



F. Y. C.

For Your Consideration

❖ JANUARY 2017 ❖

NEW YEAR WEIGHT REDUCTION

It's a good idea to begin the new year with less weight. I'm not talking about lowering how much we weigh physically. I'm talking about shedding burdens that weigh us down.

*Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, **lay aside every weight**, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*

Hebrews 12:1 ASV

WHAT WEIGHS US DOWN?

Harmful burdens that are heavy to bear.

Jealousy – being resentful or painfully desirous of another's advantages.

Bitterness – being ill-natured while interacting with others.

Resentment – harboring ill will as a result of a real or imagined grievance.

Grudges – holding a deep-seated feeling of rancor.

Stubbornness – being unreasonably and often obstinately unyielding.

Guilt – Self-reproach for supposed inadequacy or wrongdoing.

These emotional "weights" affect our spiritual well-being and our physical well-being. It's well known that our body, soul, and spirit have an effect on each other. A thought can make us feel sick. Sickness can make us feel depressed. An action can cause us grief and pain. Consider such Bible characters as: Adam and Eve, Lot, Esau, Peter (and many others).

*And he [Jesus] said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your **heart** and with all your **soul**, and with all your **mind**."*

Matthew 22:37

CAST OFF WHAT WEIGHS YOU DOWN AND AFFECTS YOUR WHOLE BEING!

*Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you **entirely**; and may your **spirit** and **soul** and **body** be preserved **complete**, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Thessalonians 5:23

***bold** emphasis mine

CHANGE

New beginnings require change...don't be afraid of change...
it is the only way "new beginnings" come about.

JUBILEE

Jubilee: The fiftieth year after seven cycles of seven years (Lev.25:10) in which Israel's land and people gained freedom. It was begun with a blast from a ram's horn on the Day of Atonement (Lev.25:9). During this year of joy and liberation, the law stipulated three respects in which the land and people were to be sanctified: (1) It was to be a time of rest for the soil as well as people (Lev.25:11). The unattended growth of the field was for the poor to glean and for the beasts of the field (Exo. 23:11). (2) All land was to revert back to the original owner (Lev.25:10-34; 27:16-24). The original distribution of land was to remain intact. All property which the original owner had been obligated to sell (and had not yet been redeemed) was to revert (without payment) to the original owner or his lawful heirs. Some exceptions to this pattern are noted in Leviticus 25:29-30; 27:17-21. (3) Every Israelite who had sold himself--either to his fellow countryman or to a foreigner settled in the land -- because of poverty and remained unredeemed was to be freed along with his children (Lev.25:39-46).

The Year of Jubilee prevented the Israelites from oppression of one another (Lev.25:17). It had a leveling effect of Israel's culture by giving everyone a chance for a new start. It discouraged excessive, permanent accumulations of wealth and the deprivation of an Israelite of his inheritance in the land. Families and tribes were preserved by the return of freed bondservants to their own families. Permanent slavery in Israel was rendered impossible.

This year was a constant reminder of God's interest in economic freedom (Eze.46:17). Purchase of property was actually tantamount to assuming a lease for a maximum of forty-nine years, and the seller always retained the right to cancel the purchase by settling with the buyer on the amount of money that was still payable,

taking into account the number of years that the buyer had made use of the property. If the seller was either incapable or not desirous of making use of this right of redemption, the property nevertheless returned to his possession automatically in the next Year of Jubilee. So the sale of a house, for example, was equivalent to renting it for a specified period of time (Lev.25:29-34). This made it difficult to accumulate vast permanent holdings of wealth (compare Isa.5:8; Mic.2:2). God's designed arrangement was against both large estates and pauperism. The Israelites were repeatedly given the opportunity to begin anew, and the impoverished were enabled to maintain themselves in society.

This year also reflected God's provision for the soil's conservation (Lev.25:11-12,18-21). During the Year of Jubilee, the Israelites were once again taught that they were to live in faith that the Lord would satisfy their needs (compare Exo.16:17-18).

The return of the jubilee year was proclaimed by a blast of trumpets which sounded throughout the land. There is no record in Scripture of the actual observance of this festival, but there are numerous allusions, which place it beyond a doubt that it was observed. The advantages of this institution were manifold.

