

PHILEMON

Lesson 15: A New Convert is a Convert

8 April, 2016

In Philemon, verses 9-12, the apostle Paul gives Philemon...

SEVEN REASONS TO RECEIVE ONESIMUS BACK:

1. On the basis of Philemon's love for the apostle Paul (vs. 9).
 - a. The Lord asks us to do things for others on the basis of our love for Him. (Mt. 5:39, Jn. 14:15).
 2. Out of respect for Paul's advanced age (vs. 9).
 - a. Older people have more experience and wisdom. They'll try to keep you from going astray like they did when they were younger, but you've got to listen to them and heed their advice.
 - b. It is a biblical command. "**Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder.**" (1 Pet. 5:5)
 3. Because Paul is a "prisoner of Jesus Christ" (vs. 9). He is not in a position to help Onesimus, but Philemon should respect the fact that Paul is in prison for serving Christ and honor his request.
 - a. Note that this refutes the teaching that material blessings prove that God is on your side. Many Christians have chosen to do without possessions for the sake of Christ and His Gospel.
 4. Because Onesimus is a child of God (vs. 10). He is more than just a runaway servant.
 - a. Saved men and women ought to do whatever they can do to help other believers even if it costs you something (time, money, reputation).
 - b. **Galatians 6:10** "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
 5. Onesimus was begotten in bonds (10). Perhaps that was the situation that brought him to his knees before Christ. Paul asks Philemon to look past the transgression and consider the result: the salvation of a precious soul.
 6. The new convert has been drastically changed (vs. 11). Before he left he was not worth the money you paid for him. As he returns to you, you're going to find him to be a great new asset.
 7. It would be like receiving the Apostle Paul himself (vs. 12). If you love me—then love him (1 Jn. 4:20).
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A NEW CONVERT IS A CONVERT: we ought to treat them as such. They're just as saved as you were when you first got saved.

Why do we distance ourselves from new converts?

1. We devoted time and effort to help new converts in the past and the results were negative.
 2. It takes time for a new convert to change bad habits and language. We're afraid they'll be a bad influence on us or our family and drag us down spiritually.
 - a. This is selfish. You're looking out for your OWN self-interests while neglecting the needs of the new believer.
 - b. Instead of worrying about the new convert being a bad influence on YOU, you ought to figure out how you can be a GOOD influence on THEM.
 - c. You've got to give them time to grow in the Lord as they fellowship with you.
 - d. You won't be enticed into sinful things if you're not interested in those things (James 1:4).
 - e. Don't expect a new convert to know what you know on their first day as a Christian.
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A NEW CONVERT IS A CONVERT:

What should a new convert do?

1. Begin serving Jesus Christ and fellowshipping with his saints. You have an advantage: lots of unsaved friends and colleagues to lead to Jesus Christ.
 2. Look and act like a Christian. If you love Jesus Christ, you'll learn quickly how to serve Him. Aim to be a profitable servant.
 3. Take advantage of every opportunity to fellowship with other believers and to hear the preaching and teaching of God's word. Give it all you've got.
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