

***ENHANCED PARTICIPATION IN THE FAITH***

**Philemon 1:1–7**  
**Introduction**

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***1. Paul Greets Philemon: Our Introduction to the Book (Philemon 1:1–2)***

**Author:** Paul (P 1:1; C 1:1) [P = Philemon; C = Colossians]

**Date of writing:** Fall of 61 (Paul has been imprisoned one and a half years in Rome)

**Place of writing:** Rome [During Paul's first Roman imprisonment (Feb. 60–Mar. 62)]

**Paul's companions:** Timothy (P 1:1; C 1:1)

Epaphras, a native of Colossae imprisoned w/ Paul (P 1:24; C 4:12)

Mark, who in Pamphylia left Paul [per Acts 13:13] (P 1:24; C 4:10)

Aristarchus, Paul's cellmate (in Ephesus) & Rome (P 1:24; C 4:12)

Demas who later forsook Paul [2 Tim 4:10] (P 1:24; C 4:14)

Luke, a fellow worker of Paul (P 1:24; C 4:14)

**Those sent by Paul:** Tychicus, Paul's mailman [Ephesians 6:21; C 4:7]

Onesimus, a slave who accompanied Tychicus (P 1:10–12; C 4:7–9)

**Main recipient:** Philemon, in whose home the Colossian church meets (P 1:1)

**Other recipients:** Apphia who probably was Philemon's wife (P 1:1)

Archippus, Paul's fellow worker [likely = Philemon's son] (P 1:1; C 4:17)

**Destination City:** Colossae (linkage of Archippus & Onesimus in Philemon & Colossians)  
Note: Paul had not been in the Colossian church: Colossians 2:1

**Message of verses 1–2:** Paul wishes grace and peace from the Father and Christ to the household of a beloved fellow-worker, Philemon, and to the [Colossian] church which meets in his home.

**Lesson 1:** Paul's journeys did not resemble a commando raid, but an aircraft carrier task force.

## 2. Prayer for Greater Recognition of Christ's Work in Phil. to Increase His Faithfulness (1:4–7)

### A. Paul thanks God [for Philemon] by continuing to mention him in prayer (1:4)

The last time Paul was within 100 miles of Colossae was in May of 56

### B. [Paul continues praying thankfully for his friend Philemon] because **he has heard about Philemon's love for all the saints and his faith in the Lord Jesus (1:5)**

Chiasm (C-asm) and

love	→	toward the Lord Jesus
	↘	and
faith	→	toward all the saints

Paul says he *has heard about* his friend's *continued* faith, not his *initial* faith.

### C. [The object of Paul's thankful prayers for his loving and faithful friend is] that **greater recognition of Christ's work in Philemon would greatly activate Philemon (1:6)**

What does *sharing of your faith* mean?

The word *sharing* is *koinōnia* (κοινωνία). It refers to a *participation of some type*:

Rom 15:26 For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem.

1 Cor 1:9 God *is* faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Cor 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

2 Cor 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

2 Cor 8:4 imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

2 Cor 9:13 while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal sharing with them and all *men*,

2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit *be* with you all. Amen.

Gal 2:9 and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we *should go* to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

Php 1:5 for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now,

Philippians 2:1 Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,

Php 3:10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

Meaning of: *Every good thing which is in us in Christ Jesus*

### D. [Paul thankfully prays for his loving and faithful friend to gain a greater recognition of Christ's work in himself to greatly activate him] because **Paul is thankful that Philemon already refreshes believers (1:7)**

Paul's desire for Philemon to be activated by acknowledging what God has done in him is not a rebuke. It is a call to greater Christlikeness.

**Lesson 2:** Paul commends Philemon and Archippus for being involved in ministry, but he commends Onesimus as being committed to ministry.

## Appendix 1: Books Written on Paul's Trips

<b>Trip</b>	<b>Passage</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Books Written</b>	<b>Near Colossae?</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Mission	Acts 13–14	48–49	1: Galatians	Pisidian Antioch
2 <sup>nd</sup> Mission	Acts 15–18	50–52	2: 1–2 Thessalonians	Ephesus
3 <sup>rd</sup> Mission	Acts 18–21	53–57	3: 1–2 Corinthians, Romans	Ephesus
1 <sup>st</sup> Roman Jail	Acts 28	60–62	4: Ephes, Colos, Philm, Philippians	
Post Roman Jail	1 Timothy, Titus	62–67	2: 1 Timothy, Titus	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Roman Jail	2 Timothy	67	1: 2 Timothy	
Paul Executed		68?		

Between 48 and 57, Paul ministered at locations within 100 miles of Colossae. The fact that Paul mentions that Mark was the cousin of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10) serves as a recommendation of Mark (whose image needed rehabilitation after he had left Paul's team just before he came to Pisidian Antioch). On the third missionary journey, Paul was in Ephesus for almost three years.

