. Is it possible to preach selected portions of the written word without preaching Jesus, the Word?
3. The drink offering was poured over meat and grain sacrifices as a type of the shed blood of Jesus to cover our sins. How did Paul see his impending execution as a parallel?
4. Two metaphors are used as part of Paul's summation of his Christian life. How does the struggle of a fight and the discipline of running express Paul's life? How did he keep the faith?

1. What kind of Christian messages or articles do you like best? (a) educational, (b) inspiring, (c) humorous, (d) centered around a story, (e) corrective.
2. Have you been moved by a Christ-centered message, either spoken or in print? Did it direct you to a closer relationship with God?
3. Use metaphors from your interests to express your Christian journey. Share them with a friend.
4. Are you as assured as Paul was of God's salvation (v. 8)?

The Christian life calls for daily, weekly, yearly and lifelong commitment to Jesus, who at his return gathers the faithful into his kingdom (4:1). It is a life of patience (v. 2) and correct teaching (v. 3). Hardship must be endured (v. 5). Discipline like that of a fighter or a runner is part of our commitment to Jesus (v. 7).

DAY 25

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

One More Thing!

2 Timothy 4:9-22

OPENING
up to the Word

Ever been in court—or supported a family member or friend who was on trial? Does the love of a friend help in anxious times?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Why did Demas leave Paul? He had been Paul's companion in Rome and a close friend of Luke (Col 4:14; Phm 24).

2. What was Paul's previous experience with John Mark (Ac 15:37-40)? How had reconciliation taken place?

3. How was Paul strengthened during his trials?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Have you ever been abandoned or betrayed by a close friend or coworker? How did you feel? Did you attempt reconciliation?

2. Have you ever been harmed or abused by anyone? Did you find help in Jesus? Did you get sound counsel to work through any anger? Did you leave the "repayment" in God's hands?

3. Do you know someone enduring a serious problem in life—perhaps in prison? This person may be in need of your support and prayers.

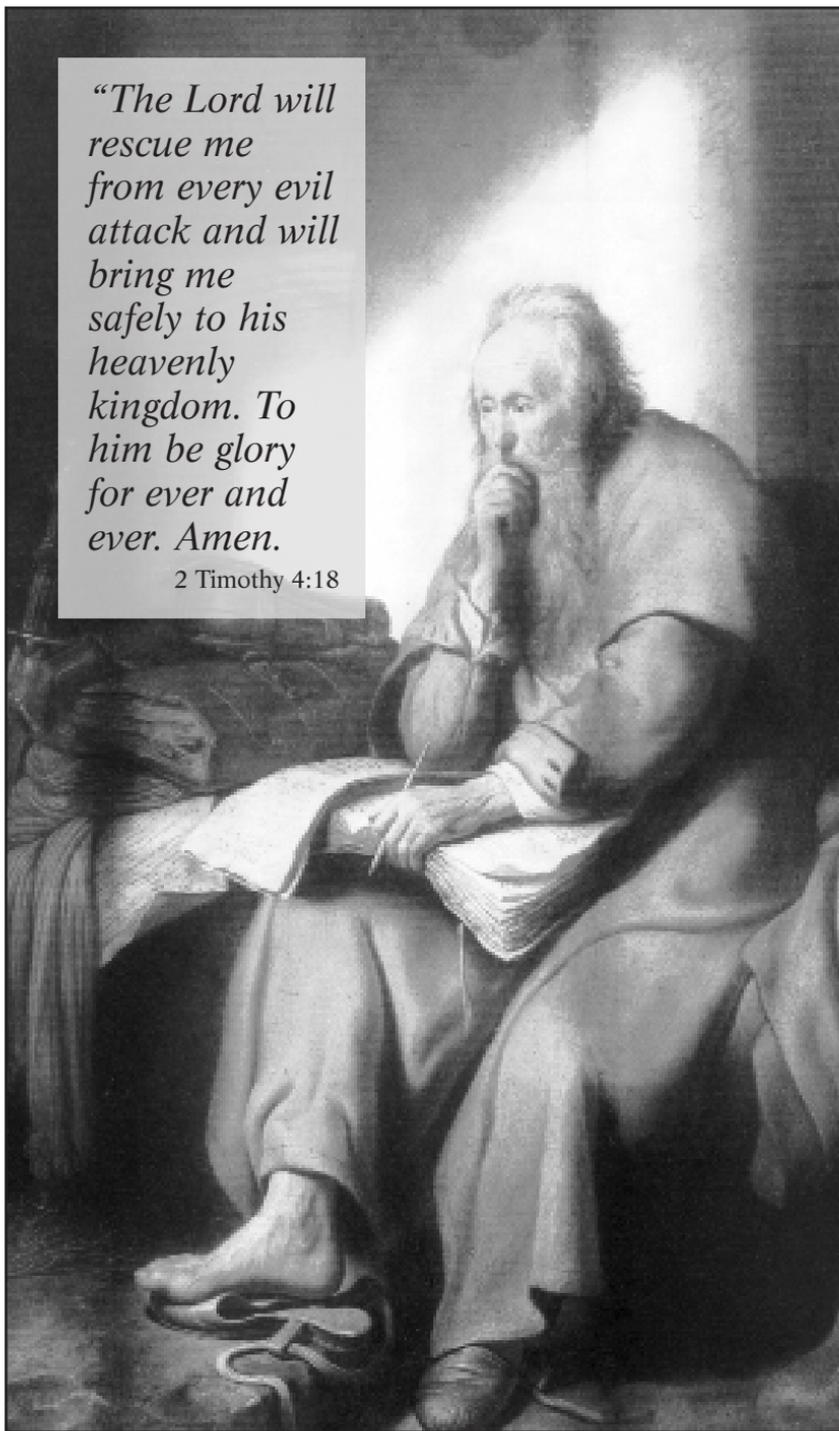
4. What "lions" has God delivered you from?

