

# August Sermon Series

## Leader Guide ESV, Session 3

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## Living in Grace

### Summary and Goal

While in prison, Paul wrote his letter to Philemon in Colossae to point this believer to the living hope all believers share in Christ Jesus—God, in His grace, transforms lives. Paul encouraged Philemon, a wealthy believer, to receive Onesimus, his runaway slave, as a brother in Christ. A picture of the gospel is displayed in Paul's letter of reconciliation as he encouraged Philemon to recognize the freedom found within the body of Christ. God's liberating grace enables us to see fellow believers as brothers and sisters who are equal in Christ, regardless of socioeconomic background or status.

### Session Outline

1. God's people are compelled by love (Philem. 8-14).
2. God's people are related as family (Philem. 15-17).
3. God's people are gracious with each other (Philem. 18-22).

*Background Passage: Philemon*

### Session in a Sentence

In Christ, God transforms relationships and makes His people a family that lives together with love and grace.

### Christ Connection

When Paul appealed to Philemon on behalf of the runaway slave, Onesimus, he placed himself in the middle of their broken relationship. To make peace, Paul volunteered to pay Onesimus's debt. Through this action, Paul modeled Jesus Christ, who is the peacemaker between God and sinful humanity. By paying our debt, Jesus reconciled us to God and to each other.

### Missional Application

Because we have been given limitless grace through Jesus Christ, we live as peacemakers who reflect the heart of our crucified Savior to others.

## Group Time

### Introduction

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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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When you hear the word *slavery*, what comes to mind? (be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)

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**SAY:** In the United States in the twenty-first century, most people would associate *slavery* with the evil, racist institution during the era of the Civil War and the two centuries leading up to it. For this reason, as we look at Paul's Letter to Philemon, we need to be careful with our understanding of slavery in this book of the Bible. It is important to understand the context of words as well as the context of the culture as much as possible when interpreting Scripture.

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the paragraph on page 66 in the DDG to comment on the nature of slavery in the first-century Roman Empire to note how it was different from the institution of slavery in the American context.

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Slavery in the first century was based primarily on economics, not skin color. When Paul wrote his letter to Philemon, roughly a quarter of the population of the Roman Empire were slaves of one sort or another as the economy of Rome was based on slave labor. People were enslaved for various reasons: being prisoners of war, defaulting on a debt, being born into a slave family, and even voluntarily indenturing themselves to make ends meet. Furthermore, freedom for slaves was possible and common, being granted by masters or purchased through personal savings.<sup>1</sup>

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**SUMMARIZE:** While in prison, Paul wrote his letter to Philemon in Colossae to point this believer to the living hope all believers share in Christ Jesus—God, in His grace, transforms lives. Paul encouraged Philemon, a wealthy believer, to receive Onesimus, his runaway slave, as a brother in Christ. A picture of the gospel is displayed in Paul’s letter of reconciliation as he encouraged Philemon to recognize the freedom found within the body of Christ. God’s liberating grace enables us to see fellow believers as brothers and sisters who are equal in Christ, regardless of socioeconomic background or status.

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### Point 1: God’s people are compelled by love (Philem. 8-14).

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**READ** Philemon 8-14 (DDG p. 67).

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**8 Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, 9 yet for love’s sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus— 10 I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. 11 (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) 12 I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. 13 I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, 14 but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord.**

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 67) to show how **God’s love** impacted this situation involving Onesimus, Philemon, and Paul.

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For the believer, love is a driving force. Having been loved first by God through Christ’s sacrifice and the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying work, we respond with love, first for God and then for others (1 John 4:19). **God’s love compels us to love.** Paul already recognized Philemon’s love for the saints, and he was grateful for it because Paul was about to ask him to extend that same love to Onesimus, a new believer.

