

PHILEMON

Free to Love God's Way



HARVEST
MINISTRIES

welcome message

Influence.

Forgiveness.

Advocacy.

Reconciliation.

This letter is a story that encompasses all of the above.

We are excited to walk through this story with you to challenge our hearts and minds to reconcile so that we may see people the way the Lord sees them...even if they have wronged you in the past. Once Jesus is accepted as our Lord and Savior, our past is wiped clean and God is able to redeem it for our good and His glory. That forgiveness is personified in the advocacy Paul extends for Onesimus to Philemon.

Philemon, a man of prestige and true faith, experienced the same person in two completely different ways. Onesimus, a slave, became Philemon's Christian brother after learning about Christ from Paul during his imprisonment and having a change of heart. Paul used his influence and relationship with Philemon to welcome the opportunity for brotherhood and forgiveness.

Our prayer is that you are encouraged to reflect on or prepare to:

- Use your level of influence to be an advocate for someone who truly deserves a second chance.
- Forgive those who have caused hurt in your life.
- Allow a mentor to influence change in your life and possibly be an advocate for your future.

Let's be free to love God's way.

Grace & Peace,

Eric & Antoinette Patrick

info@harvestministries.org



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRO

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE	3
CONTENTS	4
WHO IS ONESIMUS?	5
WHO IS PAUL?	6
PAUL'S JOURNEY	7

WEEK TWO

PHILEMON 1:6	32
PHILEMON 1:7	36
PHILEMON 1:8-9	40
PHILEMON 1:10	44
PHILEMON 1:11-12	48

WEEK FOUR

PHILEMON 1:20	72
PHILEMON 1:21	76
PHILEMON 1:22	80
PHILEMON 1:23-24	84
PHILEMON 1:25	88

WEEK ONE

PHILEMON 1:1a	10
PHILEMON 1:1b-2	14
PHILEMON 1:3	18
PHILEMON 1:4	22
PHILEMON 1:5	26

WEEK THREE

PHILEMON 1:13-14	54
PHILEMON 1:15-16	58
PHILEMON 1:17	62
PHILEMON 1:18-19	66

OUTRO

REFLECTION	94
APPENDIX	97
SALVATION	98



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This Bible study guide was designed with you, you, you, and yes, you too in mind. There's a little something for everyone. It is considered to be a 3-in-1 style. You can choose 1, 2, or all of the following options. Prayerfully, you will keep this guide by your side well after we finish it this go round. The option(s) you don't choose today will provide you another opportunity 2, 4, or even 10 years from now to enjoy again and again, in a totally new way!

CHOOSE YOUR CUSTOM EXPERIENCE

S.O.A.P. Study

S.O.A.P. is an acronym for Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer. This experience encourages you to meditate on a specific passage from the Bible, document your observations, discover ways it can be applied to your life, and pray about what has been revealed to you during this time.

Word Study

A word study is a great way to not only learn new words but discover their meanings in the context that they're being used (e.g. blue skies versus feeling blue), the original language they were written in, and how they connect with other passages throughout the Bible.

Question Study

Answering the questions related to each passage will prompt a personal, reflective experience. They will also provide opportunities to discover how Scripture applies to your past, present, and future. Some answers can be pulled directly from Scripture, but for a majority of the questions there is no right or wrong answer.

CONTENTS

01 WHO

Onesimus, a runaway slave, is the main subject of the letter. Paul, a Jewish man from Tarsus and apostle, is the author. Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and their church plant are his audience.

02 WHAT

Onesimus ran away from his master, Philemon, for fear of punishment after wronging Philemon. Paul writes this letter (epistle) to Philemon asking for mercy on Onesimus' behalf after his conversion.

03 WHEN

Paul wrote all of his epistles in 1st century AD (post-resurrection) with this letter being written while in prison.

04 WHERE

Onesimus is visiting Paul, who is in prison, possibly in Rome, while Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, have started a church plant in Colossae.

