

Main Street Church - Life Group Guide

Series: *THE RUNAWAY* - A Story of How the Gospel Changes Lives

Based on the [The Book of Philemon](#)

Message 1: Runaway Grace - The Story Through Onesimus's Eyes

Speaker: Shawn Vandop

Date: September 20, 2026



Connect (30min)

- Share 1 Highlight from the Summer & 1 Opportunity you are looking forward to this Fall.
- Think of a Key Person, a Key Place and a Key Event from your Life and share together.
> A Key Person has been... > A Key Place has been... > A Key Event has been...
- Read [Ephesians 3:14-21](#) and Pray for your Life Group as you begin this season together.

Message Discussion (45min)

- ***THE RUNAWAY*** is a journey through failure, forgiveness, reconciliation, and a fresh start. It reveals a gospel that does more than forgive our sins; it transforms who we are, changes how we see one another, and restores what once seemed beyond repair.
You may run from your past or from God, but you can never outrun Grace.

[Option: Watch the [Book of Philemon Summary](#) on the BibleProject YouTube Channel. 6min]

1. Good Grace

- a. When you hear the word **grace**, what comes to mind?
- b. How would you explain grace to someone unfamiliar with Christianity?
- c. Before hearing this message, did you tend to think of grace primarily as forgiveness, a fresh start, God's kindness, or something else? How did the message expand your understanding?

2. The Story - Have someone read the [Book of Philemon](#) out loud while others follow along.

- a. What jumps out at you from this book? Share your initial observations and questions.
- b. What do you learn about Paul, Philemon and Onesimus?

3. Onesimus experienced a grace that found him, forgave him, gave him a new identity, and turned his life around. Which of those aspects of grace means the most to you right now?

4. When we're ***THE RUNAWAY*** ...

- a. Have you ever run from a situation (conflict, relationship, conversation, etc) that you are willing to share about?
- b. What are some ways people run emotionally, relationally, or spiritually?
- c. Can you share a time when God met you with grace even though you felt distant, ashamed, undeserving, or had made a mess of something?

5. Grace accepted Onesimus, but it did not allow him to avoid responsibility.

- a. Why do people sometimes confuse grace with excusing sin or avoiding consequences?
- b. How are grace and accountability meant to work together?

6. Paul told Philemon, “If he owes you anything, charge it to me.”

- a. How does this picture help us understand what Jesus did for us?
- b. Why can it be difficult to receive grace rather than try to earn it?

7. Next Steps

Onesimus could not control Philemon’s response; he could only take the next faithful step.

- a. Is there an apology, confession, conversation, or act of restitution that grace may be leading you toward?
- b. Is it harder for you to receive grace for yourself or extend grace to someone who has hurt you? Share why.
- c. Complete this sentence: “**Because of God’s grace, I no longer have to _____, and I am now free to _____.**”

Prayer (15min)

>> Break into groups of 3-4 people to enhance this time

- In response to Sunday’s message and scripture, how can we pray for you today? Share and pray for one another.

- Who is a *RUNAWAY* in your life that we can pray for together? Share and pray for them.

Resource

>> Consider reading the brilliant little book - [*The Prodigal God*](#) - by Timothy Keller. Based on the *RUNAWAY* parable told by Jesus in [Luke 15](#).

FYI

- Confirm the details for your next Life Group meeting.
- Share any key church announcements from the weekly Church Newsletter.
 - **Prayer Summit.** Sunday, September 27 at 6pm. Worship, Prayer and Communion.