



**WEEK 3:** Friend Request – Paul, Philemon, Onesimus and healthy conflict

**Date:** Nov. 22, 2020

**Bible Passages:** Philemon

**Bottom Line:** Paul outlines for us steps to take in order to have God honoring, healthy conflict. 1) Pray, 2) Give genuine encouragement, 3) Appeal in love, 4) Look for common ground, 5) Honor others over selfishness

**Video:** <https://youtu.be/dPvs9r56fVA>

**Preparation:** Mom and/or dad, take time to prepare well for this spiritual experience with your son or daughter and perhaps their friends. Proper preparation includes reading through this guide, setting up a comfortable environment, preparing the videos, materials (*everyone will need a Bible, pen and notebook/journal*) and snacks, and prayer. It also includes giving your participants time to prepare as well. Let them know in advance what you want to do and then remind them a few minutes before your start time so that they are ready too.

**Interactive game / activity**

- Nailed It or Failed It Deep Fried Turkey Edition (<https://youtu.be/YYSUu49xzEU>) Play video [HERE](#)
- You will be shown a video clip of someone trying to deep fry a turkey. After each clip, pause the video and take a vote on if the person “Nailed It” or if they “Failed It”. Then press play to see the result.

**Activity Debrief:** (This would be a good time to pass out snacks)

- I bet some of those Failed It disasters created some conflict amongst people don’t you think?
- When you think of the word “conflict” what are some typical things that come to mind? What are some common things people have conflict over?

**Video Teaching:** [Friend Request: week 3 – Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus](#)

**Set-up:** ““Today we finish up our series titled “Friend Request.” Last week we learned about hospitality by looking at a friendship between the Apostle Paul and a lady named Lydia. Today, as we conclude our series, we will look at how to have healthy conflict and talk about a conflict between the Apostle Paul, a man named Philemon, and a man named Onesimus.””

Play the video [HERE](#)

Ice Breaker:

- When was the last time you experienced conflict? What caused it?

Discussion Starters:

- Do you tend to avoid or embrace conflict? Why do you think that is?
- Have you ever helped other people reconcile a conflict? What was the conflict? What did you do to help? What did you learn from the situation?
- Why is it often easier for us to criticize, condemn, and judge others instead of seeking to have healthy conflict?

Scripture:

The Apostle Paul is asking Philemon not just to cancel Onesimus' debt, but to reconsider his perspective on Onesimus, his runaway slave – to consider him an equal, a brother in Christ. Read **Philemon 1:8-16** together as a group and discuss the questions below.

*“Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, yet for love’s sake I prefer to appeal to you – I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus – I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord. For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother – especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.”*

Digging Deeper:

- What words or phrases interested you in this letter to Philemon from Paul?
- Paul urges Philemon to adopt a different mind-set toward Onesimus (slave to fellow brother). What advantage is there in changing the way we think about people? How might this affect the way we approach our relationships with others?
- In what way does Paul’s treatment of Onesimus reflect Christ’s treatment of us as believers?
- How does what Paul do to try and have healthy, God honoring conflict differ from what you have been taught or what you have seen regarding handling conflict?

Application:

- What do you think God wants us to understand about the Gospel through this story?
- Which of the points from the teaching video is most difficult for you to do (pray, give genuine encouragement, appeal in love, find common ground, honor others over selfishness)?
- Which point from the teaching video will you work on this week (pray, give genuine encouragement, appeal in love, find common ground, honor others)? How will you do this?

1:15 **Closing activity & prayer:** choose 1 of the following options for the whole group together.

- Singing: Together sing “[Brokenness Aside](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJMWrbSsWmk),” by All Sons and Daughters (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJMWrbSsWmk>)
- Journal Response: Pull out your notebook or journal and begin thinking about a conflict you are experiencing (or have experienced in the past). Then write down each point from the teaching video (Pray, Give genuine encouragement, Appeal in love, Find common ground, Honor others of selfishness) and journal about what you can do (or could have done) differently to handle the conflict in a God honoring and healthy way? How can you PRAY for the person you are in conflict with? How can you GENUINELY ENCOURAGE the person you are in conflict with? How can you APPEAL IN LOVE to the person you are in conflict with? What is the COMMON GROUND between you and the person you are in conflict with? How can you HONOR OTHERS over your own desires in the situation?
- Scripture Response: Read and memorize Romans 12:17-18  
*“Repay no one evil for evil but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”*
- Prayer: encourage students to use their notebooks to record prayer requests and pray for the group members throughout the week.
  - How can we pray for our people we may be in conflict with?
  - How can we pray for ourselves to handle conflict in a more God honoring way?
  - How can we pray for one another, in this small group, today?
  - CLOSE IN PRAYER.
- **FRIENDSHIP PROJECT**: This week is thanksgiving. Our challenge this month is to show a friend that you are grateful for their friendship and open a door to spiritual conversations. Using paper lunch bag or simple gift bag, fill it with candy, homemade goodies, fun treats or toys, or something that you too might like. Then, write them a card telling them that your thankful for their friendship. Try to list specific things that you are thankful for and do your best to mention God. You might say...

“I’m grateful that God blessed me with you!”

“I count you among God’s many blessings in my life.”

“You are a gift from God in my life and I’m grateful for you.”

Our hope is that through this project, we will spread some gratitude, joy, and most importantly, God’s love. Perhaps as you mention God, it will open the door to a spiritual conversation or an opportunity to invite your friend and their family to church this Christmas season. May God bless you as you share your gratitude with your friends.