



## Discussion Questions • Philemon 8-20

1. Read Philemon 8-20.
  - a. What is Paul appealing to Philemon about? What verses support your answer?
  - b. What do you think is the primary implication of Philemon welcoming Onesimus back as he would Paul?
    - i. How would this have impacted the relationship between Philemon and Onesimus?
  - c. As you consider Philemon 8-20, identify the rationale Paul uses to prompt Philemon in welcoming back Onesimus?
  - d. Does Paul seem to expect Philemon to “cash in the debt” that he makes available in verse 18? Why or why not?
  
2. Philemon would have incurred a loss when Onesimus ran away (at the very least a financial loss associated with Onesimus’ time and labour). And yet Paul asks Philemon to welcome Onesimus into his life in the same way he would welcome Paul himself back. The appeal to Philemon is essentially to forgive Onesimus.
  - a. Read Matthew 18:21-35.  
What should be the motive behind our forgiving of others who have wronged us?
  - b. Is there any language in Philemon 8-20 which would indicate to Philemon that the grace of God in the gospel ought to motivate him to welcome Onesimus back? If so, what verses?
  - c. Should we make any distinctions in our mind regarding forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration?
    - i. Are these three words synonymous (describing the exact same situation), or do distinctions between the three exist?
    - ii. If distinctions exist, upon what basis would you make that claim?
  - d. Do you find it difficult to forgive others who have wronged you? Why or why not?
    - i. Read the story of the parable of the lost son - Luke 15:11-24. The younger son took so much from his father, and yet even before the father knew his son was returning, the posture of the father was one of a readiness to forgive. People in our lives may never repent for what they have done, or ask us for forgiveness, but that does not provide us with an opportunity to harbour bitterness toward them.

**OPTIONAL:** What is one thing you are willing to change in your life as a result of what you have learned from the discussion?

### Wrap Up and Prayer

Pray for each other specifically regarding point 2.D. above.