

THE GAME CHANGING GOSPEL.

BIG IDEA: the Gospel transforms our lives and in doing so, our relationships with each other.

What's the most exciting transformation you've ever seen?

Read the book of Philemon. What gives Paul joy and comfort? (vs 4-7)

Hearing about Philemon's faith in Jesus and love for the saints. Hearing about people sharing their faith. Hearing about other Christians being encouraged by one another.

Onesimus seems to have left as one person and is about to return as a new person. What gives us this idea? What do you think has happened? (vs 11 & 16)

It seems like Onesimus was a slave and Philemon was his master. Somehow Onesimus had wronged his owner. Philemon was a Christian living in Colosse (Col 4:17). It's unclear whether the wrong Onesimus did to Philemon was something as big as stealing all of his money and running away, or simply overstaying his time while being sent away.

It seems that Onesimus has been transformed by the gospel. Paul tells us elsewhere that the gospel transforms people. How so? See Col 2:13-15, another letter written by Paul around the same time to people of the same town.

How does Paul encourage Philemon to relate to Onesimus? Why?

From what we know of their history, how might Philemon have felt?

Helpful to think about the fact that as Christians, particularly in church together and especially in Growth Group together, we need to learn to love one another. It's not always going to be people we find easy to love in our group.

The Gospel transforms lives, and as it does so, relationships - just like for Philemon and Onesimus. As we meet together as a Growth Group this year, how might the Gospel transform our lives, collectively and individually?

What are some practical ways that we, like Paul and Philemon, can encourage each other this year?

Pray that God would be transforming us this year as a Growth Group through his word and that we would be spurring each other on in understanding every good thing we have in Christ.