



Be Reconciled to Your Past! Following in the Footsteps of Onesimus

Lesson 3 • Colossians 4:7-9 and the Letter to Philemon

Colossians 4:7-18 reminds us that our ministry to others is the overflow of our relationship with Christ. 12 people are mentioned by name. Each one sought to **make their mark for eternity**. We are **following in the footsteps of those who fulfilled their ministries**, so we too can make our mark for eternity!

Losing Your Baggage Can Be _____, but It Can also Be _____!

Follow in the Footsteps of Onesimus ~ Colossians 4:7-9 _____ to Your Past!

I. A Man Who Made His Mark: Onesimus = "Useful", "Profitable"

- Onesimus is mentioned only **2 times** in the Bible: *Colossians 4:7-9* and in the little *Letter to Philemon*
- **Before Christ:** Onesimus was _____ to his master, Philemon. *Philemon 1-16a*
 - 1) **Philemon** is the believing master who was wronged.
 - 2) **Onesimus** is the unbelieving slave who ran away, showing himself to be useless to his earthly master.
- **Coming to Christ:** Onesimus was led to a saving faith in Christ by the Apostle Paul, *while Paul was in chains for faithfully serving his Master!* *Philemon 10, 19*
- **After Christ:** Onesimus was _____ to his new heavenly Master, Jesus Christ, and to His earthly servant, Paul! *Philemon 11-16*
 - 1) Like **Archippus**, Onesimus is learning to make his mark by **fulfilling his ministry from the Lord!** *Colossians 4:17*
We are saved to serve others and everyone is given a ministry by their Master to fulfill!
 - 2) Like **Tychicus**, Onesimus is learning to make his mark by **becoming trustworthy!** *Colossians 4:7-9*
Stay on track as Christ follower and over time you will build a track record of trust-worthiness!
- Know Christ:** He is a _____ in Christ.
- Grow in Christ:** He is a _____ brother.
- Show Christ:** He is a _____ brother.
- Go with Christ:** The runaway slave still needed to be reconciled with his past to be set free to fulfill his ministry and make his mark!
Philemon 11-20

**How Did Onesimus Go from Being Useless to the Lord to Being Useful for the Lord?
What Set Onesimus Free to Fulfill His Ministry from the Lord?**

Onesimus was willing to _____ being reconciled with his past!

2. Make Your Mark: Be Reconciled to Your Past in the Lord!

- Be reconciled by **returning** on the Road of Reconciliation! (*Colossians 4:9; Philemon 1-25*)

Why Is Reconciliation Like a Road with Mile Markers?

- It is more about the journey than just the destination!
 - It does not happen in isolation from God's people!
 - It requires progress over time!
 - It takes a lot of hard work!

The Road to Reconciliation

Mile Marker #1 _____ ~ Trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord and keep taking next steps to surrender more and more of your life to his Lordship.

Mile Marker #2 _____ ~ Turn from the specific sins that made you useless to God and others!

"Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin." Ezekiel 18:30-32

"Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance..." Matthew 3:8

"...repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance." Acts 26:20

Mile Marker #3 _____ ~ Ask and receive forgiveness from Christ for those sins.

"He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy." Proverbs 28:13

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

Mile Marker #4 _____ ~ Ask for forgiveness from those you have sinned against.

Matthew 5:23-26

Mile Marker #5 _____ ~ Make restitution whenever possible for whatever your sin destroyed or took from others.

Leviticus 6:1-5; Luke 19:8-10; Philemon 18-19

Mile Marker #6 _____ ~ Whenever it is possible and right in God's eyes, seek to renew the relationship that sin has ruined.

"I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart...For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother... receive him as you would receive me." Philemon 12, 15-17

Mile Marker #7 _____ ~ Develop a track record of trust-worthiness over time.

Mile Marker #8 _____ ~ Received as a brother or sister in Christ just as God in Christ has received us.

*"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual **RESTORE** such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself." Galatians 6:1-3*

- Be reconciled by **asking** for forgiveness, **giving** forgiveness, and always **being** forgiving! (3:12-14; Matthew 6:12, 14-15; Luke 17:3-5; Matthew 18:21-22, 35; Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60)

- You can **always** be reconciled with your past in Christ, even if others refuse to repent of their sin or reconcile with you as the Lord requires.

*Philemon's response would **not** determine Onesimus' destiny in Christ or ministry for Christ. At the same time Onesimus was not doing this solo and riding rough-shod past the mile markers on the Road to Reconciliation.*

Make Your Mark: Follow in the Footsteps of Onesimus and Be Reconciled with Your Past!

Ask and give forgiveness to others just as God in Christ has forgiven you!

What baggage do you need to lose today?

Where are you on the Road to Reconciliation?

*We are here to help you take the next step to be reconciled with your past!
Join a GrowGroup to receive help from fellow travelers on the Road to Restoration!*

Who do you need to ask for forgiveness? Who has asked for forgiveness but you are withholding it?
Who do you need to be forgiving toward even though they refuse to forgive or reconcile?

