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## **The Sandwich What?**

By Teresa Hampton

The *sandwich approach*. What is that? It is a method to use when you need to confront someone about a concern, sensitive issue, or problem. It usually brings a more positive result than direct, matter-of-fact confrontation. The *sandwich* is made of the following:

- Slice of bread - acknowledge the good in other person
- Middle or center - address the problem, give constructive comments and possible solutions
- Slice of bread - express confidence in the person's ability to make productive changes

Did you know an inspired writer used the sandwich approach long ago? Paul wrote the small, one-chapter book of Philemon to address something that concerned him deeply. While he was in chains, Paul met a runaway slave, Onesimus, who learned and obeyed the gospel through his teaching. The slave's owner was Philemon, a Christian whom the apostle knew personally. The church met in his home. Paul wrote Philemon asking him to lovingly receive Onesimus back.

Notice the inspired writer's use of the sandwich approach. With respect and tenderness he acknowledged the good in Philemon, noting his love and faith toward the Lord Jesus and all the saints (v. 4). Next, he addressed the sensitive issue of the runaway slave by explaining that he taught him the truth and Onesimus obeyed (8-14). Paul called him son. He appealed to Philemon to receive him back not only as a slave, but as a brother in Christ (15-16). He finished the short letter by expressing confidence in Philemon's ability to exceed his expectations (21).

Paul clearly demonstrated the usefulness of the sandwich approach as a loving way to speak to someone about a concern, issue, or problem. The beauty is that it works in the home, the church, and on the job. Try it and you will see.

**Today's Verse:** *For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother* (Philemon v. 7).

**Today's Challenge:** Read the book of Philemon and rehearse ways to use the sandwich method.

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