

Reflecting on The Book of Philemon

September 10, 2023

Notes:

- *Much of the following Discussion Questions come from the MacArthur Bible Studies book, "Colossians & Philemon: Completion and Reconciliation in Christ" (Thomas Nelson, 2007).*
- *Facilitators, last week, we asked your Group Members to write letters of encouragement. Review the first item under the "LIFE" section, and discuss it with your group today.*

DISCUSS

- 1) **Read Philemon 1:1-25; especially vss. 1-9.** What information about the man Philemon can you glean from this short letter? List the facts about him that are revealed here.

- 2) **Read Philemon 1:10-18.** What words and phrases does Paul use to describe the changes in Onesimus's life? How does Onesimus's experience reveal the power of the gospel?

3) **Read Philemon 1:8-20.** What are some of Paul's arguments for why Philemon should forgive Onesimus? Do you think Paul's words in verses 17-21 are manipulative? Why or why not?

4) Which is harder: humbling yourself and seeking forgiveness from someone you've wronged, or letting go of bitterness and forgiving someone who has wronged you? Explain your answer.

5) What specific and practical conflict resolution skills can you learn from Paul's epistle to Philemon?

PRAY

Who do you need to forgive for having wronged you? Spend some time in individual prayer, asking God for the grace and courage to forgive as you have been forgiven (Ephesians 4:32). Then ask 1-2 people to close your Life Group in prayer.

LIVE

Review from Last Week: Last week we asked you to write a letter or make a visit to someone who has encouraged you in your spiritual walk. As friendly accountability, did you do this? If so, have you received any reply? How did this action bring encouragement to your heart even though you were trying to encourage another?

This Week's Exercise: Forgiveness is an expected and yet complicated (i.e., uncomfortable) aspect of the Christian life. While we certainly encourage you to seek forgiveness and/or reconciliation with others, this week we encourage you to simply commit yourself to forgiveness. Tell someone in our church that you are committed to living in this way, and pray together.