

# SCRIPTURES FOR 5/20/07 LIFEGROUP LESSON

## **Philemon**

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

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

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

### **Thanksgiving and Prayer**

4I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, 5because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. 6I 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. 7Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints.

### **Paul's Plea for Onesimus**

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

11Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me.

12I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. 13I 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. 14But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced. 15Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good— 16no 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.

17So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. 18If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. 19I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self. 20I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. 21Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask.

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

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

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

## **Philippians 3:13-14**

Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold

of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

## **Philippians 3:15-16**

All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

## **Revelation 4:11**

You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created all things, and they exist because you created what you pleased

## **Psalms 149:4**

For the LORD delights in his people; he crowns the humble with victory.

## **1 John 3:1**

See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know him.

## **Colossians 1:15**

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

## **Ephesians 2:10**

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

## **John 17:18**

As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

## **2 Corinthians 4:17-18**

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

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 (pt 2)

## 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:

Last week Jeff tried to help us identify with the three characters in Philemon – Onesimus – the one who face his sin, Philemon – the one who must forgive, and Paul – the one who must bring them together.

**Q:** Have you ever been in one of these roles? Explain.

He said we should try to SEE THE GOOD THRU THE BAD, since *formerly* Onesimus was useless, *but now* he is useful.

**Q:** Do you have a “formerly...but now” story (i.e., you saw something as all bad, but now see some good)?

### APPLICATION:

This week, Jeff had two more suggestions:

#### SEE THE PURPOSE THRU THE PAIN (Philippians 3:13-14)

In order to leave the past behind, we need to seek after our purpose. Why are we here? What are we supposed to do? Even Paul had to “strain” and “press” in order to win. You think your past is ungodly and irreverent? Look at Paul’s. How much worse could it be? But Paul was doggedly focused on the goal; his purpose was the same as our purpose: **worship** (Rev. 4:11, Ps. 149:4), **fellowship** (1 Jn 3:1), **discipleship** (Col 1:15), **service** (Eph 2:10), and **evangelism** (Jn 17:18). When you are concentrating on these things, if you fall, at least you will fall forward.

**Q:** Which of these five facets of purpose do you most see in your life? Which do you see least?

#### STOP ASKING “WHY?” AND START ASKING “WHAT?” (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)

We know we should focus on the long term, the eternal, but often we feel unavoidably drawn to the temporary. The temporary is right in front of us, but Paul tells us that the underlying purpose, the unseen, eternal lessons behind our trials are much more important.

**Q:** How can we focus more on the lessons of our trials than the resultant pain (*others w/similar trials*)?

When you ask, “What?” Jeff suggests five different things that God may be asking you to do:

WAIT – PAY ATTENTION – MOVE FORWARD – LET GO / SURRENDER – TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

**Q:** Have you ever felt that God was asking you to do one of these five? If you did, how did it come out?

### CONCLUSION:

*(have someone read Philippians 3:15-16)* God is not a divine “bouncer.” He’s not just waiting around until you make a mistake so he can kick you out of the pool or club you over the head. He just wants you to seek Him and follow. How we deal with this stuff is a function of our spiritual maturity. We are not expected to be perfect, but we are expected to learn from our mistakes. Keep falling forward; it will get better...

### OTHER ACTIVITIES:

GROUP NEEDS: \_\_\_\_\_ SHUT-IN MINISTRY: \_\_\_\_\_

WHO’S LEADING...

THIS WEEK: WORSHIP: \_\_\_\_\_ PRAYER: \_\_\_\_\_

NEXT WEEK: WORSHIP: \_\_\_\_\_ PRAYER: \_\_\_\_\_