

# ONE & DONE

CEDAR VALLEY

## STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, August 31, 2025

**Teaching Title:** Philemon

**Key Scripture:** Philemon 1-25

### 5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

**Monday:** Rom 8:1, 12:5, 1 Cor 1:30, 2 Cor 5:17, Psalm 2

**Tuesday:** Gal 2:20, 3:26-28, Eph 1:3, 2:10-13, Psalm 5

**Wednesday:** Phil 3:9, Col 2:6-7, Psalm 41

**Thursday:** Col 3:3, 2 Timothy 1:9, Psalm 27

**Friday:** Psalm 91

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's word, what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

### MEMORY TOPIC:

Identity in Christ

**MEMORY VERSE:** Gal 3:28 NLT

There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.

### LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

#### Introduction:

The letter to Philemon is brief, but it reveals something radical about the gospel: it transforms us and changes how we see others. Paul urges Philemon not to view Onesimus through the old categories of "slave" and "master," but as a brother in Christ. Rather than commanding Philemon, Paul appeals in love, even offering to pay any debt Onesimus may owe. In doing so, Paul steps into the middle like a bridge, bearing the weight of their broken relationship so that reconciliation can take place. This reflects the way Christ stands in the middle for us—absorbing our debt so that we might be reconciled to God and to one another. The gospel transforms not only how we see God, but how we see each other. In Christ we are one, old labels are done.

#### Questions:

Ice Breaker: Who in the group has traveled the longest bridge?

Read Galatians 3:28, and 2 Cor 5:16 together as a group.

1. Where in your life is God asking you to stop viewing someone "from a worldly point of view" (2 Cor. 5:16)
2. Who is the Onesimus in your world today—someone overlooked, diminished, or devalued—whom you are called to see differently in Christ? In these verses what tell-tale signs does Paul give us of those who operate out of worldly wisdom?
3. Where might you be called to act as a "bridge" in a broken relationship or in society??
4. Paul had authority as an apostle, but he doesn't command—he appeals in love.
  - What does this teach us about how Christians should use influence, power, or privilege?

- Where in your life do you have standing, voice, or influence? How might you use it to advocate for someone with less?

5. Paul's "charge it to me" echoes Christ on the cross. How does the cross shape the way we should handle conflict, forgiveness, and reconciliation?

### **GROUP PRACTICE**

Take a few moments silently:

- Ask God to bring to mind one person you have been tempted to see "from a worldly point of view."
- Pray for the Spirit to help you see them through the lens of Christ.

If comfortable, share with the group who that person is and one practical step you could take this week to move toward reconciliation or dignity-giving love.

### **DIGGING DEEPER**

Paul's language in Philemon deliberately echoes legal and business contract terms in the Greco-Roman world.

- When Paul calls Philemon his "partner" (*koinōnos*) in v. 17, it is the same term used in business agreements—he is asking Philemon to treat Onesimus as if he were Paul's equal partner in a firm.
- In v. 18–19, when Paul writes "charge it to me" and "I will repay it," he is using the technical language of financial promissory notes. In Roman law, writing something "with my own hand" could make a contract binding.
- This means Paul is not being sentimental; he is making a formal, binding intercession on Onesimus' behalf.

From a theological standpoint, this deepens the Christ-parallel: just as Paul makes Onesimus' debt his own, Jesus takes our debt upon himself—signing it with his own blood—so: In Christ, God and sinner, slave and free, meet as family.