

PEACE / Week 3

An untroubled heart that comes from trusting God



MISSIONS

"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid." JOHN 14:27

PARENT DEVO

(Parents, this is for you to do ahead of time as you prepare your hearts to lead your kids.)

READ Philemon. What stands out to you in this letter? Who do you identify with the most? Why? How does Paul plead with Philemon for Onesimus? As a fellow believer, what does Paul expect Philemon to do? What kind of ending would you write to this story?

DID YOU KNOW? The name Onesimus means useful and in v. 11, Paul makes a word-play with it. Onesimus, now a believer, finally lives up to his name. This letter was most likely written and sent at the same time as Colossians. See Col. 4:7-17 and compare the list of names with Ph. 23-24.

REFLECTION: Who in your life do you need to forgive? Who do you need to ask forgiveness from? What is stopping you? How can doing that help you live in peace instead of living with a troubled heart? How does remembering what Christ did for you help you to forgive others?

PRAY: Thank God for the forgiveness He gave you even though you didn't deserve it. Ask Him to help you forgive, ask for forgiveness, and be a peacemaker. Thank Him for the peace He gives when we trust Him.

HELPFUL HINTS BEFORE YOU START:

- The Finish Line is the key teaching point of the lesson
- Everything in **BOLD** is meant to be read out loud. The rest is either answers to questions, instructions, or suggestions for supplies
- You will need a Bible, a sheet of paper, pen or marker, bag, and alphabet tiles (pulled from a game or made from paper)

FINISH LINE: TRUSTING GOD ALLOWS US TO BE AT PEACE WITH OTHERS

Grab a piece of paper and divide it into thirds. At the top of each column write the names of Onesimus, Philemon, and Paul. As you read, have your kids listen for words that tell them about each person. You can have them write as you read or fill it in afterwards.

READ PHILEMON 8-21

- **What do you know about each of these three men after reading the verses?**
- **Onesimus** – runaway slave, probably stole something, met Paul and became a Christian, needed to ask for forgiveness
- **Philemon** – fellow believer, Paul's friend, wealthy, church met in his house, needed to give forgiveness
- **Paul** – in prison in Rome, wrote with compassion and love, was a peacemaker between Philemon and Onesimus

Let's look at each of these men individually and see what they have to teach us about being at peace with others.

ONESIMUS

- **Reread v. 11, 18. What had he done that he needed to be forgiven of? How was he not at peace?** He ran away from his master and probably stole something when he left. He may have felt guilty and sad for what he'd done.
- **How would you have felt if you were Onesimus going back to Philemon to ask for forgiveness? Why?**
- **How did Onesimus show he trusted God?** He knew God wanted him to ask for forgiveness from Philemon. But, back then a slave could be beaten or killed for what he did. He trusted and obeyed God by going back no matter what might happen.

PHILEMON

- **Put yourself in Philemon's sandals. How might you have felt when Onesimus showed up again with Paul's letter? Would it be easy or hard for you to forgive him? Why/why not?**
- **Reread v. 14-17. What did Paul ask Philemon to do?** He wanted Philemon to forgive Onesimus and accept him as a brother in Christ, just as he would with Paul.
- **We don't know what Philemon chose to do with Onesimus, but if he did choose to trust God, how might he have responded?** He would forgive Onesimus and treat him like a brother in Christ. He could have given Onesimus a job or sent him back to work with Paul.

PAUL

- **What was Paul's role in this letter?** He was a peacemaker. He encouraged Onesimus to ask for forgiveness and was asking Philemon to give it to him out of love.
- **Look at v. 8-9, 19-20. What did he remind Philemon of in this verse?** Paul reminded him of Christ's love for him and how he was forgiven of his sins.
- **How did Paul show his trust in God?** He trusted God to change Philemon's heart so he would forgive Onesimus. He believed God was good no matter what happened.
- **Have you ever acted as a peacemaker between two people? What did you do?**

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- **Think about this: All of us are like Onesimus and need forgiveness. What debt do we owe God? How are we not at peace with Him?** We owe God because of our sins, but we can't do anything to repay Him.
- **Read verses 18-19 again. What did Paul say he would do?** Pay anything Onesimus owed.
- **How is that a small example of what Jesus did for us?** Jesus took the debt we owed for sin and paid for it on the cross.
- **Because God forgives us when we ask, how does He want us to respond when other people sin against us?** The debt that Christ paid for sin is so much bigger than any debt someone could possibly owe us. Because He is willing to forgive us, He wants us to be willing to forgive others and live at peace with them.
- **Is there someone you need to forgive or ask forgiveness from? How can doing that bring peace?** You no longer hang on to the bad feelings that troubled your heart when you were unforgiving or knew you need forgiveness. You turn over everything that was troubling your heart to God and allow Him to fill you with peace. When you are at peace with God, He helps you live in peace with others.

ACTIVITY – Pursuing Peace Relay

Supplies: bag, letter cards (*you can use letter tiles from a game or write letters on pieces of paper, making sure you can spell "peace" with the letters you put in each bag*)

Set up: Place a bag with letter cards somewhere in the house. Divide into two teams and line up on one end of the room (or race as one team and use a timer to see how fast you can finish the race).

The Game: The object of the game is to be the first team to spell out "PEACE." One person from each team will run to the bag and pull out a card. If it's a letter in the word "PEACE" they will run back with it. If not, they will put the card back in the bag, run back, and tag the next person. Keep taking turns running to the bag for cards until you've found the right ones to spell "PEACE."

Reminder: during the game everyone can pursue peace even during a competition. Make sure everyone continues to be good sports with both their teammates and the opposite team. If you need to, you can take one of their letters away because they are not pursuing peace. 😊