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- Onesimus was a slave of Philemon. For unexplained reasons, Onesimus ran away from his master and possibly stole from him on his way out (Philem. 18). Clearly **the Lord loved Onesimus** because this runaway slave ran into the apostle Paul while he was in prison in Rome, and through this encounter, Onesimus became a believer in Christ (v. 10).
- We don’t know the state of Philemon’s treatment of Onesimus, but we do know **Philemon loved his fellow believers**. With his affluence, he was supportive of the congregation in Colossae, providing the place for them to gather together (v. 2). He also refreshed the hearts of the saints he came into contact with (vv. 4-7).
- **Paul came to love Onesimus** as a son in the faith, and **he also loved Philemon**. He desired to see these two believers—a runaway slave and his master now brothers in Christ—reconciled. So Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon, and he sent his letter to Philemon to encourage him to love Onesimus as he would any other believer. Paul

could have commanded Philemon to receive Onesimus back with grace, but he chose instead to let love do its work. Paul's approach sought to ensure Philemon would read the letter with sympathy and love rather than with bitterness and anger. Paul did not want to guilt-trip Philemon; instead, he trusted that Philemon, a recipient of God's love through the gospel, would find a way to do what was right.

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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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What are some ways Christians should be compelled to act because of God's love for us? (we should forgive when we have been wronged; we should sacrifice for the benefit of others; we should develop relationships with unbelievers so we can share the gospel with them; we should go willingly and joyfully wherever God sends us to serve in Jesus' name)

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 67) to show how the gospel changed Onesimus's life and made him useful both to Paul and to Philemon.

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Paul was eager to emphasize Onesimus's conversion because the gospel changes the dynamic of all of our relationships even as it changes who we are. Before becoming a Christian, Onesimus did not live up to his name, which meant "useful" or "profitable." However, once he was born again, Onesimus could live up to his name. The love of God changed this sinner, and now he was able to love and serve others from the heart.

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- Two thousand years ago, an event occurred that permanently changed the world: Jesus died on a cross and three days later rose from the dead (see Matt. 28:5-6; John 20:27-29). This is the gospel. As a result of this good news, a runaway slave could become the joy of an aged apostle and a willing servant to his estranged master. Not only had Onesimus become a dear personal friend and companion of Paul, but he had proven to be useful in ministry. The gospel changed Onesimus's life, and Paul hoped to see the gospel change and restore Onesimus's relationship with Philemon.

*Application:* Slavery can be an especially evil institution because the practice involves sinners failing or refusing to treat human beings as God's image bearers. Furthermore, slavery is contrary to God's design for humanity. God allowed and regulated the practice of slavery in both the Old and New Testaments (see Ex. 21; Col. 3:22-4:1), but He also sowed the seeds of His design that the gospel would set people free (see Ex. 21:2; Lev. 25:10; Col. 3:11).

We do not have state-sanctioned slavery in our country today, but there are millions in the world who still live as slaves or who face inhumane conditions on a constant basis through human trafficking, sexual abuse, racial discrimination, unfair labor, and so forth. These victims are vulnerable and without a voice, and the church, being Christ's representatives on earth and armed with the gospel, should stand up for their protection and seek justice against these institutions and their perpetrators. [Note: For more about Paul's outlook on slavery, see **The Apostle Paul and Slavery** (Leader p. 83).]

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## **Point 2: God's people are related as family (Philem. 15-17).**

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**READ** Philemon 15-17 (DDG p. 68).

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**15 For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, 16 no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.**

**17 So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me.**

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 68) to show how the language of family permeates the relationships of believers to God and to one another.

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Paul pondered the reason for Onesimus’s temporary separation from Philemon. Believing in God’s sovereignty and goodness, he concluded that God wanted Onesimus to join His family. We don’t know all the details of why Onesimus ran away or whether or not he robbed Philemon of property. What we do know is that God’s sovereign grace works through human affairs. Rather than dwelling on the past, Paul instead looked at the redemptive aspect of the cross in Onesimus’s life—no longer merely a slave, now he was a brother in Christ among the people of God.