05 WHY

This letter encourages readers to evangelize and reconcile relationships between Christians. Onesimus, whose name means "useful", did not live up to his name prior to his conversion. Now that Onesimus is a Christian, Paul cosigns that he is a useful brother in Christ and can be helpful in sharing the gospel in Colossae.

06 THEMES

Forgiveness, Reconciliation, Salvation, Sanctification

WHO IS ONESIMUS?

Aliases

N/A

Hometown

Most Likely
Ephesus or
Colossae

Jobs

Slave;
Minister

Audience

Paul while
visiting him in
prison;
Philemon,
Apphia,
Archippus,
and their
home church
after being
sent back by
Paul

“^{9a}and with him Onesimus, our
faithful and beloved brother,
who is one of your number.”
(Colossians 4)

Superlatives

Messenger (Colossians 4:7-9)

Reborn Christian (Philemon 1:10)

Useful (Philemon 1:11)

Beloved Brother (Philemon 1:12,16)

Minister (Philemon 1:13)

Runaway Slave (Philemon 1:15-16)

WHO IS PAUL?

Aliases

Saul; Saul of Tarsus; Paul the Jew; Apostle Paul

Hometown

Born in Tarsus, Cilicia (modern day Turkey)

Jobs

Apostle; Preacher; Missionary; Author

Audience

Paul spoke to Jews but mainly Gentiles about Jesus and the resurrection

“^{19b} For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus.²⁰ And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, 'He is the Son of God.'”
(Acts 9)

Superlatives

Christian Persecutor (Acts 8:1-3, 9:1-2, 21, 22:4, 26:10-11; 1 Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13-14, 22-23; Philippians 3:6; 1 Timothy 1:13-15)

Well-Traveled Missionary (Acts 13-28)

Prisoner (Acts 16:23-24, 28:30-31; 2 Corinthians 11:25; Ephesians 3:1)

Artisan Tentmaker (Acts 18:3; 20:34; 2 Thessalonians 3:8)

Teacher (Acts 19:2-5)

Well-Educated Pharisee (Acts 23:6, 26:5; Galatians 1:14; Philippians 3:5)

Apostle to the Gentiles (1 Corinthians 9:1-2; 2 Corinthians 11:5)

Bold and Confrontational (Romans 15:15; Galatians 2:11-14)

PAUL'S JOURNEY

FROM TARSUS TO TRIUMPH



A.D. 15-33

Schooling, Pharisee,
and Persecutor



A.D. 46-48

1st Mission Trip



A.D. 52-57

3rd Mission Trip



A.D. 57

On Trial Before Felix
and Agrippa



A.D. 60-62

Imprisoned in Rome
(Wrote More Epistles)



A.D. 4-14

Born in Tarsus (Roman Citizen)



A.D. 33-36

Conversion to Christianity



A.D. 49-52

2nd Mission Trip



A.D. 51-59

Wrote Some of the Epistles



A.D. 57-60

Voyage to Rome (Shipwrecked)



A.D. 62-66

Martyred in Rome

THE GRACE

O F T H E

LORD JESUS CHRIST

B E W I T H

YOUR SPIRIT

PHILEMON

WEEK ONE

DAY ONE

WEEK 1

PHILEMON 1:1a

PAUL, A PRISONER FOR CHRIST JESUS, AND
TIMOTHY OUR BROTHER,

Scripture

Observation

Prayer

Application



 TRANSLATIONS

 CROSS REFERENCES

 WORD STUDY

? QUESTIONS

1. What is Paul talking about when he says that he's a prisoner for Christ Jesus?

2. How would you describe being a prisoner for Christ?

3. Paul considers Timothy a "Christian brother." What do you think would qualify someone as a Christian brother/sister?

4. Do you have a relationship with someone whom you would consider a Christian brother/sister? If so, who & why?



A series of 21 horizontal lines for writing notes, spanning the width of the page.

