

DATE: AUGUST 21, 2011

TEXT: Philemon 17-25

TITLE: "GO THE EXTRA MILE"

SERIES: "LIVING OUT YOUR FAITH IN THE REAL WORLD" (no. 2 of 3)

*****TREVOR- Have someone lead us in Lord's Prayer this week. (Words on screen)**

INTRODUCTION:

Do you have a faith and love that causes you to go the extra mile?

...The type of faith that causes you to do more than just get by or do the mere minimum in your spiritual life?

...A faith that causes you to excel in the things of God?

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught the principle of going the extra mile.

"If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles." (Matthew 5:41)

Paul is writing to Philemon about a faith and love that goes the extra mile.

I. (v.17, 23-25) GO THE EXTRA MILE WITH FORGIVENESS

(v.17) "So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me."

1. The book of Philemon is a book about forgiveness though it never mentions the word.
2. All that Paul has been writing to Philemon now leads to his request to welcome Onesimus, the slave that ran away, back home with forgiveness.
3. Paul has been appealing to Philemon on several fronts and now says, "Therefore based on all I have said, if you consider me a partner, welcome Onesimus."
4. The word "partner" is the word "koinonia," which speaks of common interest, common work, feelings and goals.
5. Paul had several partners in ministry, for he understood that we need each other and can accomplish much more when we work together.
6. He closes his letter by giving greetings from fellow workers or partners in ministry.

"Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers." (Philemon 1:23-24)

7. Epaphras was responsible for taking the gospel to Colosse and was both a hard worker and prayer warrior on behalf of the Colossian church.
8. Mark is the relative of Barnabas who became author of the gospel of Mark.
9. Aristarchus – a representative of the Thessalonian church who was with Paul on several occasions and on his journey to Rome.
10. Demas – who sadly deserted Paul because he loved this world.
11. Luke – a Physician who wrote both Luke and Acts.
12. Using the term "partner," Paul says, "If you are interested in the work of the gospel and spiritual things as I am, welcome him."

13. Paul was sending the converted Onesimus back to Philemon so he could have a face-to-face encounter with the one that wronged him.
14. The previous arrangement between Onesimus and Philemon as a runaway slave and owner had been changed by God's transformation of grace.
15. The Greek word translated as "welcome" or, literally, "to take to one's self," requires that Philemon go beyond a mere welcome, implying a reception into a circle of friends.
16. Paul is asking that Philemon restore Onesimus to fellowship by giving him access to his very heart, without prejudice.
17. Paul expressed the reason of the principle in his letter to the Romans when he said, **"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."** (Romans 15:7)
18. To accept others as Christ has accepted us means accepting those who are not cut from the same cloth or fabric as we are or people whose story in much different than ours.
19. To reach the people that need Jesus challenges our comfort zones at times, but through His spirit, we are called to reach out to others just as Christ has reached out to us, with grace and mercy.
20. To welcome him would mean to extend forgiveness based on the forgiveness he had received in Christ.

ILLUSTRATION: When Victor Hugo's novel *Les Misérables* first came out in 1862, people in Paris and elsewhere lined up to buy it. One of the central themes that dominate the novel is the moral redemption of its main character, Jean Valjean, an ex-convict. It is a story about Jean Valjean, who was sentenced to a nineteen-year prison term for stealing a loaf of bread. During his imprisonment, Valjean hardened into a tough convict. No one could beat him in a fight. No one could break his will. Valjean finally earned his release but found he had nowhere to go. He wandered through the village seeking shelter until a generous bishop had mercy on him. That night, while the bishop and his sister fell asleep, Valjean rose from his bed, rummaged through the house, and crept off into the darkness with the family silver. Three policemen knocked on the bishop's door the next morning, with Valjean in hand. They had caught him with the stolen silver and were ready to send him back to prison for life.

