

SCRIPTURES FOR 5/13/07 LIFEGROUP LESSON

Philemon

1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker, 2 to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church that meets in your home:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

4 I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, 5 because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. 6 I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. 7 Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints.

Paul's Plea for Onesimus

8 Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, 9 yet I appeal to you on the basis of love. I then, as Paul—an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus— 10 I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. 11 Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me.

12 I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. 13 I would have liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. 14 But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced. 15 Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good— 16 no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.

17 So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. 18 If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. 19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self. 20 I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in

the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. 21 Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask.

22 And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers.

23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. 24 And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.

25 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

2 Corinthians 10:5

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Romans 12:2

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

2 Timothy 10:7

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

Romans 8:6

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace

Romans 8:28

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

NOTE TO LEADER: There is a lot of material here. Familiarize yourself with it so you know which stuff you are most comfortable with and what you will cut if you get short on time. Try to keep the lesson/discussion 20-30 minutes in length. Good luck and let me know if you have any questions. - Ed



CHANGED: Changed Perspective

Jeff Browning

NOTE TO LEADERS: All items in *italics* are for your information and not designed to be read aloud.

OPENING:

ICEBREAKER or GET YA THINKIN' QUESTION: _____

OPENING PRAYER NOTES: _____

INTRODUCTION:

Jeff suggested this week that how we see things and what we do about it depends on our perspective. Webster defines perspective as “the capacity to view things in their true relations or relative importance” so in order to get perspective, we may need to step back and see the bigger picture. Otherwise, how can we see the relationship between things? Then once we see the big picture, we can change our perspective to better match God’s.

Jeff also talked about what thoughts characterize us: fearful thoughts (worry), negative thoughts (“I’m not worthy,” or “Poor me”), hopeless thoughts (“I’m always...” or “I’ll never...”), critical thoughts (glass half empty, or never good enough), or peaceful thoughts (God is in control).

Q: Which of these five best characterizes your thought processes?

Q: Does changing your perspective change your thoughts?

APPLICATION:

Outside of Philemon, Paul explains his deep understanding of perspective change:

TAKE EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE (2 Corinthians 10:5)

This is really hard. We are constantly bombarded by words and images that seek to derail our efforts to bring our thoughts into obedience.

Q: How can we get better at this? (*spend time w/Christian friends, in the Word, in prayer*) What do you do?

NOT CONFORMED BUT TRANSFORMED (Romans 12:2)

We are to be “*in the world, but not of the world*” which is, again, really hard, but we are to “renew our minds.”

Q: What can we do to renew our minds (*focus on the good, study the Word, pray*)?

NOT FEAR BUT POWER (2 Timothy 1:7)

As hard as the first two are, God promises power, love, and self-discipline. But Paul felt he needed to tell us because it is easier to give up. We need to claim this promise, trusting God to provide the strength.

Q: Why do you think it is so easy to sin rather than stand (*self-reliance, fear of failure, lack of trust*)?

NOT SIN & DEATH BUT LOVE & PEACE (Romans 8:6)

Here are the promised wages of our efforts to team with God: **love** and **peace**. But we must relinquish control to the Holy Spirit. He won’t force you; you have to release your grip.

Q: What do you need to release? What’s stopping you? (*you may wish to keep these questions rhetorical*)

TAKE ACTION

Once we know what is right, we need to move on it. Like Onesimus, we may need to take a big risk and trust God with the outcome. Maybe we need to forgive someone who is unrepentant, confess even if the repercussions are grave, call someone out who can harm you, or step in even though it is dangerous.

CONCLUSION:

(*have someone read Romans 8:28*) As scary as these things seem, God promises that, even if we can’t see it now, He will make good from bad, healing from pain, life from death, because we *are* called by Him and we must merely love Him.

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

GROUP NEEDS: _____ SHUT-IN MINISTRY: _____

WHO’S LEADING...

THIS WEEK: WORSHIP: _____ PRAYER: _____

NEXT WEEK: WORSHIP: _____ PRAYER: _____