



## What is in Your Junk Drawer?

I don't think there is a home in which the "junk drawer" does not exist. Almost everyone I have asked in the past couple of weeks fully admits to having one. This is the one drawer in the house that collects all the seemingly useless items that we don't really know what to do with. Somewhere in the depths of our minds (and the drawer) we know that the items we place in them will once again find the light of day and be useful again.

Tucked away in the New Testament we have the privilege of reading a short letter to Philemon. It is written by Paul and although it is short in word count, the words that Paul uses are filled with some incredible instruction and truths. Through generations of change (both culturally and in language) I do believe that we miss some of the original craftsmanship that Paul uses to send a message to Philemon (and the church) as instruction for living for Jesus.

Reading, hearing, and understanding this letter in its original context and language would help us appreciate the bigger picture of Paul's intent for having Philemon accept Onesimus back into his life and ministry. Consider verse eleven for a moment regarding Onesimus, Paul writes, "Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me." When you dig a little deeper into what Paul says, you begin to see some interesting connections between the words.

For example, the Greek word for "useless" (*achrēstos*) sounds like the Greek word *achristos* which means "without Christ".

The Greek word for "useful" (*euchrēstos*) sounds like the Greek word for Christ (*christos*).

Paul skillfully draws for us a connection that speaks directly to the relationship that we have together in Christ. First and foremost, that a relationship with Christ is life changing (useless – without Christ vs. useful - with Christ) and foundational to being on mission for him. Secondly, that relationship is what binds us together as disciples of Christ.

When Paul says Onesimus in now "useful both to you and to me", he is referring to the fact that he is now a part of God's family, a brother in Christ and is a part of the same mission. The message of the gospel, the incredible news of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus had become a reality for Onesimus, his life had been transformed, he was adopted into a new family.

When I read this letter, I can almost feel the excitement behind the words that Paul writes. Paul has gained a new brother in Christ who is ready and willing to do his part to bring the gospel message to others.

There are times in life when we may feel "useless", stored away in a "drawer" feeling like we are not being very effective in the work of the Lord. But, when the power of the resurrection is a reality in our lives, we are far from useless. God has a time and place for each of his children to shine, to be used by him for his glory.

If you are sitting in the "drawer" waiting for the opportunity to be "useful" again, do this: Pray. Pray and ask God to use you for his will and purpose. Be ready, the opportunity will come.