PAUL’S SHEPHERD HEART

FOR ONE USELESS PERSON

Philemon 1:1-25

Key Verses: 1:10-11

1. How does the author identify himself (1a,10b,13b,19a)? Why does he refer to himself as “a prisoner of Christ Jesus,” “in chains for the gospel”? To whom was Paul writing (1b-2)? How did he greet them (3)?

2. What were Paul’s thanksgiving and prayer topics for Philemon (4-6)? How had Philemon’s love affected the Lord’s people, including Paul (7)? What was Paul’s appeal to Philemon, and what was its basis (8-10)?

3. Read verses 10-11. What does it mean that Paul called Onesimus “my son” and that “he became my son while I was in chains,” and that “he became useful”? What can we learn here about Paul’s shepherd heart and its impact on one useless person?

4. What was Paul’s painful decision regarding Onesimus (12-13)? How did Paul show his respect for Philemon and help him see Onesimus from God’s point of view (14-16)? How could Paul have such an attitude toward Onesimus (1 Ti 1:14-15; Gal 3:28)?

5. How did Paul want Philemon to respond to Onesimus and deal with his wrongs and debts (17-18)? In reminding Philemon of how Paul had shepherded him, how did help make an environment for Onesimus (19-22)? What were his final greetings (23-25)?