

PHILEMON

Lesson 18: A Willing Mind

29 April, 2016

In **verse 14**, the apostle Paul gives Philemon an opportunity to do the right thing of his own willingness so that he can receive the full benefit of his actions.

Here's what we can gather from the context:

- Paul could have benefitted by keeping Onesimus with him.
 - This shows that a new Christian can be useful in the ministry right away.
 - This reminds us that if Paul needed help, we all could use some help.
 - Philemon had responsibilities that prevented him from travelling with Paul.
 - This shows how we can still serve the Lord by giving to missionaries.
 - Onesimus could have served Paul in Philemon's stead and it would count as Philemon's service.
 - Because Onesimus was Philemon's property, Paul had no legal right to keep him.
 - In Paul's letter to Philemon, he suggests that Onesimus be set free to serve him.
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THE FREE SERVANT: ("WANT TO" CHRISTIANS)

- Will read their Bible without needing to be pushed.
 - Will want to participate in evangelistic efforts without being threatened.
 - Will give to the Lord's work willingly.
 - Will look for ways to support foreign missions.
 - Does not have to be forced to live the Christian life according to the word of God.
 - Is not severely punished by God for failing to always obey.
 - Will seek out and find opportunities to serve the Lord.
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THE CHRISTIAN WHO SERVES IN BONDAGE: ("HAVE TO" CHRISTIANS)

- Will try to read their Bible, but will soon give up.
 - Will avoid other Christians who like to go soul winning.
 - Will give grudgingly for awhile and then stop.
 - Will not support foreign missions.
 - Will fail to live the Christian life even when persuaded.
 - Is not severely punished by God for always failing to obey.
 - Will avoid opportunities to serve unless threatened or unless they feel it is mandatory.
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OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE JESUS IN MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD:

- Public witnessing and passing out Gospel tracts.
 - Preaching in rescue missions and homeless shelters.
 - Preaching and visitation in retirement homes for the elderly.
 - Preaching and witnessing in prisons.
 - Visiting people in their homes to present the Gospel.
 - Visiting work camps.
 - Discipleship of new converts.
 - Teaching the Bible to children.
 - Encouraging missionaries through personal letters or email.
 - Sending an occasional gift to a missionary.
 - Forgive others / don't hold grudges / don't carry bitterness.
 - Love your neighbor as yourself.
 - Pray for others.
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Paul does not command Philemon to comply with his desires. It is up to the free will of Philemon to do what he knows is right or to refuse to do it. There is no “*or else*” written in this letter.

The Holy Spirit does not force anyone to get saved. He draws everyone, He makes God's commandments known, He tells them about the free gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ, and He reveals the consequences of refusing to comply with God's desire to save them. —With all this revelation and knowledge, a person is going to feel guilty if they refuse to do the right thing.

But people always resist the Holy Ghost (Acts 7:51, John 8:9) and choose rather to live with their own guilt.

ROMANS 12:1-2 This is a good example of the importance of willingness. —We're told what we SHOULD do. We may even be URGED to do it. If you don't do it, you are unreasonable, but it's your decision.

You get a new mind when you get saved. Your new mind is willing to obey and serve Jesus Christ. It will be necessary to renew that new mind as it is influenced by the flesh, the world, and the Devil. You do this through Bible reading and preaching.