#### **Voices from Church History**

“Dear Mr. Spurgeon ... While crossing the Atlantic, last September, and looking out upon its proud dashing billows and their varied forms, and thinking of the diversity in the human family, I remarked that ‘we are many as the waves, but we are one as the sea.’”<sup>2</sup>  
–Frederick Douglass (1817-1895)

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- This is yet another occasion of God working all things for good (Rom. 8:28): Whether or not Philemon had been defrauded or robbed, he now had the opportunity to receive back something much more than a slave—Onesimus, through faith in Jesus, had become a brother in Christ to his master.
  - In verse 10, Paul used the descriptions of “child” and “father” in a spiritual sense to show his deep affection for Onesimus and to categorize their relationship as one of family. Through their encounter during Paul’s imprisonment, these two men became especially close. Therefore, Paul wanted Philemon to treat Onesimus accordingly as a fellow family member in Christ.
  - Paul knew from personal experience the transforming power of God to take even enemies and make them family. Paul knew firsthand what God can do and how His grace triumphs over sin. God took Paul, a persecutor of the church, and made him a son, a brother with Christ, a brother in the church, and now a father in the faith to others, including both Philemon and Onesimus.

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**FILL IN THE BLANKS:** Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 68).

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**People of God:** Scripture describes the church as “the people of God.” Comprised of both Jew and Gentile, the church is created by God through the [atonement](#) of [Christ](#). As the people of God, the church seeks to live under God’s ruling care while we are protected and cared for by Him.

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**Essential Doctrine “People of God”:** Scripture describes the church as “the people of God” (2 Cor. 6:16). Comprised of both Jew and Gentile, the church is created by God through the **atonement** of **Christ**. The term “church” is used in two senses—of individual local churches composed of people who have covenanted together under the lordship of Christ and of the universal church composed of all believers in Christ in all times. As the people of God, the church seeks to live under God’s ruling care while we are protected and cared for by Him.

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 68) to emphasize that the gospel changes the way believers view people, traditions, and institutions.

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Philemon had a choice to follow the gracious, forgiving option Paul presented or the harsh societal standard for how to deal with a runaway slave. Paul hoped and expected Philemon would choose to see Onesimus as family, even welcoming him as Philemon would have welcomed Paul into his home. The gospel not only redeems sinners, it transforms societal conventions and makes people one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28).

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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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How have you seen the gospel unify people as family in Christ? (be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)

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**The Apostle Paul and Slavery:** Paul sent Onesimus back to his master. Was Paul in favor of slavery? Not exactly. When considering how the convention of slavery during the first century affected the early church’s practice and perspective concerning the issue, several observations need to be made: **1)** Slavery was an embedded part of the social structure, welfare system, and economic activity of the ancient world; **2)** In the absence of a modern democracy, it would have been practically impossible to lodge an effective political revolution against slavery; **3)** The most effective means of improving the life of a slave was for the master to treat him or her justly and kindly with the prospect of future freedom; **4)** In 1 Corinthians 7:21, Paul exhorted slaves to pursue their freedom when it was feasible; **5)** In 1 Timothy 1:9-10, Paul listed “slave traders” as an immoral behavior; **6)** Paul affirmed the equality that both “slave” and “free” shared in Christ (see 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 6:8; Col. 3:11); **7)** As we have seen in his letter to Philemon, Paul strongly encouraged Philemon to accept Onesimus in a radically different way than was typical between masters and slaves, a gesture and mind-set that when practiced more widely would cultivate an ethic and culture that would effectively undermine the practice of slavery.<sup>3</sup>

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### **Point 3: God’s people are gracious with each other (Philem. 18-22).**

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**READ:** Ask a volunteer to read Philemon 18-22 (DDG p. 69).

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**18 If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. 19 I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self. 20 Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ.**

**21 Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. 22 At the same time, prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that through your prayers I will be graciously given to you.**

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 69) to highlight the grace of God in Paul’s offer to make restitution on behalf of Onesimus, just as Christ did the work on our behalf of restoring us to the Father.

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In his pursuit to reconcile Onesimus with Philemon as brothers in Christ, Paul added his willingness to take on any burden that Onesimus had caused Philemon—a fittingly Christlike gesture (Gal. 6:2). Paul did not overlook the consequences of Onesimus’s decision to run away; instead, he recognized the potential offense committed against Philemon. And in a picture of gospel grace, Paul was willing to take up Onesimus’s offense and lay it on himself to restore their relationship.

