

**Discussion Questions for
"Grace"**

Philemon 1-25, Pastor Tom Olson, Weekend of December 30, 2018

1. Define *grace*.

Let's consider Onesimus:

2. Where do we see Onesimus' *conversion* in this short letter? Cite a specific verse.
 - a. How does God's grace to Onesimus bring hope and comfort *to your own soul*?
 - b. How does it bring hope and comfort about *a person for whom you're praying*?
3. Why would Onesimus' return to Philemon be difficult for *Onesimus*?
 - a. Why does grace *motivate* us to say, "I'm sorry"?
 - b. Why might it be *hard* for us, like Onesimus, to say, "I'm sorry"?
 - c. To whom in your life do you need to apologize?

Let's consider Philemon:

4. How would society in those days expect *Philemon* to treat Onesimus?
 - a. Is the situation any different today?
 - b. Why *should* grace change the way we treat people? In other words, can a Christian just act however society expects?
 - c. Paul tells Philemon in v. 16 to welcome Onesimus as a brother *in the Lord and in the flesh*. What does he mean?
 - d. To whom in your life do you need to extend forgiveness?
5. Why is grace, by its very definition, *costly to the giver*?
 - a. How is this displayed *in this letter*?
 - b. How is this proved *in Jesus*?
 - c. Have you experienced this?
 - d. *Think about your answers to #3c. & #4d.* What cost will the person forgiving you have to absorb? What cost will you need to absorb in order to forgive?

Let's consider Paul:

6. How is this letter *outside of Paul's comfort zone*?
 - a. Why is he willing to put *Philemon & Onesimus' needs* before his own comfort?
 - b. Are there any believers you know who are in conflict? *How might you intervene to help them reconcile?*
 - c. What *awkwardness or discomfort* will you have to get over in order to help them?
 - d. While intervention is often needed, helping others reconcile is often fraught with difficulties. *Share some stories where you've seen this happen successfully, so that you can approach this situation with wisdom.*
7. As much as it might be difficult to live the way this letter to Philemon describes, *why is it worth it? And why is it a pathway to delight and joy?*