

BURY THE HATCHET: LIFE GROUP-SPRING WK5

Read Philemon 12-16

I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. 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. But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do would not seem forced but would be voluntary. Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back forever—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 fellow man and as a brother in the Lord.

- 1. Philemon might have responded skeptically to Paul's appeal, saying he was not convinced he could trust the slave who had stolen from him and run away. What advice would you have given Philemon to bury the hatchet with Onesimus?**
- 2. How do you think Onesimus felt about his upcoming reunion with Philemon? Why might it have been difficult for either of these men to think of each other "as a dear brother"?**
- 3. Should Onesimus's salvation automatically heal the wound, repair the damage, or make trusting him again easier? If it does not make it easier for Philemon, what does it do for him? Does the fact that Onesimus has become a Christian reduce the seriousness of the harm he has done? If not, what does it do for him?**
- 4. Does forgiving someone mean that the wrong done to us must be minimized or overlooked? If it doesn't, then what does it mean?**



5. When it comes to burying the hatchet with someone, which is harder...

- Admitting you are wrong, taking responsibility, and seeking forgiveness?***
- Forgiving the person who wronged you and seek to restore the relationship?***
- Be the peacemaker between two friends and run the risk of losing one or both of them as your friend?***

Explain your choice.

Prayer:

2020 and the beginning of this year have been a very divisive time. Families and friends have split over politics, pandemic response, cancel culture, racial tension, and inequality. Pray for families and friends to bury the hatchet. Ask the Lord to raise up individuals who will be peacemakers.