But the bishop responded in a way no one expected: "So here you are!" he said to Valjean. "I'm delighted to see you! Had you forgotten that I gave you the candlesticks as well? They're silver like the rest, and worth a good 200 francs. Did you forget to take them?" Valjean was startled and stared at the old man with an expression no words could convey. Valjean was no thief, the bishop told the policemen. "This silver was my gift to him." When the policemen left, the bishop gave the candlesticks to his guest, who was now speechless and trembling. "Do not forget, do not ever forget," said the bishop, "you have promised to use the money to make yourself an honest man." The power of the bishop's act, which defied every human instinct for revenge, changed Valjean's life forever. A

naked encounter with forgiveness melted the granite defenses of his soul. He kept the candlesticks as a precious memento of grace and dedicated himself from then on to helping others in need.

21. God offers forgiveness through Christ if we will only accept his gift by faith.

22. We are to forgive others as Christ has forgiven us, for his forgiveness is a gift of God's grace.

23. Forgiveness is a non-negotiable thing in the body of Christ, for the Lord calls us to forgive.

ILLUSTRATION: George Herbert was a Welsh born English poet, orator and Anglican priest who lived died in the 1600's. He said, (appropriate picture of bridge)*"He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself."(George Herbert)**

24. We have been forgiven and the Lord wants us to be forgivers, for the forgiven must forgive.

ILLUSTRATION: One writer wrote, *"We are most like beasts when we kill. We are most like men when we judge. We are most like God when we forgive." (Anonymous)**

25. God receives those who were formerly scarred by sin and unites them to Himself through His Grace.

26. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus links our own need for forgiveness with our forgiveness of others.

"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." (Matthew 6:12)

27. The degree of forgiveness is expressed when he is told to welcome him as he would welcome Paul.

28. He was to give him a place in his heart as he had given Paul a place in his heart.

29. He was to honor him as Paul's substitute; welcoming him as though he were a spiritual partner like Paul within the very household he once served as a slave.

30. God calls us to a faith that forgives.

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32)

31. The world might say that no one expects you to forgive the Onesimus in your life but God calls us to have a faith that goes the extra mile.

32. We are to forgive others as we have been forgiven by Christ.

ILLUSTRATION: **C. S. Lewis said, "To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable, because God has excused the inexcusable in you."

33. Because we have received forgiveness, we should give grace to others.

34. We are called to forgive the husband or wife that hurts us deeply.

35. We are called to forgive the person that mistreats us or takes advantage of us.

36. We are to forgive the person that causes us pain.

37. It is possible to forgive and go the extra mile by welcoming as he would Paul because of grace.

38. This forgiveness is possible through the grace of God that was at work in his life.

39. Paul speaks of His grace early in the letter and again at the end of the letter with the closing words, "**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit**" (Philemon 1:25)

40. God's grace is always magnanimous and far-reaching.

41. It goes beyond duty and necessity.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Picture of Corrie ten Boom) Recently, I read a remarkable story by Corrie Ten Boom, holocaust survivor and Christian speaker. Corrie watched in horror as the Nazi jailers brutalized her sister, Betsie, in the processing center at Ravensbruck. Many years later, after the war had ended, one of these jailers approached her after she had finished delivering a message for a church service in Munich. She writes, "He was the first of our jailers that I had seen since that time. And, suddenly, it was all there--the roomful of mocking men, the heaps of clothing, Betsie's pain blanched face. His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who had preached so often the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side. Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; and I was going to ask for more? 'Lord Jesus,' I prayed, 'Forgive me and help me to forgive him.' I tried to smile. I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so, again, I breathed a silent prayer. 'Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me your forgiveness.' And as I took his hand, the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand, a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me. So, I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world's healing hinges, but on His. Our part is to yield our injuries unto Christ's care and grace.

42. The God who forgives is the God who can enable us to forgive.

43. The God of abundant grace can help us to go the extra mile.

44. Paul was not asking Philemon to do anything God could not enable him to do.

45. Is there someone in your life today that you need to accept, welcome or forgive?

46. His grace is sufficient to enable you to do what you could never do on your own.

47. He can help you to go the extra mile with forgiveness.

II. (v.18-19) GO THE EXTRA MILE WITH LOVE

(v.18) "If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me." (Philemon 1:18)

1. Paul does not deny that Philemon may have been wronged in some respect.

2. Onesimus could have wronged Philemon by embezzling his master's goods, robbing him of his money, and running away from his service or corrupting fellow servants.
3. If you have ever been wronged in some way by someone, you can relate to what Paul is writing about.
4. Onesimus had experience God's forgiveness but the consequences of his actions lingered.
5. Paul gets to the bottom line with the words, "Charge it to me," or, in other words, "Put that on my account."
6. Paul signified that he would be answerable for all, and make good all debts and damages.
7. Paul was expressing his love for Onesimus.
8. A love that caused him to pay a debt he did not owe.
9. Onesimus had a debt he probably could not pay, but Paul said, "Put it to my account."

