

## **Study Questions**

### **Faith and Love**

Philemon 1-7  
Pastor Bryan Clark

### **Opening Discussion**

1. Can you think of a time when you failed miserably or simply blew it? Share that experience with the group. Was there someone who either responded lovingly and helped you through it or someone who responded poorly and only added to the pain? Share that experience as well.
2. Grace is one of those terms we throw around as Christians but is often unclear as to what the term really means or what it demands of us. Do you agree that you cannot really know the demands of grace until you've been deeply wounded and have to extend grace to the person who wounded you? Why or why not?
3. Is there a price tag for extending grace to others? Are people more likely to criticize you for extending grace or justice? Why?
4. Would hurting struggling people view you as safe or unsafe? Why?

### **Bible Study**

1. Read Philemon 1-7. What are the cultural issues that may have made it difficult for Philemon to extend grace to a runaway slave? Do you think it is true that whatever choice he makes someone is not going to be happy with him?
2. What is the relationship between grace and peace (v3)? Is one possible without the other?
3. What is the relationship between love and faith? Do you really understand the truth if your behavior toward the saints is not loving? Can you really love like Jesus loved if that love is not motivated by sound doctrine?
4. In verse 6 Paul states that their common faith (what they believe together) plows up the ground (becomes effective) through the knowledge of what is true of them in Christ (every good thing) for the sake of Christ's reputation. What is this knowledge according to Col. 1:9,10; 2:2;3:10? How does this knowledge plow up the ground to receive Onesimus with grace?
5. Paul has joy and comfort in Philemon's character based on his track record of love. He says the saints have been "refreshed" or "experienced rest" through him. The same Greek word for "refreshed" is translated "rest" in Mathew 11:28. What should characterize the church of Jesus Christ according to Philemon 7. Should it be a safe or unsafe place for repentant sinners?

## **Application**

1. Is your natural tendency to get out of balance on the “love” side or the “faith” side? What can you do to remain balanced or get balanced?
2. Would others consider you a safe person or an unsafe person? Why? Does your behavior each day reflect the heart of the father in the story of the prodigal son?
3. What can you do to grow in your ability to rightly represent the grace of Jesus to others, especially to those who wound you?