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## POSITIVE EFFECT

It would preclude those inequalities which are produced by extremes of riches and poverty, and which would make one man dominate over another.

It would afford a fresh opportunity to those who were reduced by adverse circumstances to begin again their work in the birthright which they had temporarily forfeited.

Source: Collected from a number of reference books.

# BOOK OF PHILEMON

(A lesson in interaction among Christians)

## CHARACTERS:

Paul (Apostle)

Philemon (brother and slave owner)

Onesimus (converted run-away slave)

## LESSONS

### **Courtesy, concern, and consideration exhibited for all involved.**

Peaceful entreaty: not demands, intimidation or pressure, for compliance.

### **Recognizing another's good works.**

Be vocal about the efforts of others. Secret friends are of little value.

Praise, or lack of it, indicates the worth in the eyes of others.

Often only criticism is vocalized.

Pride and competition often squelch praise.

### **Suppression of own desires.**

What I want must be tempered by what is best for all.

In group activity, personal interests must be secondary.

### **Settling accounts.** Providing what is right (honest) in sight of all men.

Care needs to be exercised in dealing with others, especially members.

Members should not be made to suffer because of relationship.

### **Expressing confidence in others.**

By doing so, you help them become what they are capable of being.

"I know you can . . ." spurs many to success.

The opposite is also true: "You can't" often defeats.

### **Use of tact** (lit., touch) Defined: A nice discernment as to what is fitting and expedient. Skill in dealing with difficult or delicate situations.

Paul discerned what was fitting for all concerned.

No one was alienated.

### **Intercession.** Paul wrote a handwritten letter on behalf of another.

When we are in position to intercede on behalf of brother or sister, we must!

Paul didn't have to intercede; he had no obligation other than "love."

A demonstration of true brotherly love.

## OBSERVATIONS

- ▣ In each aspect, "I" became secondary, "us" was primary. (True in all groups of people.)
- ▣ Apostolic position did not allow for autocratic control. (They were "servants of all.")
- ▣ Philemon was not denounced for having a slave; he was encouraged to show kindness.
- ▣ Love of God produces love for one another (freely receive, freely give).
- ▣ Restitution is due to the injured party, unless forgiven.
- ▣ Rich, poor, slave, freeman, ruler, subject: all souls precious in God's eyes.
- ▣ Becoming a Christian does negate our civil obligations.
- ▣ How many quarrels and disputes can be avoided when the "spirit of Christ" is maintained.
- ▣ We must exhibit the same attitude our Lord demonstrated.



## Ponder This

## Square Pegs, Round Holes

It seems that some want to change Christianity to conform to their desires; to change it to an American way of thinking. Some are “marketing” the church. That is, they are structuring their message and practices in order to offer what people find appealing. It’s not the message of the Bible nor the church that need to be changed...it’s the hearts, minds, and lives of men and women that need to be changed.

### A WARNING

*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.*

2 Timothy 4:3-4

### AN EXAMPLE

*The Apostle Paul told how the “Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom.” Instead of yielding, Paul preached “Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God”*

1 Corinthians 1:22,23-24

### A LESSON

The gospel is still “living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword” (Hebrews 4:12), and is still “the power of God to salvation” (Romans 1:16).

**May we not act foolishly and change the message rather than work to change the hearts and minds of the hearers.**



## Musings of a Preacher

### My ‘To Do’ List for Today

I need to ...

love my neighbor, the unlovely, even my enemies;

**The fruit of the Spirit is love**

radiate the joy that comes from knowing my Lord;

**joy**

be at peace with myself, with others, and with the Lord;

**peace**

be patient while undergoing trials or tribulations;

**patience**

let goodness be my adornment;

**goodness**

be kind and gentle in my conduct towards others;

**kindness**

be faithful in my dealings with others, my word being my bond;

**faithfulness**

maintain self-control, to prevent harming myself and others.

**self-control.**

Galatians 5:22-23

To do these things is a challenge, but with the Lord’s help I’ll do my best!

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Bible references are from the NASB except where another translation is referenced.

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