ILLUSTRATION: (Poster or appropriate picture of the play) When our oldest daughter was in High School, she played the part of the oldest daughter, Katrin in the play, "I Remember Mama," written by John Van Druten. Throughout the story, the mom would say, "Can we get by with buying this or figure it out another way, or do I have to go to the bank?" The family always seemed to find a way so that they did not have to go to the bank. At the end of the story, it is revealed that there was never anything in the bank. Nothing could have been taken out, for nothing was there.**

10. Paul knew that he could cover it.
11. Paul is willing to bear the debt that Onesimus owed.
12. This is exactly what Jesus has done for us.
13. Like the Good Samaritan, he took the extra mile for us through love.
"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)
14. He took upon Himself our debt of sin.
"Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed." (Isaiah 53:4-5)
15. Paul was not guilty, but he was willing to pay the price for Onesimus' guilt.
16. Jesus did the same for us.
17. Christ was the sinless Savior who bore our guilt on the cross.
"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (II Corinthians 5:21)
18. None of us qualifies to walk in God's presence, but in love, Jesus put His credit to our account so that we can.
19. We must remember our own debt.
"We love because he first loved us." (I John 4:19)
20. Jesus assumed our spiritual obligation.

21. As sinners, we owed an enormous debt, but Jesus took care of it for us.
22. Until we can see how great our own sin is and how much grief it causes God, we will never know how much it cost Christ to forgive us.
23. If we put our trust in Christ as our Savior, our sins are put to His account and we are forgiven and brought into a right relationship with God.
24. We must remember what the Lord has done for us through His love.

“He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.” (Colossians 2:13-14)

25. As has been said, “He paid a debt He did not owe, I owed a debt I could not pay.”

26. As Martin Luther said, “We are all His Onesimus.”

(v.19) “I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back – not to mention that you owe me your very self.” (Philemon 1:19)

27. Paul was willing to go the extra mile to pay back any debt.

28. The term, “Pay it back” includes the idea of “compensation, reward, settlement of debt.”

29. Paul’s assuming the obligations of this slave is an appropriate picture of what Christ, on a higher plane, has done for the entire human race through His love.

ILLUSTRATION: Martin Luther, in his preface to the Epistle, wrote: “What Christ has done for us with God the Father, that St. Paul does for Onesimus with Philemon. For Philemon to receive Onesimus would be a godlike deed.

30. Paul reminds Philemon of the pardon he himself received.

31. Philemon was brought to Christ through the Apostle’s agency and, thus, was greatly indebted to the Apostle for the significant role he had in leading people to Christ.

32. Implies that if the debt is put to his account, then it is already cancelled by what Philemon owes to him as his spiritual father.

33. Onesimus debt is more than cancelled.

34. Paul calls him to go the extra mile, for others have gone the extra mile for him.

35. Paul calls him to love Onesimus because he has been loved.

EXAMPLE: There are many people who have gone the extra mile for me through the years. The Herb Grinders, Jack Eystones, H.B. London, Jim Lesters’, Betty Visbals’, Ed and Thelma Manning, Jerry MaCants’

36. I am a debtor.

37. Who are the people who have gone the extra mile for you?

38. Who brought you to Christ?

39. The reality is that most of us are in debt to a variety of people.

40. People who have loved us prayed for us, encouraged us, invested in us, cared for us, modeled and taught of the things of God.

