

# Philemon 1:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.

## Analysis

**Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord**—ναὶ ἀδελφέ (nai adelphe, yes brother) ἔγώ σου ὄναίμην ἐν κυρίῳ (egō sou onaimēn en kyriō, I would benefit from you in the Lord)—ναί (nai, yes) intensifies appeal. ὄντινημι (oninēmi, benefit/profit/have joy) is rare optative mood expressing wish/prayer. The verb ὄναίμην (onaimēn, may I have profit) plays on Ὄνήσιμος (Onēsimos, Onesimus—"profitable"). Paul requests the benefit Onesimus's name promises: Philemon's forgiveness will "profit" Paul emotionally.

**Refresh my bowels in the Lord** (ἀνάπαυσόν μου τὰ σπλάγχνα ἐν Χριστῷ, anapayson mou ta splanchna en Christō, rest/refresh my affections in Christ)—ἀναπαύω (anapauō, rest/refresh) and σπλάγχνα (splanchna, bowels/affections) recall verse 7: "the bowels of the saints are refreshed by you." Paul applies Philemon's proven character to his own need. ἐν Χριστῷ (en Christō, in Christ) frames everything—this isn't personal favor but Christian obedience.

## Historical Context

The wordplay Ὄνήσιμος/ὄναίμην (Onesimos/onaimēn) would delight ancient hearers: "Let Onesimus (Useful) be useful by forgiving Onesimus!" The appeal to consistency ("you refresh others, refresh me") uses ancient rhetorical technique—showing contradiction between reputation and current opportunity. ἐν κυρίῳ/ἐν Χριστῷ (in Lord/in Christ) appears repeatedly, grounding personal requests in theological reality.

## Related Passages

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**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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1. Does your Christian reputation create accountability—do others appeal to your proven character to expect consistent behavior?
2. How do you "refresh the bowels" of spiritual leaders and friends through your obedience and encouragement?
3. What requests framed "in the Lord" or "in Christ" are you currently resisting, and why?

## Interlinear Text

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Ναί, ἀδελφέ ἐγώ σου ὄναίμην ἐν Κυρίω. ἀνάπαυσόν  
Yea      brother      me      of thee      have joy      in      the Lord      refresh  
G3483      G80      G1473      G4675      G3685      G1722      G2962      G373

μου τὰ σπλάγχνα ἐν Κυρίω.  
my      G3588      bowels      in      the Lord  
G3450      G4698      G1722      G2962

## Additional Cross-References

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**Philemon 1:7** (Parallel theme): For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

**3 John 1:4** (Parallel theme): I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

**Philemon 1:12** (Parallel theme): Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:

