

# PHILEMON

## Lesson 19: Short Term / Long Term

6 May, 2016

Paul begins his statement in verses 15-17 with the words, “**For perhaps.**” There is much we can learn from that stance. Too often Christians make definitive statements about God or about God’s will, but they don’t have a verse of Scripture to prove it. We need to learn to stick to the Bible—and separate conjecture from facts. The word “**perhaps**” is very useful in this endeavor.

**Verse 15** Speaking of Onesimus, Paul says “**For perhaps he departed for a season.**” Notice that he chose the kindest (or least harmful) way to describe his brother’s crime of running away. We ought to show this kind of charity toward one another (1 Pet. 4:8). Charity “**covers**” or minimizes. It doesn’t expose or maximize when it comes to the way we talk about the misdeeds of our brethren. We always hope that they’ll come to their senses and return to the “joy of thy Lord.” We can help to keep that door open.

---

### SHORT TERM VS. LONG TERM

**Short term:** Philemon has suffered injury by the actions of Onesimus. Short term, there is nothing good about this situation.

**Long term:** Onesimus was lost, but now he’s saved. He was bound for hell, but now has eternal life.

Notice that Paul didn’t say, “*If Onesimus hadn’t departed, he would have never been saved.*” Christians say things like that quite often. If you’re talking about something that you can’t prove, you should never speak as though God spoke to you and told you a secret. If it’s not in the Bible, God didn’t say it. Be careful you don’t speak with authority where you have no grounds for authority. Don’t attribute a situation as being “God’s will” unless you can specifically prove it from the Bible.

---

**Short term:** Jesus suffered and died on the cross at Calvary because Adam sinned and brought sin upon all men. This is not good in the short term.

**Long term:** Jesus’ death paid for our sins and provides the way for eternal life.

Notice that God brought good out of a bad situation, but that doesn’t mean that God CAUSED the situation so that He could bring good out of it. He didn’t cause Adam to sin so that He could show His glory in Jesus Christ.

---

**Short term:** Joseph was sold as a slave into Egypt by his brothers. He’s falsely accused by Potiphar’s wife and put in prison.

**Long term:** God enables Joseph to interpret Pharaoh’s dream. He becomes a ruler in Egypt and saves his people from starvation.

You might be tempted to say that God WANTED those bad things to happen to Joseph so that God could bring good things out of it, but you would be wrong. God DID bring good from a bad situation, but that doesn’t prove that He CAUSED the bad situation.

---

**Lesson:** Don't try to comfort somebody who's facing a deadly illness or a tragedy of some kind by telling them "*this is God's will.*" It is not God's will that we suffer. It's a consequence of Adam's fall. Get rid of that habit of saying "Why did God do this to me?" He didn't.

---

**Short term:** Great Tribulation, Antichrist, Armageddon, millions die. Not God's will.

**Long term:** A thousand years of peace. The Lord reigns on earth in a kingdom of righteousness.

---

**1 THESS 5:18** "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." That verse isn't teaching that everything, good or bad, that happens to you is God's will. Giving THANKS is God's will, even during a troubling time.

---

**Short term:** Job lost his children, his cattle, his health, and his reputation as a righteous man.

**Long term:** Job was better off than when he was before all his troubles. His story blesses and helps many Christians.

---

**Short term:** ACTS 8:1, Saul of Tarsus persecuted the church causing them to flee and scatter.

**Long term:** ACTS 8:4, when the Christians scattered, the Gospel was preached everywhere they went.

---

### A BIBLICAL LOOK AT ROMANS 8:28

There are specific things mentioned in this verse that often get overlooked.

1. All things are not good. All things work together FOR good. God didn't CAUSE the "all things," but He can take those things and make something good out of it. But there's a specific condition: you must love God. Compare Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16.
  2. The context of this verse begins in verse 18. For the short term: we may suffer during this present time. Long term: we won't be in this body of sin forever; we'll have a glorified body (vs. 29). Until then, we groan in this body—WAITING for the redemption of our body (vs. 23).
  3. It won't necessarily be in THIS life that you actually SEE all things work together for good. The ultimate good spoken of in the context is to be glorified; to be like Jesus Christ.
- 

ISAIAH 46:9-10      God speaks of things from His foreknowledge. He sees the end from the beginning. He sees things "that are not yet done." People often confuse the things that God states from His foreknowledge as being things that God has ordained or caused to happen.

---

---