



WEEK 4 | GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CONNECT

This week, we are looking at Paul's letter to Philemon, one of the shortest books in the Bible. With only 1 chapter and 25 verses, it's packed with how Christ can make us new. When was the first time you heard about Jesus? How did it make you feel?

CONSIDER

What encouraged or challenged you from the sermon and/or daily devotions this week?

CHRIST

Read Philemon as a group.

Let's summarize. Paul is writing this letter to Philemon, whom we learn Paul has worked with before. At some point, Paul runs into Onesimus. Onesimus is one of Philemon's slaves. But Philemon and Onesimus get into a fight of some kind, and Onesimus runs away. It's when Onesimus has run away that he runs into Paul. While Onesimus is with Paul, he decides to give his life to Christ.

Onesimus, now being a follower of Christ, decides to go back to his master Philemon's house. Paul writes this letter to plead with Philemon to accept Onesimus back into his home, not as a slave, but as his BROTHER.

- Accepting a runaway slave back into your home during these times would have been seen as crazy or even foolish. Most people would punish runaway slaves with prison, but Paul asks Philemon to take him back as his brother, as family. **Jesus asks this same thing of us. Think of a friend who maybe pushed you away and has asked to be a friend again. Or a family member who wronged you and has asked to be in your life again. How does Jesus want us to see our friends or family who might have made some bad decisions?**
- Accepting Onesimus as a brother also shows us how Christ can change us! With Jesus by our side, we can be made new, with a new title! **How has Jesus done this for you?**

- Verses 17-18 read, “*So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me.*” We have no idea what Philemon and Onesimus’s fight was about. Paul is saying he will take on anything that Onesimus might owe him. Paul is taking on Onesimus’s sin, just as Jesus took on our sin for us. **Knowing this is an example of how we should treat people, who do you need to start treating like this?**
- The word partner or partnership is used twice in the book of Philemon in verses 6 and 17. The Greek word for partnership is *koinonia*. It means sharing or mutual participation. This is something you DO in relationships; it’s an action. Paul is asking Philemon to share God’s love and grace towards Onesimus. It’s a call to action for Philemon to act Christ-like towards Onesimus. **God calls us to action. Who might God be calling you to show love and grace?**

CALLING

- This week, think about how Paul had a BIG ask of Philemon to do something VERY counterculture by accepting Onesimus as a brother. Jesus consistently throughout His time on earth did things that were against what culture said to do. **Is Jesus calling you to do something that might go against what culture tells us? Maybe get rid of social media? Be nice to the neighbor everyone thinks is weird? Take that one coworker to lunch?**
- **Daily Devotions:** Spend 15 minutes each day with Northside devotions. Text DEVO to 81212 or use the Study tab in Northside’s mobile app for daily devotions.
- **Memorize:** *I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ. – Philemon 1:6 (NIV)*
- **Further Study:** Watch this Bible Project about Paul’s letter to Philemon: <https://mynorthsi.de/bp-philemon>