DAY TWO

WEEK 1

PHILEMON 1:1b-2

^{1b}TO PHILEMON OUR BELOVED FELLOW WORKER
²AND APPHIA OUR SISTER AND ARCHIPPUS OUR
FELLOW SOLDIER, AND THE CHURCH IN YOUR
HOUSE:

Scripture

Observation

Prayer

Application





TRANSLATIONS



CROSS REFERENCES



WORD STUDY

? QUESTIONS

1. What does the word "beloved" mean?
2. The letter is not only addressed to Philemon but a few others including a church that meets at his home. Why do you think Paul addressed him along with a group instead of privately?
3. During Paul's time, church buildings as we know them today did not exist so people had to meet in their homes. What would "having church" or fellowship in your home look like today?



NOTES



DAY THREE

WEEK 1

PHILEMON 1:3

GRACE TO YOU AND PEACE FROM GOD OUR FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Scripture

Observation

Prayer

Application



 TRANSLATIONS

 CROSS REFERENCES

 WORD STUDY

? QUESTIONS

1. Why should we give grace to other people?
2. How can you extend grace to someone you know this week? Keep a journal of your progress.
3. Do you believe grace and peace always go hand-in-hand?
4. Why did Paul mention both God the Father and God the Son (Jesus Christ)?



DAY FOUR

WEEK 1

PHILEMON 1:4

I THANK MY GOD ALWAYS WHEN I REMEMBER YOU
IN MY PRAYERS,

Scripture

Observation

Prayer

Application



 TRANSLATIONS

 CROSS REFERENCES

 WORD STUDY

? QUESTIONS

1. Who in your life have you given God thanks for and why?
2. Have you noticed a transition in the way that you pray for someone?
3. Write a prayer to God giving thanks for someone else not mentioned above in question one. Use the next page if you need more space.





DAY FIVE

WEEK 1

PHILEMON 1:5

BECAUSE I HEAR OF YOUR LOVE AND OF THE FAITH THAT YOU HAVE TOWARD THE LORD JESUS AND FOR ALL THE SAINTS,

Scripture


Observation

Prayer

Application



 TRANSLATIONS

 CROSS REFERENCES

 WORD STUDY

? QUESTIONS

1. Who in your life displays love towards other people like no one you've ever seen before?

Name at least three people that you can show more love too.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2. Who in your life do you admire because they have a strong faith in God?

3. If your closest friends and acquaintances were asked about your reputation of love and faithfulness, what would they say?

4. How can you build on your faith in God?



A series of horizontal lines for writing notes, consisting of 21 lines spaced evenly down the page.

**I ALWAYS THANK
MY GOD WHEN I
REMEMBER YOU IN
MY PRAYERS.**



PHILEMON

WEEK TWO

DAY ONE

WEEK 2

PHILEMON 1:6

AND I PRAY THAT THE SHARING OF YOUR FAITH
MAY BECOME EFFECTIVE FOR THE FULL
KNOWLEDGE OF EVERY GOOD THING THAT IS IN
US FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST.

Scripture

Observation

Prayer

Application



 TRANSLATIONS

 CROSS REFERENCES

 WORD STUDY

? QUESTIONS

1. How do you know if the sharing of your faith has become effective?

What does ineffective faith look like to you?

2. Write about a time you have seen yours or someone else's faith be effective. Use the next page if you need more space.

3. What "good things" are in you to share with others for the sake of Christ? It is perfectly okay to celebrate how wonderful God has created you!

Who can share your faith with this week that may need to hear it most?



DAY TWO

WEEK 2

PHILEMON 1:7

FOR I HAVE DERIVED MUCH JOY AND COMFORT FROM YOUR LOVE, MY BROTHER, BECAUSE THE HEARTS OF THE SAINTS HAVE BEEN REFRESHED THROUGH YOU.

Scripture

Observation

Prayer

Application



 TRANSLATIONS

 CROSS REFERENCES

 WORD STUDY

? QUESTIONS

1. Paul is experiencing joy and comfort in prison from people like Philemon. Who in your life brings you joy and comfort during tough times? This can be more than one person.

What do they say or do that makes you feel this way?

