



**OPEN**

Due to the brevity of the book, we will read the entire letter of Philemon each week. Consider reading it from a different translation each time.

[To support your reading of Philemon, go to **Go Deeper Section 1** at the end of this study.]

Philemon 1–25

**WATCH**

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Bryan Loritts’s teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

**Who has the job of reconciliation?**

**What is essential for rich relationships?**

**What are the three principles for stewarding truth?**

Show session 3: *One Part Truth* (13 minutes)

**DISCUSS**

Bryan opened by alluding to post-apartheid South Africa to show how we must tell the truth about the wrongs we’ve committed for reconciliation to be possible. As Bryan stated, “There can be no reconciliation without truth.”

**Do you agree that truth is required for reconciliation? Why, or why not? What examples in your life influence your answer?**

Let’s look at this letter through the lens of truth. Read Philemon 1–16.

Lined writing area with 20 horizontal lines for student responses.











Paul wasn't the only one who spoke the truth in love. In the Old Testament, we read about Joseph, who was honest with his brothers about their wrongdoing. Read Genesis 50:15–21.

Joseph's brothers were afraid of how Joseph might respond to them now that their father was dead. And while he did speak the truth regarding their ill-willed actions, he also pointed to God's providence. Like Joseph, we can speak honestly about the pain someone has caused us while still honoring God. **What difference could it make if we spoke the truth in a loving way as Joseph did?**

Sometimes we speak the truth in a loving way but the person we confront does not receive it well. The possibility of more relational tension can make us cautious to speak the truth. **Have you ever attempted to point out the sin of another in a loving way, but the relationship was still fractured because you spoke the truth? If so, what happened? How do we wrestle with the reality that sometimes by speaking the truth, the relationship could suffer or change?**

In verse 21, we read that Joseph, the same man who was sold into slavery by his brothers, "spoke kindly to [his brothers]." Like Joseph, we can extend kindness while also acknowledging the truth of the wrongs committed against us. As you face conflict in your relationships, pray that God will give you the words you need to speak the truth in a way that reflects his kindness. **Who needs to experience your kindness as you speak the truth this week?**

### 3. A Reconciliation Framework Story

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Throughout this series, Bryan has outlined a framework for reconciliation based on the letter of Philemon. The parable of the lost son, found in Luke 15, can also teach us about repentance, grace, and truth.

Read Luke 15:11–32 and consider who repented, who gave grace, and who spoke truth.

The younger son demonstrated repentance when he returned to his father. He recognized his wrong and confessed it. Like the son, we can return to our heavenly Father when we sin. We must also repent to the one we've sinned against. **In what circumstances is it easiest for you to repent of your sins? What makes it hard to repent?**

Luke 15:20–24 shows the father's radical demonstration of grace toward his son. His actions paint a beautiful picture of what Christ has done for us. We don't deserve to be sons and daughters of God, but we have been given salvation through Christ's death and resurrection. **What difference has God's grace made in your life? In what ways does understanding God's grace for you impact how you practice grace with others?**

In Luke 15:25–32, the older son spoke the truth when he pointed out how his brother carelessly spent their father's money, but he failed to recognize the priority of the relationship in reconciliation. Like the older brother, we may be tempted to elevate the truth over the relationship, but when someone repents, our response should be like the father who ran toward his repentant son. **When have you handled speaking the truth poorly? How**

Lined writing area consisting of 20 horizontal lines for taking notes.



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The Book of Philemon STUDY GUIDE

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