

## Final Words (vv. 21-25)

**VERSE 21 Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, since I know that**

**you will do even more than what I say** (Πεποιθῶς τῇ ὑπακοῇ σου ἔγραψά σοι, εἰδὼς ὅτι

καὶ ὑπὲρ ὃ λέγω ποιήσεις [*perf.act.part.nom.m.s. peitho persuade; “having confidence” + d.a.w/noun loc.f.s. hupakoe obedience + pro.gen.s. su + aor.act.ind.1s. grapho write + pro.dat.m.s. su + perf.act.part.nom.m.s. oida know + conj hoti + conj kai even + pro.acc.nt.p. hos what + pres.act.ind.1s. lego + fut.act.ind.2s. poieo do*]).

**VERSE 22 At the same time also prepare me a lodging, for I hope that through**

**your prayers I will be given to you** (ἅμα δὲ καὶ ἐτοίμαζέ μοι ξενίαν· ἐλπίζω γὰρ ὅτι διὰ

τῶν προσευχῶν ὑμῶν χαρισθήσομαι ὑμῖν [*adv ama at the same time + conj de + conj kai also + pres.act.imper.2s. etoimazo prepare + pro.dat.m.s. ego + noun acc.f.s. zenia guest room; “lodging” + pres.act.ind.1s. elpizo hope + conj gar + conj hoti + prep dia + d.a.w/noun gen.f.p. proseuche prayer + pro.gen.p. su + fut.pass.ind.1s. charizomai grant + pro.dat.p. su*]).

**VERSE 23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you** (Ἀσπάζεται σε

Ἐπαφρᾶς ὁ συναιχμάλωτός μου ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ [*pres.dep.ind.3s. aspazomai greet + pro.acc.s. su + noun nom.m.s. Epaphras + d.a.w/noun nom.m.s. suaichialotos fellow-prisoner + pro.gen.s. ego + prep en + noun loc.m.s. Christ + noun loc.m.s. Jesus*]),

**VERSE 24 as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers** (Μάρκος,

Ἀρίσταρχος, Δημᾶς, Λουκᾶς, οἱ συνεργοί μου [*noun nom.m.s. Mark + noun nom.m.s.*

*Aristarchus + noun nom.m.s. Demas + noun nom.m.s. Luke + d.a.w/noun nom.m.p. sunergos*

*fellow-worker + pro.gen.m.s. ego*]).

**VERSE 25 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit** (Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν [*d.a.w/noun nom.f.s. charis + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s. kurios + noun gen.m.s. Jesus + noun gen.m.s. Christ + prep meta + d.a.w/noun gen.nt.s. pneuma + pro.gen.p. su*]).

**ANALYSIS: VERSES 21-25**

1. Paul refused to exercise his apostolic authority over Philemon in regard to Onesimus (v. 6), and here at the end of the letter Paul expresses confidence that Philemon will comply with his requests (v. 21a).
2. The previous section (vv. 17-20) concludes specific instructions for Philemon.
3. The sentence in v. 21 opens with a perfect active participle (*peitho* have confidence, be certain/sure of) reveals Paul's mind-set regarding Philemon's integrity.
4. The word "confidence" in the perfect tense refers to the fact that Paul is so convinced that he places confidence in Philemon to do the right thing regarding Onesimus.
5. The noun "obedience" (*hupakoe*) is ironic in the face of Paul's earlier decision not to evoke his apostolic authority (vv. 8-9).
6. This term is used in Paul's writings for the believer's obedience to God (Rom. 6:16; 15:18; 16:19).
7. While the ultimate object of a believer's obedience is certainly God, here the reference in context is in reference to Paul's God-given authority.
8. Paul regards himself as an intermediary agent of God, therefore he rightfully deserves "obedience" (*hupakoē* in 2Cor. 7:15; cf. Phil. 2:12).
9. "I write" is again an epistolary aorist (writer places himself in the time-frame of the recipients).
10. The second half of v. 21 opens with yet another perfect (causal circumstantial) participle "knowing" (*oida* know).
11. Paul makes another ambiguous request: "I know that you will do even more than I say."
12. Speculation surrounds this statement.
13. One view is that Paul is asking Philemon to free Onesimus.
14. Manumission does not seem to be behind this phase as Paul as per vv. 13 and furthermore Paul has at no place in the letter called for Onesimus to be disengaged from his household niche (cf. vv. 15-16).
15. It is possible and even probable that Onesimus fled his niche based on a doctrinal principle related to positional sanctification, namely that in Christ there is no distinction between "slave and free" (Col. 3:11; Gal. 3:28).
16. If so, then Onesimus made a misapplication based on a valid spiritual truth.
17. This would explain his flight to the place where his ultimate spiritual authority resided.
18. In Rome he served Paul but he still was bound to the legal status of a slave.
19. Paul in the second half of v. 21 is fully confident that Philemon will go above and beyond the basic call to full restoration.
20. This is what mature believers do for others in distress.

