

# Lesson 13

**NT Book:** Philemon

**Book Theme:** God Makes Us Useful

**Key Verse:** Philemon 11

**Summary:** The book of Philemon is another book of the Bible written by Paul to an individual person. But Philemon was not a pastor; he was a slave owner in the city of Colossae! Philemon and Paul had likely met during Paul's two years in Ephesus, and Philemon became a vital part of the Colossian church (Ph. 7). But now Paul was not only friends with Philemon, but also with one of Philemon's slaves who had run away! Onesimus, had run away from his home with Philemon and, certainly by God's design, had eventually met Paul. Onesimus heard the Gospel and believed, and then he stayed to serve Paul while he was in prison. But eventually, Paul knew it was time for reconciliation between Onesimus and Philemon. Paul wrote this letter to Philemon on Onesimus' behalf and sent it, along with the letters to the Colossians and Ephesians, with Tychicus and Onesimus. Paul urged Philemon to accept Onesimus back as the brother in Christ he had become. Onesimus was useful to Philemon now as a fellow Christian, and not merely as a slave (Phil 11). He wanted Philemon to realize that, through faith in Jesus, God makes us useful in ways we never could be on our own!

**Video:** The story of Philemon

**Teaching Points::** How are Christians useful?

## Class Time

### Review Activities

- Review flash cards
- Review a verse together, then play "Sparkle" with that verse. The first child says the first word of the verse, then the next says the second word, etc. around and around the table. If a child can't think of the next word within 5 seconds, he/she is out. When the verse ends, the next child says, "Sparkle" and is out. Play until you're down to one winner, then start again with a new verse.

### Small Group Activity

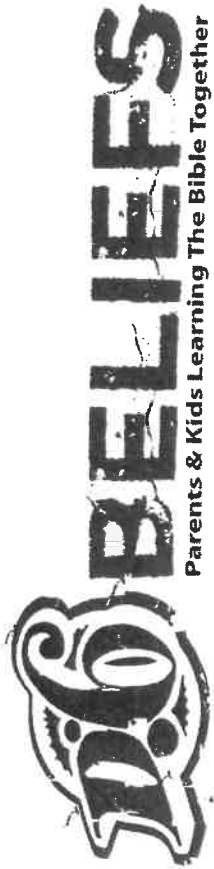
- "Illustrated Verse" - Have children draw a picture to represent as many words in the key verse (Philemon 11) as they can. They could also use a combination of pictures +/- letters (think Cracker Barrel children's menu). For example "once" could be the number "1" + "s," or a picture of a "bow" + "th" for "both". See if you can read the verse based on the child's clues or have each table present clues to the other tables.

### Large Group Activity

- Give kids cards of book of Bible, theme, and key verse (you can use Go Fish cards) and have them walk around to find their matches.

### Take Home Page

- Send a take home page with each child and encourage them to spend time with God during the week.



# New Testament - Lesson 13

## Philemon

Theme: God Makes Us Useful

Key Verse: Once he was useless to you, but now he is useful both to you and to me.

Philemon 11

### Philemon

Philemon and Paul had likely met during Paul's two years in Ephesus, and upon returning home, Philemon had become a vital part of the Colossian church (Ph. 7). Now Paul was not only friends with Philemon, but also with one of Philemon's slaves who had run away! Onesimus, had run away from his home with Philemon and, certainly by God's design, had eventually met Paul. Onesimus heard the Gospel and believed, and then he stayed to serve Paul while he was in prison. But eventually, Paul knew it was time for reconciliation between Onesimus and Philemon. Paul wrote this letter to Philemon on Onesimus' behalf and sent it along with the letters to the Colossians and Ephesians with Tychicus and Onesimus. Paul urged Philemon to accept Onesimus back as the brother in Christ he had become. Onesimus was useful to Philemon now as a fellow Christian, and not merely as a slave (Phil 11). He wanted Philemon to realize that, through faith in Jesus, God makes us useful in ways we never could be on our own.

### This Week

Read Philemon 1:8-18

1. What are some reasons why we might not be useful to God?
2. How does being focused on God and following Christ make us more useful to others?
3. What are some ways that Christians can be a blessing in the lives of those around us?
4. What are some ways that you can be more useful in the church or in your family?