41. We have a debt to love others.

“Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.” (Romans 13:8)

42. So Paul motivates us to love others and forgive them by reminding us of how much we owe.

EXAMPLE: In Matthew, 18:21-35, Jesus tells the story of a man who had a large debt he could not pay. He pleaded for mercy and the master took pity on him and canceled the debt. However, he went out and found someone that owed him a comparatively small debt. This person could not pay and begged him for mercy but he showed no mercy. The master was told that the one he had mercy on showed no mercy to his debtor. He was then turned to the jailers until he should pay back all he owed. Jesus then said, **“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.” (Matthew 18:35)**

43. We are to pass on to others the forgiveness we have received.

44. We are to go the extra mile for others have gone the extra mile for us.

45. We are to go the extra mile for others, for God and others has gone the extra mile for us.

46. We are to go the extra mile with love because we are loved.

III. (v.20 & 22) GO THE EXTRA MILE WITH ENCOURAGEMENT

(v.20) “I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ (Philemon 1:20)

1. Paul expresses his wish.
2. He wished to be blessed and refreshed in Christ through Philemon's response to Onesimus.
3. An act of forgiveness on Philemon's part will make the nature of the gospel better understood, all of which will refresh his heart in Christ.
4. To fail to respond appropriately would add to Paul's burdens, seriously misrepresent Christianity, and discredit the gospel.
5. “In the Lord” means that it was the Lord who had enabled His servant to act in a magnanimous way.
6. “In the Lord” signifies that the joy Paul desires is spiritual satisfaction.
7. It indicates that Paul would acknowledge the hand of the Lord at work in it.
8. He would receive joy and spiritual pleasure.
9. The whole request is done “in the Lord” and by virtue of their communion of faith in Christ.
10. In verse 7, Paul had said Philemon's love refreshed the hearts of the saints.
11. Paul writes, “Now you can refresh my heart in the Lord.”
12. To be refreshed is to be encouraged.
13. The word rendered "refresh" - means "to give rest to, to give repose, to free from sorrow or care;" and, the sense is that by receiving Onesimus, Philemon would cause the deep and anxious feelings of Paul to cease, and he would be calm and encouraged.
14. Paul will be really refreshed and encouraged, for it will be a fresh reminder of what it means to be in Christ.
15. Paul will rejoice because he knows that Philemon is responding from the new life that he has experienced in Christ.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Picture) Famous UCLA Coach, John Wooden used to encourage his players to acknowledge the assists of their teammates. If one player received a pass that allowed him to score, Wooden wanted him to give the other man a wink or point to him as they moved down to the opposite end of the court.

“But what if the other player isn’t looking when you point him out?” a new player asked Wooden once. Wooden just smiled: “Oh, don’t worry. He’ll be looking.”

16. He understood the power of encouraging and building each other up.

“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” (I Thessalonians 5:11)

17. We can lighten the load by blessing others and building them up.

ILLUSTRATION: **“There is no better exercise for strengthening the heart than reaching down and lifting people up.” (Lawrence Hicks)

18. We can be a blessing to others.

19. Paul is pointing out he had an opportunity to be a blessing to Onemistus and also to be a blessing to Paul.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Picture of first light bulb or one similar or Thomas Edison) Thomas Edison understood this principle of encouraging and blessing others even when they cause you pain. It took hundreds of hours for he and his staff to manufacture a single incandescent light bulb. One day, after finishing a bulb, he handed it to a young errand boy and asked him to take it upstairs to the testing room. As the boy turned and started up the stairs, he stumbled and fell, and the bulb shattered on the steps. Instead of lecturing the boy, Edison reassured him and then told his staff to start working on another bulb. When it was completed several days later, Edison powerfully demonstrated the reality of his forgiveness. He walked over to the same boy, handed him the bulb, and said, "Please take this up to the testing room." Imagine how that boy must have felt. He knew that he didn't deserve to be trusted with this responsibility again. Yet, here it was, being offered as though nothing had ever happened. Nothing could have restored this boy to the team more clearly, more quickly, or more fully. He was refreshed and encourage by the action of Thomas Edison.

20. To bless those who have hurt us, deprived us of something, or in other words, handicapped us is to go the extra mile with love.

21. To go the extra mile is to take the opportunity to discover where people hurt and help them by being a source of refreshment and blessing.

