

# CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE — WEEK 01



## Let's Talk

Recall a time when you were avoided or dismissed by others. Share a few details about that experience with your group. If someone is dismissed too quickly, how do you think they might feel?

## Let's Study

Watch The Philemon Bible Book Overview Video by the Bible Project (6.39 minutes)  
<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/philemon/>

Philemon was a follower of Jesus and he was a wealthy man living in Colossae in 61AD. Onesimus was one of Philemon's slaves. When you hear the word slavery, what image comes to mind? How was slavery different in the time of the Roman empire when Paul wrote Philemon? How was it similar?

There are many passages in Scripture that mention slavery and even instructions for how a slave and master should treat one another. How would you respond to someone who says God allowed slavery and therefore supports it?

Read Galatians 3:28, Galatians 5:1 and Ephesians 6:9.  
How do these verses help you understand God's view of slavery?

Read 1 Corinthians 7:21-24.  
What advice does Paul give to those who became followers of Jesus while they were still in slavery living in non-Christian households? The context of this passage suggests a focus on the gospel more so than on social status. In what ways would that be difficult? What ways could it actually make life easier?

Read Philemon 1:1-2.  
Notice how Paul introduces himself. His other letters say Paul, an apostle of Christ or Paul, a servant of Christ. Why do you think he began as he did?

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Read Philemon 1:3.

Before Paul gets into the main reasons for why he is writing, he extends God's grace and peace. What can be learned from this? Is there an example to follow? Explain.

## Let's Apply

The diversity of humanity is God's idea and yet sometimes people are dismissed because of their social status, gender, ethnicity, political views etc. What are things we can do to help us not dismiss ideas or people (especially other Christians) too quickly?

What are ways we can engage in mission and take a stand against modern day slavery?

From the first couple of verses we see Paul is not writing a private letter to Philemon. As Pastor Jon mentioned, 'forgiveness, unity and love is worked out in God's new family'. When is it easier to be transparent with one another about struggles or sin? What would it take for you to be more open with your group?

## Let's Pray

Loving Father, we ask for your divine protection for all who are exploited and enslaved. We cry out to you for their freedom. Restore their dignity and provide them a new beginning. Make us instruments of your Spirit for their liberation. For this we pray through our Lord Jesus Christ, AMEN.