



Twice Freed

Patricia St. John

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Onesimus is a slave. Eirene is a rich merchant's daughter. Onesimus longs to gain his freedom and Eirene's love. However, he doesn't realize where true freedom lies. He wants nothing to do with Jesus Christ. His master, Philemon, may follow the teachings of the Christ and his apostle Paul... but Onesimus has other plans.

Twice Freed Details

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Author : Patricia St. John

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From Reader Review Twice Freed for online ebook

Olivia says

Recommended for ages 12 and up. Onesimus is a Greek slave boy who is adamant about getting his freedom. But he begins to hear of Jesus Christ and the way he sacrificed his life. He tries to push thoughts of Him away, but yet he keeps hearing more about him. When his master's son is crippled for life partly by Onesium, he is more then ever wanting to flee. His master, Philemon, becomes a disciple of Christ and soon his son follows in his footstep. The question for Onesimus is whether he is willing to serve Christ and be a slave for the rest of his life.

Rachel says

I received this book years ago as a gift for my tenth birthday. I was always fascinated about ancient Rome for some reason and the cover of Twice Freed caught my eye.

It didn't disappoint either. I read almost the entire book in one setting. It was thrilling and I was transported into the world of the first century AD.

But I was ten then, and I guess I hardly paid much attention to style and plot, as I had just begun to read "novels". I picked it up a few months ago and realized how descriptive the writing was. And I was like, wow. To some extent, I'd ignored this earlier. And I realized that the love part was a bit rushed (Onesimus falls in love with Eirene the first time he sees her) but this is not too distracting. After all, it is a book intended for younger audiences. And overall it's a beautiful captivating story. Left an indelible print in my mind. I think this is one of the few books whose story stayed with me.

Larissa says

I haven't read this in years, but when I was younger I read it several times. I loved most of Patricia St John's books, but particularly this one. It gave so much to this story of Onesimus and I loved how she created a whole story out of a few lines in a small book of the Bible. Whenever I looked at Philemon (that's the book I seem to recall it being from) with my family or in church after reading this, I was always very interested and felt this secret joy about my expanded insight into a possibility of Onesimus' life, and related with the book much better thanks to this story.

Emily says

A review by an 11 and 8-year-old

"Twice Freed" is a book about slavery and Jesus Christ. It takes place in Colosse in the time of the Roman Empire shortly after Jesus' time on earth. Onesimus is the main character and Philemon is his master. Archippus, Philemon's son, and Onesimus were good friends when they were young. Now Onesimus doesn't really like Archippus anymore because Archippus is his master, and he treats him badly. As the story goes

along, Onesimeus battles fear and wicked deeds in his heart. Eirene, a rich slave-owner's daughter, is his friend and she is so cheerful, Onesimus couldn't be happy without her.

This book was pretty good. We have read others by this author, and we liked "Treasures of the Snow" the best. In "Twice Freed" we learned that everyone can turn to Christ no matter how much sin they have. Our mom cried because it was a good story. We like how it reflected off the book of Philemon from the Bible. It definitely made the story three dimensional in our minds.

Paul says

We enjoyed reading these to our children, but I was a little skeptical about this story of a biblical character and a book published posthumously. However, I was pleased with a good story line, plausible but clearly fiction drawn from scant reference to the biblical character Onesimus.

The context and setting for the story were richly biblical, taken from throughout the New Testament stories of the missionary travels of Paul.

The Christian themes are clear throughout, with nothing that is theologically "off." However, I am a little uncomfortable with fictional portrayal of Bible characters, not because I don't approve of respectful imagination, but because children and people who don't know the Bible might confuse fiction with fact.

Sarahelisabeth says

Historical fiction about the slave Onesimus who is mentioned in the book of Philemon in the Bible.

I read this aloud to my children and this was one of those books which elicited requests for more.

Obviously, there is much that we don't know about Onesimus but this brought to life an imagined scenario along with the distances between towns, their character and life in Roman times.

This is aimed at slightly older children than some of the more well known Patrician St John books

(Tanglewood Secrets, Treasures of the Snow and Rainbow Garden) but is ideal for tweens and their parents!

Stephanie says

I found this book to be a wonderful piece of historical fiction! It really helped me immerse myself into the time period of the Apostle Paul and the Roman empire. It's told from the perspective of a young man who is a slave of a wealthy family, and the book journeys with him on his "quest" to obtain freedom. Characters from the New Testament such as Aquila and Priscilla make appearances, and of course ~ Paul. It is rich with historical detail, giving insight into the everyday normalcy of the pagan gods of that era, and highlights the beginnings of Christianity. What a great resource to read alongside the New Testament!

