

**Lesson Aim:** To grow in our understanding of how to forgive in light of how God has forgiven us.



*connecting*

**Prayer:** Start your time together by asking the Holy Spirit to lead your discussion.

**Icebreaker:** What was your longest hike or backpacking trip? Where was it and how long did it take?

1. **READ the whole letter to Philemon.** How would you characterize the tone of the letter? How would you feel if you received this letter from someone you really respected?

2. **READ vs. 1-7.** What do we learn about Philemon from the first seven verses? What does it tell us about his family life? How would you describe him based on what we read here?

3. Have you ever been a part of a group where bitterness started with one person and then spread through the group? How did it affect the group?

4. **READ vs. 8-11.** Why do you think the Apostle Paul doesn't just tell Philemon to take Onesimus back and forgive him? Why do you think he presents himself as "an old man in prison"?

5. Have you ever had anything stolen from you? What did you feel like when you found out? Did you ever get it back?

6. **READ Matthew 18:21-35, Matthew 6:9-15.** Why do you think "forgiveness" is such a big deal to God?

7. Pastor Chris talked about having to make the "choice" to forgive. When is a time when you had to deliberately choose to forgive someone? What made you decide to do that? Was it hard?

8. **READ Genesis 50:15-21.** Joseph had been deeply hurt by his brothers. Now many years later we see his response when he had opportunity for revenge. What does he do? What reasons does he give?

9. Take a few minutes to privately write down issues that you may still be holding onto as a grudge. Then, talk with God about the situation and leave it with Him. If you feel comfortable doing so, tell the group (or someone in your group) what it was.



*growing*



*sewing*



*reaching*

**When everyone is ready, take a few minutes as a group thanking God for His forgiveness in prayer.**

### Nursing Grudges

- Imprisons you in the PAST
- Spreads BITTERNESS
- Gives SATAN an opening into your life
- HINDERS your relationship with God

### Three People to Know

- PHILEMON - A church leader in Colossae
- ONESIMUS - Philemon's fugitive slave
- PAUL - The spiritual mentor of both

### Getting Rid of Unnecessary Baggage

Principle 1: Forgiveness requires a CHOICE. (vs. 8-14)

Principle 2: God uses bad things for GOOD PURPOSES. (vs. 15-16)

Principle 3: In order to forgive, we must learn to HAND-OFF our grudges.  
(vs. 17-21)

### How?

Step One: Identify and Understand the LOSS.

Step Two: Remember that WE are forgiven.

Step Three: Leave the grudge at the FOOT OF THE CROSS.

Step Four: Tell a FRIEND. (vs. 22-25)