

## Daily Devotional, January 26, 2021

### “Not By Compulsion, But Voluntary”, (Philemon 14, NKJV)

*“But without your consent I wanted to do nothing, that your good deed might not be by compulsion, as it were, but voluntary.” (Philemon 14)*

The Apostle Paul wrote this personal letter to Philemon, asking him to receive his runaway slave Onesimus as a brother, with mercy. In God’s providence, Onesimus had met up with Paul and gotten saved. Notice that the appeal that Paul made was based upon Philemon’s free will choice. Would he choose to exercise mercy or not? Would he choose to listen to the wise counsel and appeal of the godly apostle or not?

Consider what the Bible says the response of the Christian ought to be to the love freely bestowed upon His children. *“We love Him because He first loved us”* (1 John 4:19). God does not compel us to love Him, but we love Him because of all He has done and continues to do in our lives. The same principle applies to giving, and can be extended to the use of one’s time and spiritual and natural gifts. *“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver”* (2 Corinthians 9:7). Coercion, manipulation, and guilt trips are the way of the world, not the way of God. The Christian cheerfully serves Jesus Christ, because he or she knows Him to be the most benevolent Master.

Let us make application of this in our daily communications. When we request that kindness be done and grace be extended to another, which Christians all ought to regularly do, let us ask and not forcefully command. The blessing that the other receives in doing a good turn to someone else will be all the greater when they are not commanded to do it. When in authority, be it in the workplace, the home, or the church, let us humbly beseech, and not virulently lay down the law. You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar. Graceful speech is what it comes down to. Consider as you go about your day what method of request and tone you take with others when asking them to do or not do something. Deliberately. I think if we all do that, then we will find that the mercy, kindness, and love will boomerang back to us also, making for peace and blessing in our lives, homes, churches, classrooms, and workplaces.