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- Paul’s gesture toward Philemon was a picture of gospel. Just like Paul took the place of Onesimus for any wrongdoing, Christ took our place, incurring our penalty. As Christ has reconciled us to the Father by grace through faith, Paul served as the agent of reconciliation in this situation. As a follower of Christ, Paul wanted to see his brothers, Philemon and Onesimus, experience a transformed, renewed relationship rooted in the love and grace of the gospel.

**Commentary:** “Note how Paul models the transforming love of the gospel as he asks Philemon to ‘charge that to my account’ (v. 18) since Christ already paid the price for all of them. This gospel paradigm reminds us of the ‘charge it to my account’ that Christ himself has said to us. Likewise, when Paul asks Philemon to ‘receive him as you would receive me’ (v. 17), this request that Philemon regard Onesimus as he would Paul himself draws our minds to the gospel. For in the gospel, God regards us as he would his own Son. God receives us as he would receive Christ. Ever so gently and subtly, then, Paul’s words undermine the cultural norms that are contrary to the gospel by transforming worldly perspectives with the realities of grace. This grace is so powerful that it makes a slave not only a brother (v. 16) and a partner (v. 17) without

debt (v. 18); the slave even becomes one to whom a master becomes indebted by the relational ties of the gospel (v. 19).”<sup>4</sup>

*Application:* The gospel is the story of Christ dying in our place and being raised for us, and this story is to affect and shape the way Christians live. The gospel is the story the Holy Spirit uses to radically transform not only the way we think but also the way we treat others, especially those within the church (Gal. 6:10).

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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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How should believers respond to other believers who have wronged them? (they should love those who sin against them, pray for them, and do good to them; they should show grace and forgive; they might choose to overlook the offense in love; they may need to confront the offender with love and in hopes of repentance and reconciliation)

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 69) to explain the nature of forgiveness and why Paul was confident in Philemon’s obedience to forgive and accept Onesimus.

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Essentially, Paul was asking Philemon to forgive Onesimus. Forgiveness often does not come easy because it comes with a cost. It means letting go of the past, letting go of the anger, letting go of the sense of moral superiority. Forgiveness requires this sacrifice, yet it is a noble act expected of Christians, who have received the grace and forgiveness of God themselves. For this reason, Paul was confident that Philemon would obey his request and welcome Onesimus home as a beloved brother in Christ.

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- Because of Christ, forgiveness is possible. In Him we find freedom from our sinful past and transformation from the inside out. Having experienced God’s forgiving grace through faith in Jesus, we should extend forgiveness to others (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:12-13).
  - What happens if we don’t extend forgiveness? We become prisoners to our own bitterness, which eventually chokes out our joy and life. When we lose our compassion for others, it’s because we have lost sight of God’s compassion toward us. Those who have been shown mercy should show mercy to others. As Jesus said, it is the merciful who will be shown mercy (Matt. 5:7). Those who withhold forgiveness prove that they do not belong in the kingdom of God (see Matt. 18:21-35).
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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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What might explain a professing Christian’s choice to withhold forgiveness from another believer? (he may not be a Christian in the first place; she may be living in unrepentant sin; he may not grasp the depth of his own sin and the incredible grace of God to forgive him; a stubborn heart; having forgiven in the past and still continue to be sinned against)

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## My Mission

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**EXPLAIN:** The Letter to Philemon serves as an exhortation toward Christian character and maturity. The gospel proclaims what Christ has done for sinners by reconciling rebellious creatures with their Creator. So the gospel should lead the Christian community to pursue relationships that reflect the gospel, much like the reconciliation Paul sought to achieve between Philemon and Onesimus. All Christians should model this kind of love and grace toward one another. Whether male or female (Gal. 3:28), Jew or Gentile (Rom. 10:12), or master or slave (Col. 3:22–4:1), our relationships should consist of forgiveness, restoration, and reconciliation. Our choices can drastically transform the trajectory of someone’s life and lead people toward Christ.

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**READ** the following missional application statement in the DDG (p. 70), and encourage group members to choose at least one of the options below as a way to respond to the truth of God’s Word.

