



For the week of **April 20-26**

*we did not meet this week but here are some thoughts for your quiet times*

**DAY ONE:** Philemon Take a few extra minutes today to read all 25 verses of this short book

Meeting the Apostle Paul in a Roman prison changed the direction of Onesimus' life, moving him from "useless" to "useful" as he surrendered his life to Christ. Onesimus was a runaway slave who, in addition, may have stolen something from his owner Philemon. After Onesimus meets Paul in prison and commits his life to Jesus, Paul then writes to Philemon in an effort to begin the reconciliation process between the two men.

Jesus has given Onesimus a new way to live and Paul appeals to Philemon's faith as the basis for accepting Onesimus as a brother in Christ. Because of Onesimus' surrender to Christ, and his new purpose, Paul is asking Philemon to surrender his rights and forgive his returning slave. It wouldn't have been an easy thing to do. Surrendering never is.

But it's what God, through his gift of Jesus, calls us to do. It's the way of Jesus as we become "like the Christ." Becoming like Jesus is a life of constant surrender: our dreams, plans, time, and finances. It's all to be surrendered.

If you've not surrendered to Jesus, placed your faith and trust in him and his work on the cross, we encourage you to do so today. If you have, there's probably an area in your life that needs to be surrendered (or re-surrendered). In your Chair time today, surrender that area to God as you trust him for the results.

**DAY TWO:** Read Philemon 8-16

Read the passage and then choose **one verse** that seems important to you and answer one of these three questions:

1. What does it say about God?
2. What does it say about you?
3. What does it say about others?

Then talk to God about what you read/learned and respond appropriately to it. Also take a few minutes to begin memorizing verse 7.

**DAY THREE:** Useful Read Philippians 1:3-6

As Onesimus moved from “useless” to “useful,” he became a living example of what his mentor—the Apostle Paul—wrote, *...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus* (Philippians 1:6).

In much the same way God intended to use Onesimus in the building of his kingdom, he intends the same for us. Part of becoming like the Christ involves recognizing that as we take small steps of obedience, he will use us. He continually moves us from “useless” to “useful.”

It’s possible to be stuck in “uselessness” because we’re unwilling to follow where Jesus might lead. We fear he might call us to situations similar to those experienced by Onesimus. But in the same way Onesimus followed Paul’s example—who followed Jesus—we must follow. Listen to Chris Tomlin’s song *I Will Follow*, and be encouraged to take the next step in your journey of following Jesus.

#### DAY FOUR: Read Philemon 17-22

Read the passage and then choose **one verse** that seems important to you and answer the questions that apply:

- Is there a sin to avoid ?
- Is there a promise to claim?
- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there an application to make?
- Is there something new about God?

Then talk to God about what you read/learned and respond appropriately to it.