However, Colossians 2:1 indicates that Paul did not minister in Colossae. This suggests that Philemon had traveled to meet Paul, when he was within 100 miles of Colossae.

However, it is pertinent to ask whether Paul did anything to encourage such people as Philemon to travel to Ephesus. I believe that the number of people who were with Paul in Rome who knew the Colossians is instructive. Members of Paul's team spent part of their time accompanying Paul and part of their time ministering in various locales surrounding the places that Paul himself actually visited. Hence, I would describe Paul's missionary activity as resembling an aircraft carrier task force, rather than a commando raid.

My sense is that this was not unique to the time that Paul was in Ephesus. My take on the New Testament data is that this was Paul's normal procedure everywhere. The book of Acts focuses on Paul's travels, but the New Testament indicates that his team members coordinated their travels with his—between them, they blanketed the territory.

As an aside, most people date Ephesians approximately one year prior to Ephesians and Philemon. I rather doubt that, because the same messenger (Tychicus) would have traveled 1000+ miles one way for each trip. It does not seem to be in keeping with Paul's procedures to have Tychicus travel to and from Ephesus one year and then to repeat that trip in going to Colossae. I would expect Paul to send Tychicus on one trip to conduct ministry in Asia Minor for a period of time before having him return to where Paul was. Two round trips in the space of a little over one year suggests some travel at times when the weather would not be cooperative.

## Appendix 2: Persons Known to Readers of Colossians, Philemon, & Ephesians

<p>P 1:1 <b>Paul</b>, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and <b>Timothy</b>, our brother, To <b>Philemon</b> our beloved <i>friend</i> and fellow laborer, 2 to the beloved <b>Apphia</b>, <b>Archippus</b> our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:</p> <p>P 1:10 I appeal to you for my son <b>Qnesimus</b>, whom I have begotten <i>while</i> in my chains.</p> <p>P 1:23 <b>Epaphras</b>, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, 24 <i>as do</i> <b>Mark</b>, <b>Aristarchus</b>, <b>Demas</b>, <b>Luke</b>, my fellow laborers.</p> <p><i>1. Note that <b>Qnesimus</b> is said to be <u>one of you</u> in Colossians and is the one for whom Paul makes a request of Philemon.</i></p> <p><i>2. Note that Paul greets <b>Archippus</b> as one actively engaged in ministry in both Colossians and Philemon.</i></p>	<p>C 1:1 <b>Paul</b>, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and <b>Timothy</b>, our brother.</p> <p>C 4:7 <b>Tychicus</b>, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. 8 I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts, 9 with <b>Qnesimus</b>, a faithful and beloved brother, who is <u>one of you</u>. They will make known to you all things which <i>are happening</i> here. 10 <b>Aristarchus</b>, my fellow prisoner greets you, with <b>Mark</b>, the cousin of <b>Barnabas</b> (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), 11 and Jesus who is called <b>Justus</b>. These <i>are my</i> only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me. 12 <b>Epaphras</b>, who is <i>one of you</i>, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. 14 <b>Luke</b>, the beloved physician and <b>Demas</b> greet you.</p> <p>15 Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and <b>Nymphas</b> and the church that <i>is</i> in his house. 16 Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. 17 And say to <b>Archippus</b>, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."</p>
<p>E 6:21 But that you also may know my affairs <i>and</i> how I am doing, <b>Tychicus</b>, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you; 22 whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and <i>that</i> he may comfort your hearts.</p>	<p><i>Dotted underline = one in Rome (e.g., <b>Paul</b>)</i>  <i>Dashed underline = traveler (e.g., <b>Tychicus</b>)</i>  <i>Solid underline = one in Colossae (e.g., <b>Philemon</b>)</i>  <i>Dot-dash underline = location? (e.g., <b>Barnabas</b>)</i></p>

**Timothy**, the brother, is with Paul in Rome.

**Epaphras**, a native of Colossae, was imprisoned with Paul.

**Barnabas** was w/ Paul in Pisidian Antioch (1<sup>st</sup> trip, Acts 13:14–51) tho not in Ephesus on 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> trips.

**Mark**, who left just Paul immediately before Paul came to Pisidian Antioch,

**Aristarchus**, a Macedonian, was imprisoned with Paul's in Ephesus (Acts 19:29) and now in Rome.

**Demas** (possibly a Thessalonian), Paul's fellow worker, was with him in Rome.

**Luke**, Paul's fellow worker, was with him in Rome.

**Justus**, a Jewish fellow worker of Paul, who was with him in Rome.

**Tychicus**, who carried the epistles of Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon to their destinations.

**Qnesimus**, the slave for whom Paul made a request.

**Philemon** the letter's main recipient (in whose home the Colossian church met) was involved in ministry.

**Apphia** (probably Philemon's wife) and **Archippus** (probably his son) was also involved in ministry.