



Linked With Love

PHILEMON 1:1-25

There is an undeniable link between gratitude and love. Paul writes to Philemon sharing his thanks for *him* and for his *love* for the church. He makes a request to Philemon, but is clear to explain that he is not ordering, demanding, or persuading him to grant his request. Instead, he is asking him *in love* to *show* love.

It begins with Paul expressing his gratitude for Philemon, reminding him that he is on his prayer list. When you think about the people you pray for regularly and the people you love, the list probably overlaps a bit. It is generally easy to pray for those we love. Conversely, it is also easy to love those we pray for. But our hearts are not so strong that we can hate those we pray for.

You may have some people in your life that you wouldn't use the word "love" to describe your relationship with. How many of those people do you pray for regularly? I don't prompt this question to persuade, guilt, or shame; much like Paul, I ask this in love knowing that your heart is capable of more. You are not the Grinch. Your heart capacity is much bigger than its size.

Holy Spirit power living inside of you means you have the love of God - unconditional love - accessible to your heart. Think about the people in your life that you may not want to give thanks for. Choose one of them to begin praying for them. Ask God to bless them, to reveal himself to them, to meet their needs. Selflessly add them to your daily prayer list. Send them a note in the mail or a text saying you hope they have a good day. If they own a business, make a purchase to support them. These small actions take little time out of your day but make a big difference in the kingdom because they foster love. Depending on the relationship, it may not feel comfortable; it doesn't need to. Our comfort is not the goal - gratitude and love are.

This devotional is not rhetorical. It's not just a cute idea that you can read about. It is a real request and will only be a benefit to you and the person you are praying for. It is your faith in action, your heart softening, and your gratitude being expressed. Today, show love like Paul.

