

Philemon 1:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient,

Analysis

Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient—διό (dio, wherefore/therefore) marks transition from thanksgiving (vv. 4-7) to request (vv. 8-20). πολλὴν ἐν Χριστῷ παρρησίαν ἔχων (pollēn en Christō parrēsian echōn, having much boldness in Christ) ἐπιτάσσειν σοι τὸ ἀνῆκον (epitassein soi to anēkon, to command you what is fitting)—παρρησία (parrēsia, boldness/freedom of speech) and ἐπιτάσσω (epitassō, command/order) indicate apostolic authority.

Paul could command Philemon's obedience but chooses different approach. τὸ ἀνῆκον (to anēkon, the fitting/proper thing)—receiving Onesimus as brother isn't optional preference but moral obligation. Yet Paul forgoes authoritarian command for loving appeal (v. 9), demonstrating the new-creation ethic where power serves rather than dominates. This models Christian leadership: knowing when to command and when to appeal.

Historical Context

Apostolic authority included binding commands (1 Corinthians 7:10, 11:17, 14:37; 1 Thessalonians 4:2). But Paul distinguished essential doctrine (command) from prudential wisdom (appeal). The Philemon situation required free, willing obedience from the heart (v. 14), not coerced compliance. Ancient patronage culture operated through commands from superior to inferior; Christianity introduced mutual submission "in Christ."

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. When do you exercise legitimate authority, and when do you wisely choose persuasion over command?
2. How does "boldness in Christ" differ from worldly power-plays and personality-driven leadership?
3. What "fitting" actions does the gospel require of you toward those who've wronged you?

Interlinear Text

Διὸ	πολλὴν	ἐν	Χριστῷ	παρόρησίαν	ἔχων
Wherefore	much	in	Christ	bold	though I might be
G1352	G4183	G1722	G5547	G3954	G2192
ἐπιτάσσειν	σοι	τὸ	ἀνήκον		
to enjoin	thee	G3588	that which is convenient		
G2004	G4671		G433		

Additional Cross-References

1 Thessalonians 2:6 (References Christ): Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:8 (Parallel theme): For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed:

Ephesians 5:4 (Parallel theme): Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

2 Corinthians 3:12 (Parallel theme): Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:

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