

# Forgive / Forgiven

## Part 1: The **BURDEN** of unforgiveness

Let's remind ourselves of the **STORY**

Philemon's **HOUSEHOLD**: Philemon, Apphia, Archippus vs. 1-3

Philemon's **SLAVE**: Onesimus vs. 10

Philemon's and Onesimus' **CHURCH** Colossians 4:7-9

Onesimus's **WRONG** against Philemon vs. 10-17

Let's look at forgiveness from **TWO POSITIONS**

Onesimus: A **wrong-doer** seeking to be **FORGIVEN**

Philemon: The **one wronged** being asked to **FORGIVE**

Let's have lots of **GRACE** with people Matthew 5:38-40

Acts of **HUMILIATION** - Let it go, forgive, move on! vs. 39

Acts of **INJURY, HARM** - Be over generous in repayment vs. 40

Let's **CONSIDER** where we are in relation to **forgiveness**

Is there someone **YOU NEED TO FORGIVE?**

Was it an act of humiliation or an act of harm?

Is there someone **YOU NEED TO SEEK FORGIVENESS FROM?**

## Life Group Discussion Questions – May 4, 2025

**Philemon 1:10-12** *I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me. I have sent him back to you in person, that is, sending my very heart*

### DISCOVER

1. It has been said that if you don't forgive someone, you are only hurting yourself. What truth do you find in this statement? Describe the impact on someone who wronged you if they know that you have not forgiven them. Are there any grudges that you hold onto? How does this impact you and possibly your relationship with the target of your resentment?
2. What exceptions are there to extending grace? Why should God forgive you if you don't forgive others? Is there any sin too great for God or us to forgive? Give examples
3. If someone apologizes to you by saying they are sorry you were offended, how does that make you feel? How does such an apology fall short of a repentant heart?
4. In what ways have you found freedom after seeking forgiveness based on a wrong that you committed? Sometimes people will not extend forgiveness or grace to us. What should be our mindset or next steps in such a case? When can seeking forgiveness turn into groveling or begging? Explain why groveling or begging is not the intended approach for seeking forgiveness. What does it say about a person if they demand groveling when forgiveness is sought?

### EXPLORE (Read Philemon)

1. What is known or implied about the wrong committed by Onesimus? How would Paul have known about the wrong done by Onesimus? What condition of the heart precedes confession of sin? How and when does that condition emerge and grow? If we have a pattern of not acknowledging sin then what damage can be done to oneself?
2. How would Philemon have been impacted by an important slave suddenly disappearing? Have you ever been left in the lurch when someone you depended on unexpectedly quit? What was your reaction? Would you respond in the same way today? Explain.
3. Leaders sometimes need to play the role of peacekeeper. See Matthew 5:9, 1 Samuel 18, and 1 Samuel 25. What happens if the role of peacekeeper is overlooked? What would have been lost if Paul had not sent Onesimus back to Philemon?
4. The story of Onesimus and Philemon is a beautiful picture of the distinction between law and grace. Describe how law and grace came together in this story.

### EXPERIENCE

1. Is there someone you need to forgive? Was it an act of humiliation or an act of harm? Share with each other, uplift, and hold each other accountable in love.
2. Likewise, is there someone you need to seek forgiveness from? Are there risks in seeking forgiveness in this case? When will you act on the call to reconciliation?

### PRAY

*Abba Father, please reveal to us those for whom we need to seek forgiveness from and then hold us accountable for our follow-through. If You are willing, please soften our hearts to hearing your Spirit of accountability. May we also be givers of grace just as You are for us. And through our obedience, may Your Mighty Name be proclaimed so that You are known as a loving God and the source of true love. In Jesus name, Amen.*