



Week 2 – The Heart Of The Issue (Philemon – verses 8-14)

The book of Philemon was written by Paul to help reconcile a broken relationship between Philemon (a church leader) and Onesimus (his run-away slave). This week we discovered that reconciliation is a matter of the heart.

Main Points:

- Healthy relationships **require** healthy confrontations (verse 8)
- You **cannot control** another person's heart
- Mending fences will always require **two willing hearts** (verse 9)
- **Repentance and change** are prerequisites for fence mending (verse 11)

Discussion Questions:

- Our culture teaches us that LOVE is a euphoric feeling, a mountain top experience to be pursued. In reality, the kind of love we all long for emerges as we journey through the difficulties and offenses that take place in the context of relationship. Have you ever experienced that lovin' feeling? What happened? How did it change over time?
- In the message, Nathan said that most people find ways to avoid conflict. What is your go to move for avoiding difficult conversations?
- We cannot control the heart of another person, but that doesn't stop us from trying. What are some of the ways that you have tried to control someone else's heart?
- Reconciliation is always God's best, but sometimes we cannot reconcile a relationship with another person. What are some examples of relationships that cannot be mended? What would a biblical approach to that situation look like? Discuss.
- Repentance and change are prerequisites for fence mending. Does grace and forgiveness mean that no change is necessary on the part of the offender? How might a person pursue reconciliation while also protecting themselves from an insincere person?

Next Steps:

- Even if you cannot achieve reconciliation with another person, you can still forgive them (release them of the debt owed, release the anger) and prepare your heart to reconcile when they are ready. Don't forget that forgiveness is not an option! (Matthew 18:21-35)
- Remember that Jesus instructed the offended party to initiate reconciliation. Is there someone or something you need to confront? (Matthew 18:15-17)