22. To spiritually encourage and strengthen some in and through the things of God.

23. This is the ministry of “refreshing” others.

24. Encouragement can be a refreshing drink of God’s love in a dry desert.

25. Be a blessing to others.

ILLUSTRATION: George Shuler and Ira Wilson were roommates at Moody Bible Institute in 1924. At the Institute, they combined their talents and

gave the world a beautiful song of consecration, "Make Me A Blessing." Wilson wrote the lyrics and Shuler the music.

**Out in the high-ways and by-ways of life,
Many are weary and sad;
Carry the sunshine where darkness is rife,
Making the sorrowing glad.**

CHORUS:

****Make me a blessing, Make me a blessing --
Out of my life, May Jesus shine;
Make me a blessing, O Savior, I pray,
Make me a blessing to someone today. (Ira Wilson)**

26. What would happen if every one of us lived to be a blessing to others?

EXAMPLE: In the Old Testament, the Lord told Moses to tell Aaron and his sons to bless His people in this way:

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."(Numbers 6:24-26)

27. May it be upon our heart to see people blessed by the Lord.

28. Live to encourage others and refresh their hearts in Christ.

29. Be an encourager and not a drainer.

30. Be a lifter and not downer.

31. Through a variety of ways, we can be a blessing to others.

32. *BLESS OTHERS THROUGH YOUR ACTIONS

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." (Galatians 6:9-10)

33. *BLESS OTHERS THROUGH YOUR PRAYERS

34. We can be a refreshment for others through our prayers.

35. The importance of prayer is highlighted in his closing remarks.

"And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers." (Philemon 1:22)

36. Pray specifically and intentionally for others, for your prayers matter.

ILLUSTRATION: *"Prayer does not equip us for greater works-prayer is the greater work." (Oswald Chambers)**

37. If we want to make a difference in people's lives and see God's work in their lives, we need to be diligent in our prayer for them.

38. Be an encouragement to others.

39. Ask God to show you how you can personally bless others.

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:24-25)

ILLUSTRATION: In his book, *Touch of Wonder*, Arthur Gordon recalls that years ago at the University of Wisconsin, there was a club of some brilliant young men with some real literary talent. At each meeting, one of them would read a story or an essay he had written and submit it to the group's scrutiny. No punches were pulled; each work was mercilessly evaluated. The sessions were so brutal that the club members dubbed themselves, "The Stranglers."

The coeds formed a comparable group of their own, known as "The Wranglers". Like their male counterparts, they read their manuscripts aloud; however, their criticism was much gentler. In fact, there was almost none at all. Instead, the Wranglers looked for kind things to say to each other. All literary efforts, however feeble, were encouraged. When an alumnus made an analysis of his classmates' careers, there were some interesting discoveries. Of all the bright young talent in the Stranglers, not one made a literary reputation of any kind. On the other hand, a half dozen successful writers came from the ranks of the Wranglers – some of national prominence, including Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, who wrote *The Yearling*. Coincidence? I don't think so. Gordon notes that the basic talent in the two groups was about the same. The difference was that the Wranglers encouraged one another; the Stranglers discouraged each other and promoted self-doubt. "In choosing a name for themselves," wrote Gordon, "they had been wiser than they knew."

40. Go the extra mile by encouraging others in Christ.

IV. GO THE EXTRA MILE WITH OBEDIENCE

(v.21) "Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask." (Philemon 1:21)

1. Paul had confidence in Philemon that he would do the right thing.
2. His confidence was based upon the God who was at work in Philemon's life.
3. Paul expressed this principle of confidence in God's working in his letter to Philippians.

"...I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 1:4-6)

4. Paul's words were designed to set Philemon thinking about what the Lord really was asking of him.
5. Paul was confident he would hearken unto the Lord and listen and respond to Him.
6. Do you take time to consider what the Lord is really asking of you?
7. The key for all of us is to listen to the Lord and do what He asks us to do.

