



IMMANUEL CHURCH

Discussion Guide: Structural Shift February 25, 2018

Opening Questions:

- Can you think of a time where a single relationship changed a larger context? It might have made things better or worse, but did you realize at the time that said relationship was affecting everything else?
- Why do you think relationships can be so catalytic in a family or a neighborhood or a work environment? If they're so important, why do you think we spend so little time nurturing them in those contexts?

Looking at Scripture:

- Read **Philemon 16...** What would be an equivalent to the status and relational change that Onesimus experiences with Paul and eventually Philemon? Do you think it was an adjustment for both Onesimus and Philemon? Why or why not?
- What might be some cultural "rules" or "norms" that a radically reconciled relationship might necessitate we move past in this day and age?
- Read **Ephesians 4:31-32...** Paul's encouragement seems to draw a hard line in the sand between the way the Kingdom operates and the way the world typically does. Why is being tenderhearted, kind and forgiving seen as such a fundamental cultural shift? Shouldn't we all naturally want those things?
- Does it frustrate you at all to think of forgiving as an ongoing action instead of a one-time event? What does it look like, practically, to *nasa*? To lift up or carry someone's offense or wrongdoing? How do we get ourselves to *want* to do that? Because it certainly doesn't come naturally, does it?
- Jesus was the ultimate example in forgiving others; he was the ultimate example in carrying the transgressions of others. Why do so many Christians seem to miss the sacrificial nature of following in Christ's footsteps toward the cross like this?

Application Questions:

- This week's bottom line was **RELATIONSHIPS DEFINE A CULTURE, SO THEY CAN CHANGE ONE TOO.** What does that idea mean to you? What do you sense the Holy Spirit maybe nudging you toward in your relationships? In your culture?
- What does *inside* radical relational reconciliation look like? Are there other Christians you need to sort things out with? How about *outside*? What is your group doing to build relationships with unchurched, non-Christians (like Onesimus)? How do we as Christians support relational reconciliation that we may not be directly involved in?

Pray for relational reconciliation in our families, our communities, our country and our world. Ask God to start a fresh movement of compassion and love. Ask him to start it with you, your group and our church. Ask him to help us be like Jesus and give us a desire to build relationships that lead others to him.