WINDOW
on the Word

When Paul claimed that God delivered him from "the lion," he may have been using code for Emperor Nero. Christians were being put to death as scapegoats by this evil dictator. Paul was overjoyed that he had been protected so he could proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

*“The Lord will
rescue me
from every evil
attack and will
bring me
safely to his
heavenly
kingdom. To
him be glory
for ever and
ever. Amen.*

2 Timothy 4:18



The Apostle Paul in Prison by Rembrandt Van Rijn, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart

Introduction to Titus

Date: This epistle probably was written at about the same time Paul wrote his first epistle to Timothy, around A.D. 62 to 64 , after his first Roman imprisonment.

Recipient: Titus was a gentile convert of Paul (Gal 2:1-5) and had been the minister in Crete. The last mention of him is in 2 Timothy 4:10, where Paul said Titus went to Dalmatia around A.D. 64-67.

Teaching Christ-centered truth and grace is a theme throughout this pastoral epistle. Though written to Titus to help him in his pastoral responsibilities, the grace-based message extends to the lives of the congregation. This epistle to Titus illustrates the various ways that Christian leaders can share the grace of God with others:

Preach	1:3
Command	1:3
Teach stewardship	1:7
Exhort, encourage	1:9; 2:15, 3:8
Teach sound doctrine	1:9; 2:7, 10
Convict, convince	1:9, 13; 2:15
Set a good example	2:3
Train, advise, encourage	2:4
Teach through visible example	2:7

Paul emphasizes that one is saved by grace and the love of God by Jesus our Savior through the renewal of the Holy Spirit (3:3-7). Our relationship with God is not due to any righteousness on our part, but based on his mercy (v. 5). And what is the response to that great gift of forgiveness and salvation? Paul focused the response on how Christ will produce good works in the lives of those who live in him:

1:16	Beware of false teachers, who are disobedient and do not do good works.
2:7	Young men must model good works.
2:14	Be enthusiasts of good works.

- 3:1 As Christians, be ready for every good work.
- 3:8 Be intent upon good works.
- 3:14 Yield to Christ, so that good works are maintained.

Outline:

I. QUALIFICATION OF TRUE MINISTERS, 1:1-16

- A. Greetings to Titus, 1:1-4
- B. Qualification of Church Officials, 1:5-9
- C. Disqualification of False Teachers, 1:10-16

II. REGULATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOR, 2:1-15

- A. Teachings for Older People, 2:1-3
- B. Teachings for Younger People, 2:4-8
- C. Teachings for Slaves, 2:9-10
- D. Teaching the Power of Grace, 2:11-15

III. CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE AND CHRISTIAN LIFE, 3:1-15

- A. Christians and Pagans in the Community, 3:1-3
- B. The Power of Christian Salvation, 3:4-7
- C. Final Instructions, 3:8-15

Ministers: True or False

Titus 1:1-16

OPENING
up to the Word

Do you have a favorite minister, teacher or Christian author?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Compare Paul's list of qualifications for elders that he gave to Titus (vs. 6-9) with his list to Timothy, stating character traits needed by church officials (1Ti 3:1-7).

2. Do you see the direction in verse 9 as important for all Christians? Compare this instruction with 2 Timothy 3:16 regarding the purposes for applying Scripture.

