

Series Overview and Guides

2017-2018 ANNUAL THEME | SERIES 6

AUGUST 2018

Objective

what we hope to see God accomplish in us through this study

We join God in His work of continual restoration.

STATEMENTS OF THE OBJECTIVE

Expressions of Christian thinking permeate the letter. First, two people were in need of reconciliation, and Paul sought a way to accomplish it, just as Jesus did. Second, Paul pleaded the case of Onesimus, taking the side of the guilty in calling for forgiveness. Similarly, Jesus pleaded the case of sinners, bringing them to the Father. Third, Paul offered to pay the debt Onesimus owed, even though it was not Paul's responsibility. Jesus took the debt of sinners and paid it vicariously. Fourth, the reconciliation was, in essence, effected in Paul. He was the tie that brought Philemon and Onesimus together; through Paul, harmony was restored. Paul's consistent theme "in Christ" reveals that he thought the same way regarding the God-human relationship. In Christ, humanity and deity)

—R.R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon (NAC)*

Premise

why we are studying this

We need restoration! It is a continual reality on the hot, hard deadpan of this world. Thankfully, God has empowered His people to be agents of refreshment, sharing the blessings of living water with all in need.

STATEMENTS OF THE PREMISE

"For with much wisdom is much sorrow; as knowledge increases, grief increases."
—Ecclesiastes 1:18 HCSB

"Yes, brother, may I have joy from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ."
—Philemon 20 (HCSB)

Blackbird singing in the dead of night
Take these broken wings and learn to fly
All your life
You were only waiting for this moment to arise

Blackbird singing in the dead of night
Take these sunken eyes and learn to see
All your life
You were only waiting for this moment to be free
Blackbird fly

Blackbird fly
Into the light of the dark black night

—Paul McCartney
Blackbird

Theme

what the study is about

God is the Lord of restoration. As His people, Christians are agents of reconciliation. It's a major part of his we use our powers for good, or in the common parlance, "It's what we do." Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus all taste of the refreshment of doing good in this wonderful letter. Further, the epistle calls for more commitment to reconciliation – a strong motivation to modern people in a season of division.

STATEMENTS OF THE THEME

"Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. One thing more—prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping through your prayers to be restored to you."
—Philemon 21-22 (NRSV)

"Everything is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed the message of reconciliation to us. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, certain that God is appealing through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, 'Be reconciled to God.' "



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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SCRIPTURE QUOTATIONS

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SERMON ACCESS ONLINE



You can watch the related sermons at www.friscobible.com/sermons or by scanning the QR code.

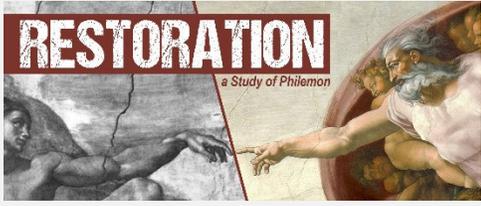
On the **Sermons** page, filter by Series and select **Restoration**.

PERMISSION

You are welcome to copy and distribute this study guide for your personal or group study.

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ANNUAL THEME 2017-2018

USE YOUR POWERS FOR GOOD

SCRIPTURE READING

Philemon 1-3

KEY IDEAS

THEME

The situation, settlement, and reason seem to us much too small a thing for the limited time-frame of an apostle. Yet Paul blesses all involved with grace and peace, applying scripture to himself and them. This is living proof of his commitment to the “ministry of reconciliation.”

OBJECTIVE

We shower grace and peace on “little” things.

NOTHING TOO SMALL

Nothing is too small for a Christian to care. No person is unworthy of investment. No situation is beyond prayerful work of restoration.

—Wayne Braudrick

THE UNKNOWN

Paul included in his greeting those who are relatively unknown. Apphia and Archippus are evidently family members, probably Philemon’s wife and son. Paul may have addressed Apphia because the wife typically managed the household slaves, and Archippus because he seems to be a leader in the church (Col. 4:17).

