

BIBLE RUNAWAYS

There were at least 11 Bible characters who “ran away” when things got tough. They are: Adam, Jonah, Elijah, Mark, Onesimus, Moses, Gideon, Prodigal Son, David, Judas Iscariot, and Peter.

Runaway #5 - Onesimus



A Few Thoughts:

- *Onesimus fled from Colosse and ended up in Rome.*
- *Onesimus most likely traveled by sea because it would have been the faster way.*
- *Colosse to Rome = 1300 miles.*
- *Onesimus probably knew Paul since Paul & Philemon were friends & met in Colosse.*
- *Onesimus was traveling as a slave. Everyone would know he was an escaped slave*
- *If he did not have written proof of his freedom, he would eventually be arrested as a runaway. (Maybe. He was looking for Paul.)*
- *Paul was probably under house arrest so who knows how Onesimus & Paul met in Rome.*

1. Since Onesimus was a slave, he would have no money. How did he afford his trip?

2. Since Onesimus left illegally, would he be safe anywhere? Yes No
3. Since Onesimus dishonored his master (who was reported to be a good man), how would the master (Philemon) feel about Onesimus?

4. Since slaves can be sold, would anyone want to buy Onesimus now? Yes No
5. Let's look at Paul's letter to Philemon to learn more.
 - a. Phile. 10 Yes No The mention of Onesimus starts in verse 10. The only thing mentioned before that is greetings. Is it safe to assume that the main reason for this letter was to discuss Onesimus? (So, this is important to Paul.)
 - b. Phile. 10 Yes No Paul calls Onesimus "my son whom I have begotten in my chains". Paul evidently led Onesimus to the Lord there in a prison.
 - c. Phile. 11 Yes No Onesimus was no longer a valuable slave to Philemon because he ran away.
 - d. Phile. 11 Yes No Onesimus found his true value in Jesus Christ and could now be a blessing to others, especially Philemon & Paul.
 - e. Phile. 12 Yes No Paul was sending Onesimus back to Philemon in Colosse because Onesimus belonged to Philemon legally.
 - f. Phile. 18 Yes No Onesimus probably stole money or supplies for his trip (escape). Paul offered to repay that debt to Philemon.

Ok, so here we have a worthless, thieving, runaway slave, a "loser", "a failure", no good to anyone.

6. Have you been there? Explain. _____

7. A runaway can have a second chance. Match the columns. (Verses are in Philemon)
- a. (11,13) ___ Paul said, "He is our brother now".
 - b. (12) ___ Paul said he would trust Onesimus with his love & his money.
 - c. (10) ___ Onesimus is going back to Colosse where he failed.
 - d. (13) ___ Paul said, "God used this to bring Onesimus to God".
 - e. (16) ___ Paul said that Onesimus was valuable.
 - f. (15) ___ Paul said, "Onesimus can be on our team, serving God".
 - g. (19) ___ Paul said "Onesimus sinned & failed like the rest of us".
 - h. (19) ___ Paul said " Onesimus is walking with the Lord now".

8. What did Paul say about Onesimus in his letter to the Colossian church? (Col. 4:10)
- a. "With Onesimus, a F_____ and B_____ B_____."
 - b. "...who is _____ of _____".
 - c. "...will make _____ to you what is happening in our ministry".

Onesimus got a chance to prove that God changed his life. He proved it to God, to Paul, to Philemon, and to all the people in and around the Colossian church.

Remember our previous lessons: Adam got another opportunity to live for God, as did Jonah, Elijah, Mark, and you, and me.

**THE INCREDIBLE BLESSING IS THAT: GOD DOES NOT WANT US TO RUN AWAY.
 GOD COMES LOOKING FOR US.
 GOD WANTS US BACK AND HE LOVES US STILL.
 OUR VALUE TO GOD IS NO LESS; IT IS THE SAME.**

9. Write out 1 Tim. 1:12-14.

Why is that the harder I push God & people away, the tighter God hugs me, tells me He loves me, and uses me to help in the lives of people.

10. Will you do the following?
- a. ___Yes ___No Forgive yourself for running away from God's ways.
 - b. ___Yes ___No Believe that God has forgiven you & received you back.
 - c. ___Yes ___No Don't be ashamed to tell your story; God will use it.
 - d. ___Yes ___No Give God the credit for your recovery & "come back".
 - e. ___Yes ___No Live this: "I can do all things through Christ Who give me the strength".