ILLUSTRATION: Jess Moody tells the story of Mr. Stanley, who was the signalman at the giant industrial plant years ago. He came down the same street on his way to work every day for 25 years. As he jaunted

along, he passed Mr. Helman's jewelry store at about the same time each morning. There was a giant grandfather's clock just inside the door. The signalman would set his watch each day by the old clock. At five in the afternoon, Mr. Stanley had the responsibility of blowing the whistle, signaling closing time. After all these many years, Mr. Stanley retired. On his last day of work, he came at his usual time by Mr. Helman's store. He said, "Mr. Helman, this is my last day to come by the store. I'm retiring. It looks like I won't be setting my watch by the old grandfather's clock anymore." Mr. Stanley didn't understand when Mr. Helman burst into laughter. "Is it that funny that I am retiring?" "No, no, Helman replied. "What is funny is that every evening, I set my grandfather's clock by your five o'clock whistle!"

8. Who are you setting your standards for living by?

9. Who are you really listening to?

10. Set our actions by God's Word for His word never fails.

"If you love me, you will obey what I command." (John 14:15)

11. It is not what the church is asking of you, but what the Lord is asking of you.

12. We do ministry for the sake of saving many souls, not because the church asks us to, but because the Lord asks us to

13. We give to the work of the Lord not because the Church asks us to but because God asks us to.

14. Don't limit what you do for the Lord to what the church asks you to do.

15. God will ask more of you than the church will ever ask of you, for God wants all of you.

16. Don't be satisfied with giving God less than He asks.

17. It really is about living to please the Lord, which is done through obedience to Him.

18. Paul said, "... we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts." (I Thessalonians 2:4)

19. Obedience means his loyalty is to the Lord.

20. Find out what the Lord really expects of you and do it.

21. The call is obedience is to the God who is present with us in every situation and is speaking to us all the time.

ILLUSTRATION: ** Ruth Barton, in her book, *Invitation to Solitude and Silence*, wrote, "Every obedience, however small, (if any obedience is ever small), quickens our sensitivity to Him and our capacity to understand Him and so makes more real our sense of His presence." (Albert Edward Day, *The Captivating Presence*)

22. Obedience is indispensable.

23. It is obedience to God and His teachings, principles, and ways.

24. Paul was convinced that if he obeyed the Lord, it would result in Him doing more than Paul was asking.

25. Obedience would cause Him to go the extra mile

26. God would guide him to higher levels.

27. God calls us to live by the principle of His love.
28. Such love leaves Philemon with only one choice, namely, the highest good for his servant and for the apostle.
29. This love for God and obedience to Him would cause him to do more than he was asked.
30. God calls us to go the extra mile with love.
31. His love in us will not let us do less.
32. It calls us to give our very best to please the Lord.

ILLUSTRATION: Some years ago, our oldest daughter, April, sang in a children's Christmas musical based on a Christian school for the children of "Untouchables" in India prior to World War II. Each year, the children received Christmas presents from children in England. The girls got a doll, and the boys, a toy. On one occasion, the doctor from a nearby mission hospital was asked to distribute the gifts. In the course of his visit, he told the youngsters about a village where the boys and girls had never even heard of Jesus. He suggested that maybe they would like to give them some of their old toys as presents. They liked the idea and readily agreed. A week later, the doctor returned to collect the gifts. The sight was unforgettable. One by one, the children filed by and handed the doctor a doll or a toy. To his great surprise, they all gave the new presents they had just received several days earlier. When he asked why, a girl spoke up, "Think what God did by giving us his only Son. Could we give him less than our best?"

33. Going the second mile is giving God our very best because He has given us His best.
34. It is a response to His great grace and love.
35. It is going the extra mile with obedience to your heart, your passions, and your desires.

CONCLUSION: Do you have a faith and love that causes you to go the extra Mile?

Are you going the extra mile or are you just trying to get by?

God calls us to go the extra mile.

GO THE EXTRA MILE WITH FORGIVENESS

Are your sins forgiven – is there someone you need to forgive?

GO THE EXTRA MILE WITH LOVE

Are you paying the debt of love you owe?

Are you loving others as God has loved you?

GO THE EXTRA MILE WITH ENCOURAGEMENT

Are you refreshing and blessing others in Christ?

GO THE EXTRA MILE WITH OBEDIENCE

Are you listening to the Lord and doing what He asks you to do?

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