3. Consider the statement that God never lies (1:2), but Cretans always lie (1:12). Paul quotes Epimenides, a poet from Crete, c. 600 B.C. Why is it important to silence false prophets?

4. How does Paul view those who profess to know God, but who are known to act against God?

LIVING
out the Word

1. How far in advance of an event do you start planning? For marriage? Pregnancy? Vacation? Retirement? How long ago did God plan to demonstrate and express his love for you?

2. Consider Paul's list of character traits for leaders. How is leadership in Christ related to a life of service?

3. What helps you maintain Jesus as the focus of your faith? (a) daily prayer, (b) Bible reading, (c) meditation, (d) reading and listening to Christ-centered ministry.

WINDOW
on the Word

*Crete was a small island, rampant with **sexual sins**. This was in part due to the teaching by Cretan philosophers that immoral actions were not sinful. Since wild beasts lived on the island, the Cretans themselves were typified as vicious brutes.*

Do Liars Always Lie?

Paul raises a paradox when he quotes the Greek poet and priest Epimenides in Titus 1:12: "The Cretans are always liars." But Epimenides was a Cretan. Was he lying or telling the truth about Cretans?

If he were telling the truth, he would be a liar. If he were a liar, he would be telling the truth. The resolution of this ancient paradox clarifies several misunderstandings about the Bible. It explains how false teachers can quote true scriptures (Mt 4:1-10; 2Co 11:13-15), why the false prophet Balaam uttered true prophecies (Nu 22) and why the demon who impersonated Samuel seemed to be honest (1 Sa 28:3,12-20).

The answer hinges on the principle that *someone who is always a liar does not always lie*. If a liar could be depended upon to lie consistently, one could always extract the truth from him or her.

Consider the story of a logician who is surrounded by a tribe of savages. The tribal chief decides to give the logician a sporting chance to escape. He places the logician in a jail having two exits and two guards. One exit leads to freedom, the other to death. One guard is always truthful, the other always lies. He is allowed to ask only one question of only one guard. The logician asks, "If I ask the other guard whether this exit leads to freedom, will he say yes?" If the guard says "yes," the logician has picked the wrong door. If he says "no" the logician has picked the correct door. No matter which guard he asks, he can determine from the answer which door leads to freedom.

In order to be effective, liars often mix truth with error. The statements of Satan in Genesis 3:4-5 are an excellent example.

Keep in mind, however, that a quotation from the Bible *may* be false, if the one quoted is a liar, but it should not be assumed to be false just *because* the one quoted is a liar. Just as Epimenides spoke the truth when he said (by implication) that he was a liar, a spirit also spoke the truth when he said, "I will be a lying spirit" (1Ki 22:22).

—William Stenger

MAKING CHRISTIANITY ATTRACTIVE

In Titus 2:10, Paul instructs Titus to teach specific groups in the church about how they should live their lives in that culture, “so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our savior attractive.”

OLDER MEN

- Temperate
- Worthy of respect
- Self-controlled
- Sound in faith
- Sound in love
- Sound in endurance

YOUNGER MEN

- Self-controlled
(Titus was to be example in everything, by doing what is good, and by showing integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech in his teaching)

SLAVES

- Subject to masters in everything
- Trying to please masters
- Not talking back to masters
- Not stealing from masters
- Trustworthy

OLDER WOMEN

- Reverent in the way they live their lives
- Not slanderers
- Not addicted to much wine
- Teaching what is good
- Training younger women

YOUNGER WOMEN

- (Learning from the older woman to be:)
- Loving to their husbands
- Loving to their children
- Self-controlled
- Pure
- Busy at home
- Kind
- Subject to their husbands

Just Say “No” To Ungodliness

DAY 28

Titus 2:1-15

When did you last give advice to someone younger than yourself? Was the advice asked for or volunteered? Did he or she accept it or reject it?

1. Study the chart on the opposite page of Paul's instructions to Titus regarding various groups of believers. What problems appear to have been common in that society? How did these problems affect Christians? Remember that they were called out from the values of society—but many were new to the values of Christianity.

2. How often are love and self-control mentioned? Were they especially needed in Crete?

3. “To the pure, all things are pure” (1:15). How does one become pure (see 2:11-14)?

4. What are the theological implications of calling Jesus “our great God and Savior?”

5. Do you believe that grace leads to permissiveness? On the contrary, what does Paul say that grace “teaches us”?

1. Look through the instructions for various groups (see opposite page). How would these play out in our society? How would these instructions be received in your church?

