

Weekly Study Guide

February 26, 2017

Wish to view the message again? Go to vimeo.com/gracepeoplemn. Will you be out of town soon? Watch on-line at livestream.com/gracepeople. Desire to ask Pastor Steve a question about today's message? Contact him at 651.429.5349 x215 or steve@gracepeople.church

Daily Readings

Sunday	Matthew 25: 37-40	Presents Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel's prophetic hope.
	Mark 1:11-13	A Gospel written for the Romans; fast paced, featuring Jesus' power and suffering; shortest of the Gospels.
	Luke 10:30-37	Written by Luke, a Gentile (non-Jew); includes many parables and stories.
	John 3:16-18	Written emphasizing Jesus' divinity and purpose
Monday	Acts 1:8	The story of how the Gospel is spread through the Holy Spirit's power; written by Luke.
Tuesday	Romans 8:38-39	Written by Paul to the Christian church in Rome. He spells out the true Gospel he is preaching to dispel false rumors.
	1 Corinthians 12:4, 13:4-7	Written by Paul to the church in Corinth addressing problems there with suggestions and solutions.
	2 Corinthians 12:7-10	Written by Paul to the church in Corinth, using autobiographical references to teach.
Wednesday	Galatians 2:20-21	Written to the church in Galatia; confronting false teaching and proclaiming grace.
	Ephesians 2:4-9	Written to the church in Ephesus to help them grow stronger in faith and love on a foundation of the grace of Jesus.
	Philippians 2:3-11	Written for the church in Philippi with great affection expressing the joy of living in Christ.
	Colossians 3:15-17	Written to church of Colosse; emphasizing the power of Christ in our lives.
	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24, 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17	Written to the church in Thessalonica about the return of Christ; oldest letter.
	1 Timothy 4:8; 2 Timothy 1:5-7	Written to Timothy, a leader in the church, about sound doctrine and Godliness.
	Titus 3:5-8	Written to Titus about sound doctrine and good works.
	Philemon 15-17	Written to a slave owner urging him to reconcile with his runaway slave and give him freedom because of Jesus' grace for them both.

The Reading Guide is continued on the next page.

Regular habits of private Bible reading strengthen our relationship with God and teach us how to follow Jesus. In addition to the thematic exercise above, you can use this guide each week to lead you through relevant sections of the Bible.

Thursday	Hebrews 7:23-27	The fulfillment of the Covenant in Jesus. This is not a letter. It's a sermon. Chapter 11 offers a Readers' Digest version of the Old Testament.
Friday	James 1:22 1 Peter 2:9-11, 2 Peter 3:8-9	General letter written by James to Jewish believers in Jesus; faith in action. Written by Peter asking to whose standards you will conform, God's or the world's?
Saturday	1 John 3:16-18, 2 John 6, 3 John 4-8 Jude 20-25 Revelation 3:19-20	Letters written by John encouraging the church to love one another. Written by Jude to encourage the church in faithfulness. John's visions calling the church to faithfulness to Jesus and assuring no matter how things look, God is in charge.

Group Discussion Guide

CONNECT

Today is the beginning of a new chapter in our church's story as we officially become Community of Grace Lutheran Church. Tell the group how long you've been at our church, and what you love about your church home.

LEARN AND APPLY

This week in worship we read the tiny (but potent) letter of Paul to Philemon. We're going to review that letter together and apply it to our lives. Begin by reading just the "from" and "to" sections in **Philemon 1-3**.

- What terms are used to describe the various people sending and receiving this letter?
- These terms reflect and reinforce the relationships they had with one another and what they valued about each other. Go around your group and encourage one another by saying what you value about each person in your Growth Group community.

In the next section, Paul very delicately makes a big request! He asks that Philemon will receive back and set free his runaway slave, Onesimus. **Read Philemon 4-16**.

- Paul is very careful to give Philemon the freedom to make this choice voluntarily, even though he argues persuasively that it's the right thing to do. Why do you think Paul didn't want to make this a "command" or obligation (verses 8 and 14)?
- How is doing the right thing freely different from doing the same thing out of obligation?

In the next section, Paul voluntarily uses his own privilege and position for the sake of Onesimus. In doing so, he imitates what he has seen in the example of Jesus. **Read Philemon 17-22.**

- Share about a time someone risked something of themselves for your benefit, and/or you risked something for someone else.
- How might you use your position to look out for, or benefit, someone else right now?

In this series, we've been learning to ask "What are we learning about God?" in any given Bible passage. This passage has shown us that God cares for runaway slaves, for people at risk, and vulnerable ones in society.

- How easy or difficult is this lesson for you? Where do you think any difficulty comes from?
- What else are you learning about God in this letter?
- We learned that caring, like God, for the vulnerable can be part of our normal lives, not an add-on activity. Brainstorm together how your lives could reflect this.

PRAY

This February we've also been learning to ask "What are we learning about being the people of God?" and "How will we respond?" Philemon teaches us to be a people, to live with lower walls and higher transparency.

What's happening in your life that you would like to share with your group for support and prayer? Before responding to this question, break into sub-groups (men and women is one idea). Share your answers as spoken prayers, including prayers for the vulnerable "Onesimus's" in our world today.

What's in the Bible?

Old Testament

Story of Israel

1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy
6. Joshua
7. Judges
8. Ruth
9. 1 Samuel
10. 2 Samuel
11. 1 Kings
12. 2 Kings
13. 1 Chronicles
14. 2 Chronicles
15. Ezra
16. Nehemiah
17. Esther

Writings of Israel

18. Job
19. Psalms
20. Proverbs
21. Ecclesiastes
22. Song of Solomon

Prophets of Israel

23. Isaiah
24. Jeremiah
25. Lamentations
26. Ezekiel
27. Daniel
28. Hosea
29. Joel
30. Amos
31. Obadiah
32. Jonah
33. Micah
34. Nahum
35. Habakkuk
36. Zephaniah
37. Haggai
38. Zechariah
39. Malachi

New Testament

Story of Jesus

1. Matthew
2. Mark
3. Luke
4. John

Story of First Christians

5. Acts (of the Apostles)

Writings/Letters of First Christians

6. Romans
7. 1 Corinthians
8. 2 Corinthians
9. Galatians
10. Ephesians
11. Philippians
12. Colossians
13. 1 Thessalonians
14. 2 Thessalonians
15. 1 Timothy
16. 2 Timothy
17. Titus
18. Philemon
19. Hebrews
20. James
21. 1 Peter
22. 2 Peter
23. 1 John
24. 2 John
25. 3 John
26. Jude
27. Revelation