

Free Indeed

RECONCILIATION IN CHRIST

FREE INDEED PT 1: THE PROBLEM

As Christ-followers, we belong to a big family called the church. That means that what we have in common is greater than anything else. We may disagree on issues, but the fact that we share this planet means something. We're part of the family called the human race. No matter what our opinions are today, the things that divide us diminish when we focus on what really matters.

Big Idea: *What divides us diminishes when we focus on family.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What kind of relationship do you have with your family? If you have or had siblings, how did you all get along? Do you think of the church as a family? If so, how so? If not, why not?
2. What was the last news headline or pop-culture issue that caused tension in your relationships (family or friends)? Was there a resolution? What did that look like?
3. Read Philemon 1-2. Why does Paul refer to himself as "a prisoner of Christ Jesus"? What does verse 2 show us about the early NT church? Why would Paul want this letter read to the entire church?
4. Read Philemon 3-7. What can you tell about how Paul felt about the church in Colossae and Philemon's leadership? What qualities of Philemon do you respect and why? Are there any qualities that give you pause?
5. When Paul tells people what he's praying for when he thinks of them, this often gives us the clue to the inner meaning of the letter. What is Paul praying for Philemon?
6. What do verses 4-7 show about Paul's attitude toward Philemon? What kind of person was Philemon? How did Philemon give Paul joy?
7. What do you think is Paul's purpose in sharing these high words of praise with Philemon? Does your testimony shine brightly like Philemon's? What might someone say about you?

This week, how can we as a group focus on being a "family?" How can we hold each other accountable and be generous instead of divisive? How can we choose kindness over criticism?