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Because we have been given limitless grace through Jesus Christ, we live as peacemakers who reflect the heart of our crucified Savior to others.

- **What attitudes will you repent of as a result of interacting with the Letter to Philemon?**
- **What are some ways you need to encourage believers in your group/church to forgive others?**
- **How can cultivating a forgiving spirit in your daily life lead to opportunities to share the gospel?**

#### **Voices from the Church**

“[L]ofty doctrines such as the love of God, forgiveness in Christ, or the inherent dignity of humanity have real and pertinent impact in everyday life. The book of Philemon illustrates that principles like these can and should profoundly affect the lives of believers.”<sup>5</sup>

–Chuck Swindoll

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**CLOSE IN PRAYER:** Father, You are the God who hears the cries of slaves. Thank You for freeing us from the spiritual bondage of sin and for transforming broken relationships on the basis of Christ’s redemptive work on the cross. Help us to embrace the Spirit’s guidance as we seek to renew relationships with others and live as a covenant family of love and grace. Amen.

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**INSTRUCT:** As your group departs, encourage group members to read and respond to the **Daily Study** devotions in their DDG (pp. 71-73), which build and expand upon the group study. Also advocate for small groups or families to use **Encourage One Another** (p. 74) for mutual accountability and fellowship grounded upon the foundation of God’s Word.

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## **Daily Discipleship**

Throughout the week following the session, use the ideas below to remind and encourage your group members to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The **Daily Study** devotions in the DDG (pp. 71-73) will help group members get into God’s Word and study it for themselves. **Encourage One Another** (p. 74) will help group members and families fellowship with one another with purpose.

### **Daily Study**

Brief daily devotions in the DDG (pp. 71-73) will help group members take initiative in their own discipleship.

- Make sure all group members have access to a Bible to read. Have some Bibles available to give to guests who may need one, or offer to get one and arrange a time to meet to give it and show how to navigate it for the devotions.
- Share the following idea from the devotion for **Day 2** as a part of point 1 in the session: **Paul communicated that Philemon’s duty as a fellow Christian transcended his role as a master; he should consider his Christian identity above his societal identity.**

Consider leading by example and reading the daily devotions yourself with your own DDG. Based on your study, use brief messages throughout the week (group text, email, social media) to encourage your group to keep up with their daily time in God’s Word and to live it out. Here are a couple of examples you can use:

- **Day 3: “Because of what Christ did on the cross to bring salvation and peace, all other matters of relationship**

have been made subject to God's glorious grace.

- **Day 4: "In Christ, God transforms relationships and makes His people a family that lives together with love and grace."**

Visit [www.GospelProject.com/Blog](http://www.GospelProject.com/Blog) for additional content and resources you can use to help group members gain more insight into their daily studies. Send group members a link or a portion of a blog post or other content that you believe will be helpful and encouraging for their time in God's Word.

## Encourage One Another

This brief plan for fellowship and accountability in the group member's DDG (p. 74) will help groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. It could also be used for family discipleship with students and children who are using *The Gospel Project* in their groups.

- **Encourage group members to share ways they have seen relationships transformed as a result of the gospel's presence in people's lives.**
- See yourself as a member of the group who also needs encouragement in the faith, and participate in such a group this week.

## Additional Commentary

### Point 1: God's people are compelled by love (Philem. 8-14).

"Paul could easily have used his apostolic authority to order Philemon to accept Onesimus back (8), but instead he chooses to make a loving appeal to him (9). This is a risky strategy, for Philemon could still choose to punish Onesimus severely for running away. But clearly Paul and Onesimus trusted that a Christian perspective and Onesimus' evident change of heart would set the stage for reconciliation ... Onesimus evidently became a Christian through Paul's ministry, though we do not know in what way, for Paul refers to him lovingly as *my son* (10) and *my very heart* (12). Onesimus means a lot to him. He also plays on Onesimus' name, which means 'useful' saying, *formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me* (11). This suggests that Onesimus had proved his worth, so that Paul can speak of him with full confidence."<sup>6</sup>

