

Philemon 1:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

Analysis

For we have great joy and consolation in thy love—χαρὰν γὰρ πολλὴν ἔσχον καὶ παράκλησιν (charan gar pollēn eschon kai paraklēsin, for I had much joy and encouragement). χαρά (chara, joy) and παράκλησις (paraklēsis, encouragement/consolation/comfort) describe Paul's response to reports of Philemon's ministry. ἐπὶ τῇ ἀγάπῃ σου (epi tē agapē sou, because of your love)—Philemon's love refreshed others, producing vicarious joy in Paul.

Because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother (ὅτι τὰ σπλάγχνα τῶν ἀγίων ἀναπέπαυται διὰ σοῦ, ἀδελφέ, hoti ta splanchna tōn hagiōn anapepautai dia sou, adelphe)—σπλάγχνα (splanchna, bowels/intestines/affections) is Hebrew idiom for deepest emotions (heart in modern English). ἀναπαύω (anapauō, refresh/rest/revive) means giving weary people rest. ἀδελφέ (adelphe, brother) personalizes appeal—Paul speaks as family, not authority figure. Verse 20 repeats "refresh my bowels," applying Philemon's proven character to Paul's request.

Historical Context

Ancient Mediterranean physiology located emotions in σπλάγχνα (splanchna, internal organs), especially kidneys and intestines. Modern "heartfelt" parallels ancient "bowel-deep." Philemon's hospitality provided literal rest (food, lodging) and spiritual encouragement to traveling ministers and local believers. Paul

leverages this reputation: as you've refreshed others, now refresh me by forgiving Onesimus.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. Does your love produce joy and encouragement in others, or are you draining rather than refreshing?
2. How do you "refresh the bowels of the saints"—practically meeting needs and providing spiritual encouragement?
3. Who has God placed in your life needing refreshment, and how can you meet their emotional/spiritual needs?

Interlinear Text

χάριν	γὰρ	ἔχομεν	πολλὴν	καὶ	παράκλησιν	ἐπὶ	τῇ	
joy	For	we have	great	and	consolation	in		G3588
G5485	G1063	G2192	G4183	G2532	G3874		G1909	
ἀγάπη	σοῦ	ὅτι	τὰ	σπλάγχνα	τῶν	ἀγίων		
love	thee	because	G3588	the bowels	G3588	of the saints		
G26	G4675	G3754		G4698		G40		
ἀναπέπαυται	διὰ	σοῦ	ἀδελφέ					
are refreshed	by	thee	brother					
G373	G1223	G4675	G80					

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 7:13 (Parallel theme): Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.

2 Corinthians 7:4 (Parallel theme): Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.

1 Thessalonians 3:9 (Parallel theme): For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God;

1 Thessalonians 2:19 (Parallel theme): For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

Philemon 1:20 (Parallel theme): Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.

2 Timothy 1:16 (Parallel theme): The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:

2 John 1:4 (Parallel theme): I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.