21. Paul concludes his appeals to Philemon with a personal request concerning his impending visit to Colossae.
22. “At the same time” or “meanwhile” (adv. *ama* with conj. *de*) links the previous request (v. 21) with the conclusion to this letter.
23. In Hellenistic Greek, the word “guest room” (*zenia* also at Acts 28:23) was a synonym for “hospitality.”
24. What Paul is requesting here is not just an empty room, but a reception with all the amenities that excellent hospitality entails.
25. Paul is not merely suggesting this, he commands it (pres.act.imper. 2s. *hetoimazo*)!!
26. As his special “partner” in the faith (v. 17;cf. v. 6), Paul is not in the least reticent to make such a bold request.
27. This type of request can only be made with someone of Philemon’s stature.
28. The request is based on Philemon’s history that is on the “basis of love” (v. 9).
29. Philemon also had the resources to make this happen.
30. Again, discretion must be exercised in making requests of believers.
31. In v. 22 Paul expresses his desire to visit Philemon at some future date.
32. The verb “I hope” is used elsewhere in connection with Paul’s travel plans (cf. Rom. 15:24; 1Cor. 16:7; Phil. 2:19, 23).
33. Paul’s reference to “prayers” defers to God’s will as that which would ultimately determine the future plans of Paul.
34. “Your” is a second person plural and includes the community of believers in Colossae which met in Philemon’s house.
35. This plural also sets the stage for Paul’s final greetings to the believers there.
36. Thus Paul makes it apparent that this letter is not strictly a personal letter as noted in vv. 1-3.
37. Others were witness to Paul’s demand and Philemon’s response affected the entire local church.
38. “I will be given” (fut.pass.ind. *charizomai* grant, give; deal graciously with, forgive; pardon, hand over, release; be returned) carries the sense of “gracious provision” (cf. Rom. 8:32; 1Cor. 2:12; Gal. 3:18; Phil. 1:29; 2:9).
39. Here in the passive voice in a context where “prayers” are mentioned can be taken as a divine passive.
40. This verb is used of the release of a prisoner and the cancellation of a debt (Lk. 7:42, 43).
41. “To you” is a second person plural.
42. Paul’s sincerity in visiting Philemon is genuine,
43. This travel note serves to express Paul’s desire to be face to face with the recipient rather than outlining an itinerary.
44. There is evidence in the canonical text as well as in early Christian tradition that Paul did indeed return to Asia after his Roman imprisonment.
45. The close parallel to the listing of well-wishers is Col. 4:10-15 where Epaphras, Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke are mentioned.
46. Tychicus was the letter carrier (Col. 4:7-8) who provided an in depth report on Paul’s situation.
47. Tychicus escorted Onesimus back to Philemon.
48. Perhaps Onesimus carried this letter and handed it to Philemon.
49. “Epaphras” is mentioned first, due to his prominence among the Colossians (v. 23).
50. He was the one who introduced the Christian faith to the Colossae area (cf. Col. 1:7; 4:12).

51. His name, as are the rest, serve as an endorsement to Philemon.
52. The designation “fellow prisoner” along with “in Christ Jesus” suggests that the designation is metaphorical rather than literal.
53. This title is applied to Aristarchus rather than to Epaphras in Col. 4:10; cf. Rom. 16:7).
54. This designation serves to evoke imagery to persuade Philemon to imitate those who are willing to give up their freedom and rights for the sake of the gospel.
55. “Greets you” begins the Greek sentence in v. 23 and applies to the five individuals listed in vv. 23 & 24.
56. All four names appear in the final greetings in Colossians (4:10, 14).
57. “Mark” the one identified as “the cousin of Barnabas” in Col. 4:10 is John Mark who joined Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, but did not complete the journey abandoning them in Pamphylia (Acts 15:32).
58. His mention here points to the reconciliation between him and Paul.
59. In a letter designed to produce reconciliation between two believers adds weight to Paul’s appeals to Philemon.
60. “Aristarchus” was one of Paul’s traveling companions in Acts (19:29; 20:4).
61. “Demas,” who later abandoned Paul (2Tim. 4:10-11), was a faithful coworker at this time.
62. “Luke” was a longtime companion of Paul’s as noted in the “we-passages” in Acts (16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16).
63. In Col. 4:14 he is identified as “the beloved physician.”
64. These four are identified as Paul’s “coworkers” (cf. also Rom. 16:3, 9, 21; 2Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25; 4:3; Col. 4:11).
65. In v. 1 of this letter this title is applied to Philemon and Timothy.
66. The point not to be lost on Philemon is that all the men share the same accountability within which Philemon is to play his role.
67. As in Paul’s other letters the grace benediction (v. 25) replaces the “farewell wish” often found in secular letters of the era.
68. The benediction here is identical to the one in Phil. 4:23.
69. Although formulaic in nature this benediction is not without significance.
70. Here “grace” evokes the opening salutation of “grace and peace” in v. 3.
71. The principle of “grace” must dominate the approach of believers toward one another.
72. And God’s grace is such that it overshadows human failure.
73. Since we are all recipients of divine grace we should be willing to extend grace to one another where forgiveness is in order.
74. “With your spirit” (cf. also Gal. 6:18) refers to the human spirit of the inner person.
75. Of interest is the fact that “your” is a plural while “spirit” (w/d.a.) is a singular.
76. Hence, it should read: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with the spirit of you all.”
77. Here Paul includes every single believer within the Colossian church as every believer is connected to one another and has a stake in the Philemon-Onesimus affair.
78. Jesus Christ is the source of this “grace” that makes it possible for believers to gain forgiveness and to grant forgiveness.

**END: Philemon Chapter One**  
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