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we would reach out to those who have wounded us or whom we have wounded and seek reconciliation through grace and peace.

Session 1: No Job too Small

1. Have you ever seen a broken relationship restored to health? Describe what happened. What were the first steps that led to restoration?

2. Read Philemon 1-3. Discuss each of the people named. What do we know about them from other scriptures?

3. Read the Key Ideas for this session in the sidebar on the left.
 - How can we impact our relationships by showering the other person with “grace and peace”? Discuss what that would look like in your various relationships, such as:
 - Husband and wife
 - Parent and child
 - Siblings
 - Employer (boss, manager, etc) and employee
 - In which of these relationships do you find it most difficult to be gracious, and why?

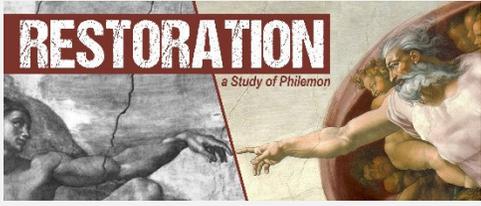
4. Paul used his powers for good to reconcile a relationship between two believers. How does being in Christ impact two people who need to be reconciled?

5. Discuss ways that you can “use your powers for good” to bring people together and deepen their involvement in the local church.



SERIES 6 | SESSION 2

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2017-2018

USE YOUR POWERS FOR GOOD

SCRIPTURE READING

Philemon 4-7

KEY IDEAS

THEME

The refreshment of the Lord flows back and forth between the brethren in a beautiful, almost breathtaking display of fellowship. This is all predicated on faith in Jesus, who is the *raison d'être*. All good, joy, and refreshment is for His glory.

OBJECTIVE

We refresh the saints.

LOVE FOR THE SAINTS

The objects of Philemon's love and faith [in verse 5] were "all the saints" and "the Lord Jesus" respectively. The Greek construction is chiasmic. That is, the first and fourth elements in verse 5 go together, as do the second and third. This construction emphasizes the unity of the entire thought: love for the saints grows out of faith in Christ.

—Thomas Constable
Notes on Philemon

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that "the hearts of the saints may be refreshed through" us for the glory of Christ.

Use the other side of this page to write additional prayer requests.

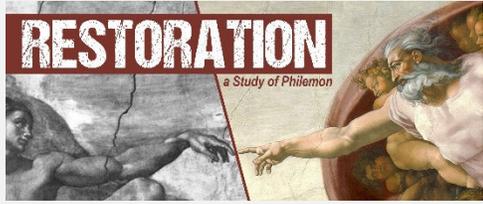
Session 2: Effective Refreshment

1. Spiritually dry times happen to most of us at some point. If you have experienced this, who came alongside you to refresh your spirit? How did they refresh you?
 - Why does praying for fellow believers matter to them? Why does it refresh their souls?
 - What are some practical ways to more faithfully pray for believers, both those you know personally and others you only know about?
2. Read Philemon 4-7. A hallmark of Paul in many of his letters was to pray for the churches (v. 4).
 - Why does praying for fellow believers matter to them? Why does it refresh their souls?
 - What are some practical ways to more faithfully pray for believers, both those you know personally and others you only know about?
3. Paul linked faith in the Lord with loving actions for all the saints (v. 5). Discuss why faith and love in deeds must be intertwined in our lives.
 - Which is stronger for you, faith or love?
 - What are some ways to strengthen each area?
4. In verse 6, Paul reminded Philemon that every good thing in us is for the glory of Christ. How should that motivate us to refresh others?
 - How willing are you to be refreshed by the faith and love of others?
 - What can *you* do to more consistently refresh other believers?
5. Even Paul was refreshed by hearing of Philemon's love (v. 7).
 - How willing are you to be refreshed by the faith and love of others?
 - What can *you* do to more consistently refresh other believers?



SERIES 6 | SESSION 3

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2017-2018

USE YOUR POWERS FOR GOOD

SCRIPTURE READING

Philemon 8-16

KEY IDEAS

THEME

The apostle lays out a path of powerful rarity, where good is done for the best of reasons. Like Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus, we must: do right because of love; use our power despite limitations; do good without compulsion; and embrace both forgiveness and brotherhood.

OBJECTIVE

We do good for great reasons.

TRANSFORMATIONAL LOVE

The supreme work of Christianity is to transform men, so that out of their transformed lives shall come the transformation of all social conditions, and the victories of righteousness and of love.

— G. Campbell Morgan
Living Messages of the Books of the Bible

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that all of us will do right because of love, use our powers despite limitations, without compulsion, embracing forgiveness and fellowship for the glory of God!

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests

Session 3: Do Good for Great Reasons

1. Throughout the year, we've been following the theme "Use your powers for good." As you look back at this past year, how have you used your powers for good?
 - Why did Paul prefer to make it a request?

2. Read Philemon 8-9a. Paul said that he has a request of Philemon which he could have presented as a command.
 - What are some differences between doing what is right out of love rather than only obedience?

3. In verses 9b-12, it is clear that Paul — despite being a prisoner — had led Onesimus to Christ and developed a deep friendship with him.
 - What are some other examples in the Bible of God using people for His glory despite seeming physical or situational limitations?
 - How likely are we to use seeming limitations as excuses for not using our powers for good? How can we remind ourselves of God's ability to use us despite these so-called limits?

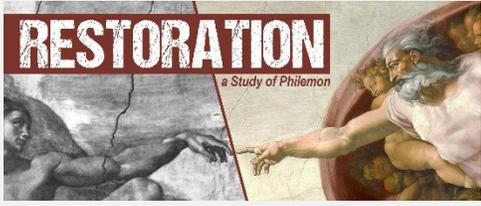
4. In verses 13-16, Paul urged Philemon to receive Onesimus back as a brother in Christ.
 - Again, Paul emphasized Philemon's willingness rather than obedience. Why is this an indispensable part of forgiveness and fellowship?
 - If you have a broken relationship with a fellow believer, ask God for the love and willingness to restore your mutual fellowship. How can this group pray for you?



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SERIES 6 | SESSION 4

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2017-2018

USE YOUR POWERS FOR GOOD

SCRIPTURE READING

Philemon 17-25

KEY IDEAS

THEME

The Apostle Paul calls for Philemon to work as his partner in life restoration. He personally shows Christ's ministry of reconciliation, calling for Philemon (and all other Christians) to energize the saints and partner with other Christians.

OBJECTIVE

We partner with God's people in life restoration.

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Christian fellowship involves participation in the lives of others. On one hand, it means that believers fully acknowledge the circumstances which made others the way they are. It includes a realization that God can change them. On the other hand, it involves a willingness to become involved in making others' lives better.

— Richard R. Melick, Jr.
The New American Commentary: Philippians, Colossians, Philemon

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week. Pray for eyes to see opportunities to help those around you, especially for those of the family of God who need refreshment, encouragement, or restoration.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

Session 4: Partner in Restoration

1. Read Philemon 17-19 together.
 - What did Paul ask of Philemon? How did Paul come to Onesimus's aid?
 - How did Paul's actions reflect what Christ has done for every believer? Read 1 Corinthians 11:1.

2. In verses 20-22, Paul told Philemon that he can use his powers for good to refresh Paul's heart, do even more than he expects, prepare to help him, and pray for his release.
 - Has God used you to energize someone's life in similar ways? Or have you seen examples in people you know? If so, tell the group about it.
 - What are some practical ways we can live out the spirit of Paul's request in verse 22, applying it to our day and situations?

3. Review the *Objective*, *Premise*, and *Theme* of this study (see page 1). What have you learned from this study of Philemon?

4. If you attend Frisco Bible Church, what have you learned from the annual theme, *Use Your Powers for Good*? Consider writing a note to the pastors about how God has used this in your life.