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"Paul's rhetoric here, as elsewhere, should not be denigrated as manipulative and contrived. It is typical of a leader with a strong personality that he should sincerely want to encourage and leave it open to his audience to respond of their own free will, while at the same time being so convinced of the righteousness of his own opinion that he naturally seeks to persuade them to share it. In the end it is Paul's courtesy and restraint which leaves the greatest impression here. Nor should we ignore the degree to which Paul's tactic reflects the social reality of his circumstances: If Philemon was a figure of social significance and power, then to press him over strongly with commands and threats might have been counterproductive in the loss of Philemon himself."<sup>7</sup>

### Point 2: God's people are related as family (Philem. 15-17).

"Paul speaks theologically of the transformed relationship between Onesimus and Philemon based on forgiveness and love. The phrase in verse 16, 'both as a man and as a brother in the Lord,' translates an ambiguous Greek phrase that reads literally, 'both in the flesh and in the Lord.' Paul may only be asking that Onesimus be treated with love as a fellow Christian. In the flesh, Onesimus remains legally Philemon's slave; but spiritually, he should be regarded and treated as much more—as a brother. Their spiritual union together 'in the Lord' transcends the earthly master/slave relationship. In other words, Paul affirms that Onesimus, the man, is far more than a piece of property. He is Philemon's equal before the Lord."<sup>8</sup>

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"Whatever his personal hope (see vv. 11-12), Paul seriously reckons with the possibility that Philemon might decide to retain



the services of Onesimus as a slave **permanently**. Paul implies (v. 15) that Onesimus’s separation from Philemon, which was caused by the slave’s unlawful departure, was encompassed within the gracious, providential will of God. Upon his return, Onesimus would be even dearer to Philemon than he was to Paul because their dual relation as slave and master (**in the flesh**) and as Christian brothers (**in the Lord**) would be experienced within the intimacy of a single household.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Point 3: God’s people are gracious with each other (Philem. 18-22).**

“Paul’s emphasis on his personal investment in the ‘Onesimus affair’ reaches its climax here: *I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand*. I will pay it back. This affirmation could mark the beginning of the letter closing, since it usually occurs in this section in Paul’s other letters. But Paul’s ‘signature’ functions differently here than in other letters, and it is better to keep v. 19 with v. 18. English translations cannot quite convey the emphasis on Paul’s own involvement that we find in the Greek text: both ‘I’s are expressed in Greek with a pronoun (not strictly required), and the ‘my’ may also be emphatic.”<sup>10</sup>

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“The second section in this passage called for Philemon to live up to his character. Perhaps again employing a play on words with the name ‘Onesimus,’ Paul asked for some ‘profit’ (‘benefit,’ NIV). Word association may have guided Paul. Onesimus was in a position to ‘benefit’ Philemon. Paul thought of a way Philemon could ‘benefit’ him for all of his efforts. The benefit was not financial or material. Paul always sought the spiritual blessings, even when financial terminology rose to the foreground. The benefit was to be ‘in the Lord.’ Paul lived on spiritual truths—they were the lasting treasures. Paul, thus, asked for a spiritual response from Philemon.”<sup>11</sup>

### **References**

1. See “Slave, Servant,” by James A. Brooks, in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2003) [Logos].
2. Frederick Douglass, quoted in *The Complete Works of C. H. Spurgeon, Volume 69: Autobiography–Diary, Letters, and Records*, Vol. 4, by Charles H. Spurgeon (Delmarva, 2013) [eBook].
3. Adapted from N. T. Wright and Michael F. Bird, *The New Testament in Its World: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the First Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019), 467.
4. Julius J. Kim, “Philemon,” in *Gospel Transformation Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 1654, n. 17-20.
5. Chuck Swindoll, “Philemon,” Insight for Living Ministries, December 9, 2020, [www.insight.org/resources/bible/the-pauline-epistles/philemon](http://www.insight.org/resources/bible/the-pauline-epistles/philemon).
6. Sanyu Iralu, “Philemon,” in *South Asia Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Brian Wintle (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 1706.
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9. Murray J. Harris, “Philemon,” in *CSB Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2017), 1943, n. 15-16.
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11. Richard R. Melick Jr., *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, in *The New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 1991) [Logos].