2. Do you see antidotes to addiction in this chapter? Is there a void in your life? Does your Savior fill it?

3. Paul says that grace teaches us (2:11). How does God's grace teach us?

*Some estimate that there were seven times as many slaves as there were free people in the Roman Empire. **Slavery** in that culture was a problem that Christians had to accept. However, they could address the way slaves were treated. Some masters were cruel, while others treated slaves more like servants and took responsibility for their well-being and education. When slaves became Christians and their sins had been forgiven by God, they were still obliged to fulfill their responsibility to their masters, however long that might have taken.*

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word

Hear No Evil! Speak No Evil! Do No Evil!

Titus 3:1-15

OPENING
up to the Word

Ever been the victim of gossip? How did it make you feel? Hated? Angry? How did you react? Ever have good news spread about you? How did that make you feel? Loved? Joyful?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Paul gives general instructions for Christians of all ages and stations in life (3:1-2). Compare these instructions to the chart in chapters one and two.

2. Examine Paul's description of the process of change in the lives of Christians. How has God acted to save us? How do we respond to his grace in our lives?

3. What is "the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit" (see Jn 3:1-5; Mt 3:11; Ac 2:38)?

4. In verse 10, the term *divisive person* or *heretic* refers to one who teaches religious heresy, which can mean "other party" or "sect," meaning those who teach false doctrine. Again, Paul warns Titus to avoid false teachers. On what basis—and after how many warnings?

LIVING
out the Word

1. How are Christian values generated and produced?

2. Where are you in life's journey? Still in the early stages? Approaching the finish line? Trace the steps of God's grace in your life (3:3-7).

WINDOW
on the Word

*In Titus, Paul states three times that **God is Savior** (1:3; 2:10; 3:4) and another three times that **Jesus is Savior** (1:4; 2:13; 3:6). So God our Savior, through taking on a human life in Jesus our Savior, saves us by his grace, not by our works.*

***Justification** is the act of God to forgive our sin and to make us righteous, not because we are good, but because he is good. As Christians, we can be assured of being heirs of eternal life.*

Introduction to Philemon

Authorship: The apostle Paul.

Date: About A.D. 60-62 during Paul's first Roman imprisonment. It was written before the books of Timothy and Titus.

Setting and purpose: This short prison epistle is a model of grace-based conflict resolution. Paul tactfully intervened on behalf of Onesimus, an indentured servant of Philemon, a believer in Colosse. Onesimus had deserted his duty and sought out Paul in Rome. Paul appealed to Philemon to receive Onesimus back without punishing him.

Paul entreats Philemon to forgive Onesimus by contrasting Philemon's freedom with Paul's spiritual bondage (vs. 8-9), showing Onesimus to be a son to Paul in the faith (vs. 10-14), suggesting that Philemon receive Onesimus as a dear brother instead of a slave (vs. 15-16). Paul offers to cover any financial indebtedness (vs. 17-20). Finally, Paul requests lodging of Philemon—he intends to visit him after release from prison (vs. 21-25).

Distinctive features: Theme—we are no longer slaves, but brothers and sisters in Christ (vs. 14-17). Christianity undermined slavery, for all people are created in the image of God. Citizenship in the heavenly kingdom makes earthly status irrelevant.

Outline:

I. GREETINGS TO A DEAR FRIEND, vs. 1-3

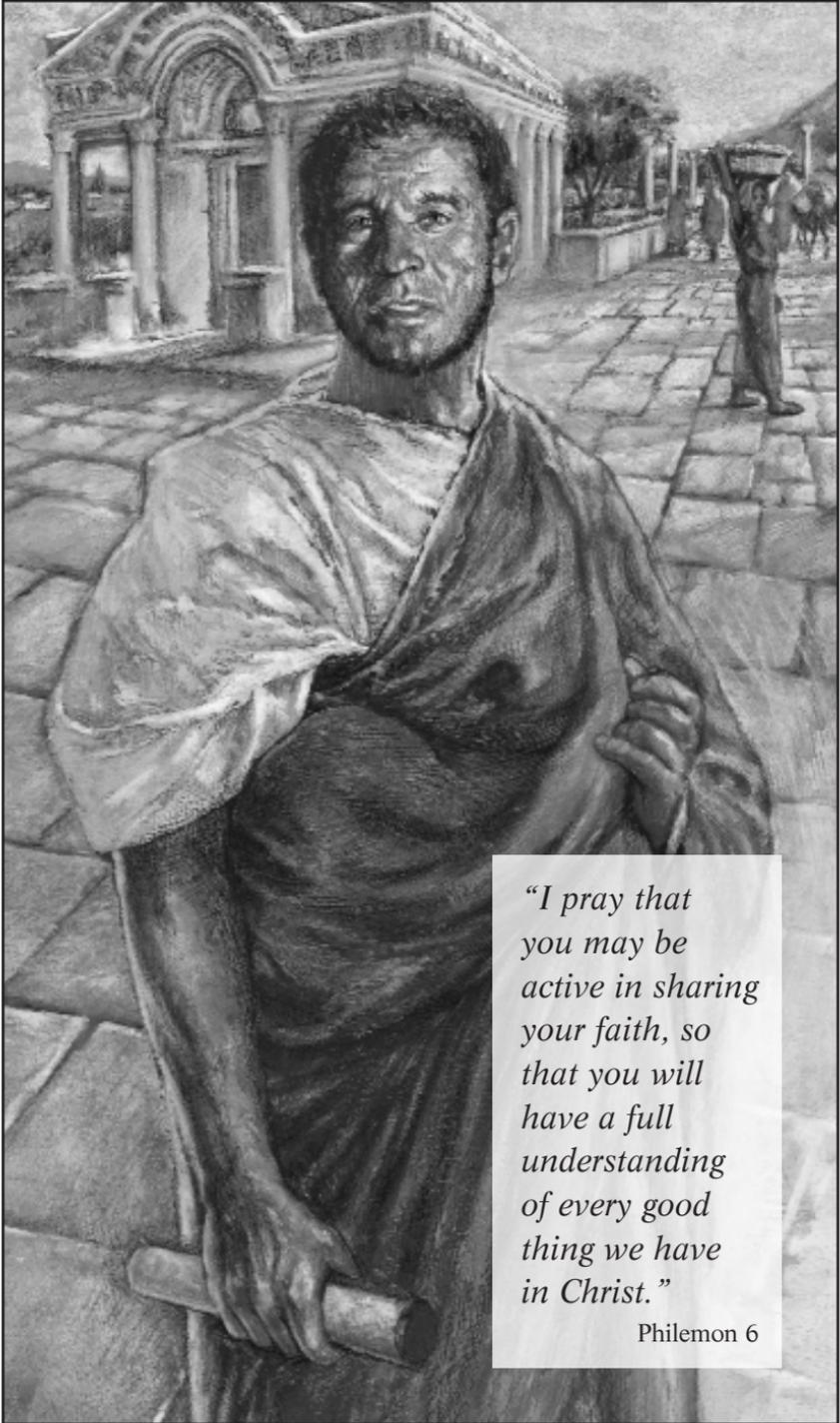
II. COMMENDATION OF PRAISE TO PHILEMON, vs. 4-7

- A. Praise for His Faith
- B. Praise for His Love

III. REQUEST FOR ONESIMUS' FORGIVENESS, vs. 8-22

- A. Paul Pleads His Own Condition, vs. 8-9
- B. Paul Pleads for His "Son" Onesimus, vs. 10-14
- C. Paul Pleads for "A Beloved Brother," vs. 15-16
- D. Paul Offers to Pay Debts for Onesimus, vs. 17-20
- E. Paul Plans to Visit, vs. 21-22

IV. FAREWELL, vs. 23-25



*“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.”*

Philemon 6

“No Longer a Slave”

DAY 30

Philemon

Ever been in trouble and needed help? Physical, financial, emotional or spiritual? Did a friend intervene for you in your time of need?

1. How do you see Paul’s use of authority to influence Philemon’s decision? How tactful is he? How does Paul use his position in prison as an appeal rather than a command (vs. 8-9)?

2. What Christian attributes does Paul commend Philemon for (vs. 4-7)?

3. How did being a part of the body of Christ create a sense of brotherhood in the community (vs. 15-16)? Compare with 1 Corinthians 6:1-8.

4. How do you suppose Philemon felt when Paul offered to pay any debt that Onesimus had incurred? What about Paul’s reminder that Philemon was indebted to him (vs. 17-20)?

5. Guess who’s coming to visit (vs. 21-22)? Would this planned visit have encouraged Philemon to take action?

1. How tactful are you when you want a favor from someone?

2. Do you readily express your thankfulness for another’s help, love and faith? Or do you express thanks only when you want something?

3. When did you last reach out to someone less fortunate than you? Be proactive—pass on and “pay forward” God’s grace!

*According to tradition, **Philemon later became Bishop of Colosse**, and eventually he was martyred. After Onesimus was set free by Philemon, his continued bond-service to our Lord led to his ordination as Bishop of Berea in Macedonia. Tradition also holds that Onesimus returned to Rome, only to be martyred under the persecution of the crazed emperor Nero.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word