Olivia says

I liked the simplicity yet fun of this book. An awesome look at the heart of Onesimus. Based on the Biblical

character.

Eva says

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Paige Cuthbertson says

I really loved everything about this book! The descriptions of places and landscapes were vivid but not pointless and drawn out; there was romance, but it wasn't the main storyline, and it was pure; the author was honest yet discreet about the descriptions of pagan worship; the characters were well developed; the storyline kept me wanting more; her version of events was not unbiblical, so her creative license does not get out of hand... it was wonderful! Highly recommend for both children and adults. The love of God, as well as His mercy and truth and forgiveness are all depicted so well in a poignant message; and the adventure of the story is historically accurate and so exciting!

Amy Meyers says

A little too violent when he kills his gladiator friend. The whole section on him being a gladiator wasn't believable. I absolutely loved how she tied together so many cultural, geographical, and theological themes of the Roman Empire at the time of Paul's missionary journeys. Her writing gets bogged down on occasion in descriptions of setting (flora), but otherwise I really appreciate her style of storytelling. I thought I wouldn't like this book as much as some of her others, but I liked it better than Tanglewood and even Star of Light. Treasures of the Snow and Rainbow Garden are still my favorites, however!

Eliza says

This book was amazing! I loved it. The only reason I didn't rate it 5 stars is because I usually reserve 5 stars for my favoritests (An Old Fashioned Girl, The Anne of Green gables series, etc.)

I would definitely recommend this to Christian tweens and teens. It is a little dramatic and a little violent in some parts.

Christina says

Twice Freed is a fictionalized account of Onesimus, Philemon's slave who ends up meeting Paul and becoming a Christian. The kids and I read it together and enjoyed it very much. St. John did good research to write this book (both biblical and historical) and has done a nice job filling out the life of Onesimus. At times the book feels a little bit preachy, and yet at the same time, Onesimus' conversion to Christianity (as well as the conversion of Philemon and Archippus) are key to the story, so the longer dialogues about Christianity are not extraneous to the plot at all. When possible, St. John quotes from Paul's epistles during these

discussions. The book is also nice because it introduces the reader to a lot of folks mentioned in the New Testament, especially Acts. We're reading through the book of Acts in church, so *Twice Freed* will help the kids recognize names.

When we finished the book I read *Philemon* to the kids. It was amazing how well they understood it after reading *Twice Freed*. It's my experience that many evangelical readers tend to over-spiritualize *Philemon*, rather than taking Paul's exhortations to *Philemon* as very earthy and practical ramifications of the gospel. After reading *Twice Freed*, the kids seemed to understand quite easily that Paul was asking/commanding *Philemon* to free *Onesimus* and to treat him just as he would treat Paul himself. After we read *Philemon* Eden said, "Wait, are you telling me that what you just read is the actual letter that Paul sent to *Philemon*?" I assured her it was. She said, "So this letter that is 1000 years old is in that book?" (pointing to the Bible). "Yes it is," I said, "but the letter's almost 2000 years old, actually." She was stunned, but also very excited by the information. Reading *Twice Freed* really helped her understand that the Bible is about real people in real places. Cool.

Overall *Twice Freed* is a lovely imagining of life in the first century and how the gospel of Jesus Christ genuinely changed those people and places.

Christina says

This was such an amazing book! I highly recommend it! While it is a historical fictions children's novel, it has so much worth to readers of all ages. St. John gives a fictional account of *Onesimus*, *Philemon*'s slave spoken of by Paul in his letter to *Philemon*. The author does an amazingly accurate job of presenting the places and events of this time period as they are accounted for in other passages of Scripture and historical background books. After reading this, I had a better understanding of Paul's ministry and what/why he addresses the church in Corinth on such issues as idol worshipping, false teaching, etc. St. John's theology of fallen man and his bondage to sin, the hope and salvation offered in Jesus Christ, and the importance of forgiveness is seen throughout this book. A very pleasant find!

Jessica Joy says

Twice Freed is the story of a young slave boy living during Ancient Rome. Struggling with his hate and fear, he runs away to find a new life. Along the way circumstances fall into place which show him what, or who, he really needs to be free: Christ.

This book is wonderful. Based around the book of *Philimon*, Patricia St. John forms a story which makes you cry and laugh, while you, along with the whole host of characters, struggle to find the true answer of love despite life's suffering. Even if you are not normally into Roman historical fiction, you will still love this book. If you have not read it already you need to. =D
