The Philemon Appproach

Adam Willingham · Philemon 1:4–21

INTRODUCTION

- What is the best way, the most effective way to deal with a brother or sister that you might have a concern with?
- A better approach in many situations, if not in most situations, is a more gentle approach that I like to call the Philemon approach.
- Onesimus is going to deliver this letter to Philemon saying, make sure to receive me back as a brother. And that's the real message of the book.

1 Encourage Up Front

Philemon 1:4–7; Galatians 1:3; Galatians 1:6

- I thank my God always making mention of you in my prayers, because I hear of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints.
- Say something encouraging and uplifting up front.
- It sets a positive tone from the very outset.
- If possible, praise the individual for their godly characteristics.
- Even if you can't think of anything positive to say to or about someone, you can think of something positive to say toward them.

2 Appeal, Don't Order

Philemon 1:8–16; 1 Corinthians 10:23; Colossians 4:1

- Though I have enough confidence in Christ to order you to do what is proper, yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you.
- The tactic is appeal, don't order. Suggest, don't command and demand.
- It's not a matter simply of what's right and wrong. It's a matter of what's the best way to do it.
- It takes a motive of love to appeal and not to order.
- Love cannot be coerced. Love cannot be forced. Love is a free choice.
- We want to make it the other person's idea so that they will want to do it.

3 Use Your Relationship as a Motivator

Philemon 1:17–20

- If then you regard me a partner, accept him as you would me.
- Paul is using his relationship as a motivator. That's not manipulation. It's a tactic.
- Paul was basically saying, treat him like you would me. Do it for me. Don't let me down.
- It's so important to develop these relationships ahead of time so that you can use this tactic.

- Establish rapport with your brethren. Good rapport with your brethren. Reach out to them. Get to know them.

4 Express Confidence

Philemon 1:21; 2 Thessalonians 3:4; Galatians 5:10

- Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, since I know that you will do even more than what I say.
- This is expressing confidence in your brother.
- Only say that if you really mean it. But we can always choose to think the best of someone.
- Love believes all things. I think in the context, what that means is we need to believe the best about our brother and sister.
- We need to think the best of one another. We need to believe in one another.

> THE CHALLENGE
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> **So keep in mind that the ultimate goal is not just that you say what needed to be said. What is the ultimate goal? Their salvation.**

MY NOTES