

Philemon

Key Scriptures: Philemon 1-3; Philemon 8-18; Matthew 18:21-35

1. Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- If you could have one superpower to tackle daily life challenges, what would it be—and how would you use it to make *your* Mondays less crazy?
- Imagine you had to pack a 'survival kit' for life's toughest seasons. What's the most unusual (or hilarious) thing you'd include, and why?

2. Start thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Read Philemon 1-3. Why does Paul begin by identifying himself as a "prisoner of Christ"? What does this title reveal about his approach to reconciliation?
- In Philemon 8-18, Paul makes an appeal for Onesimus. How does Paul's approach reflect humility and love?
- Compare the story of Onesimus to Jesus' parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:21-35. How do both stories highlight the importance of forgiveness?
- Read Philemon 17-18. Paul offers to pay Onesimus' debt. How does this reflect Christ's sacrifice for our sins?
- How does the concept of forgiveness in these passages challenge societal norms about conflict and resolution?

3. Start sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- Can you think of a time when someone asked you for forgiveness? How did you respond, and how did it impact your relationship?
- Is there someone in your life you need to seek forgiveness from or offer forgiveness to? How might God be prompting you to take a step toward reconciliation?
- Share a time when choosing peace over conflict made a significant difference in your relationships. How did it impact them? Why do you think it did?
- How does the concept of forgiveness that Paul is being an example of challenge the way you interact with people who you disagree with? Both in person and on social media? What might God be asking you to do differently?
- Forgiving others or asking for forgiveness often feels like it "costs" us something. What "costs" have you experienced when choosing to forgive or seek forgiveness?

4. Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- Pray for boldness and humility to seek forgiveness from those we've wronged.
- Ask for God's strength to forgive others, especially in relationships that are strained.
- Pray for wisdom and guidance to be peacemakers, both in personal relationships and within the larger community.

5. Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- This week, commit to addressing a broken relationship in your life. Whether you need to ask for forgiveness, offer forgiveness, or mediate a conflict, take the first step toward reconciliation, trusting that God will guide you.