2. What does "refreshed" mean to you?

3. Have you been "refreshed" by someone else's love? If so, who and how?



DAY THREE

WEEK 2

PHILEMON 1:8-9

⁸ACCORDINGLY, THOUGH I AM BOLD ENOUGH IN CHRIST TO COMMAND YOU TO DO WHAT IS REQUIRED, ⁹YET FOR LOVE'S SAKE I PREFER TO APPEAL TO YOU—I, PAUL, AN OLD MAN AND NOW A PRISONER ALSO FOR CHRIST JESUS

Scripture

Observation

Prayer

Application





TRANSLATIONS



CROSS REFERENCES



WORD STUDY

? QUESTIONS

1. Can you think of when you tried to use power and position versus a time you served with love? How did the results compare?

Is it possible to revisit that situation and extend more grace and love?

2. Write a prayer asking God for guidance with your actions towards others on a separate piece of paper or on a device. Keep this prayer somewhere you will see it frequently as a reminder to lead with love.

DAY FOUR

WEEK 2

PHILEMON 1:10

I APPEAL TO YOU FOR MY CHILD, ONESIMUS,
WHOSE FATHER I BECAME IN MY IMPRISONMENT.

Scripture

Observation

Prayer

Application



 TRANSLATIONS

 CROSS REFERENCES

 WORD STUDY

? QUESTIONS

1. Think about a time when you should have spoken on someone else's behalf. Briefly, write out that story below. Use the next page if you need more space.

How do you feel your advocacy could've made a difference in their outcome?

2. What do you think happened between Onesimus and Paul for Paul to become an advocate for Onesimus' character? Use your imagination.

DAY FIVE

WEEK 2

PHILEMON 1:11-12

(FORMERLY HE WAS USELESS TO YOU, BUT NOW HE IS INDEED USEFUL TO YOU AND TO ME.) I AM SENDING HIM BACK TO YOU, SENDING MY VERY HEART.

Scripture

Observation

Prayer

Application





TRANSLATIONS



CROSS REFERENCES



WORD STUDY

? QUESTIONS

1. Compare and contrast these two words.

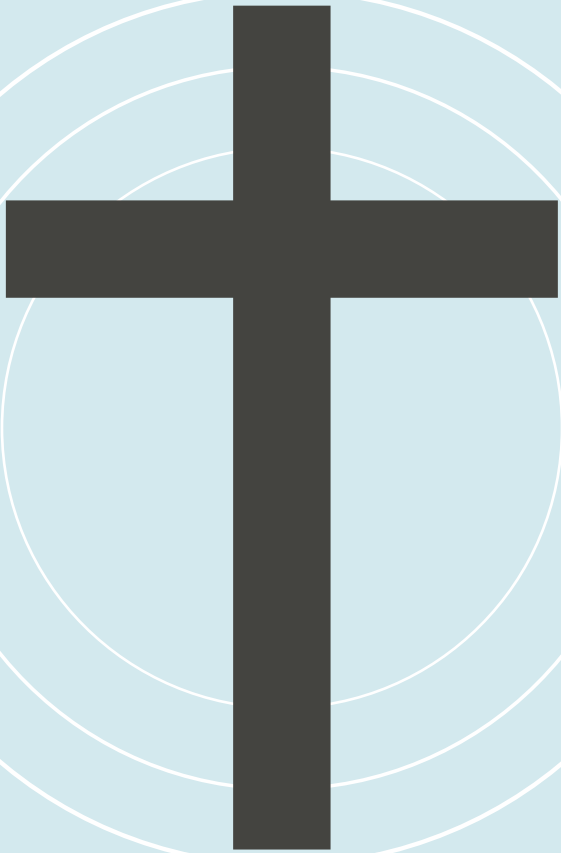
Useless		Useful

2. Here, Paul is being an advocate for Onesimus about a shift in his life. How has God been an advocate for you during a shift in your life?

Did that advocacy come in the form of a person or an opportunity? Explain below and use the next page if you need more space.



THE SAINTS HAVE BEEN REFRESHED THROUGH YOU.



PHILEMON

WEEK THREE

DAY ONE

WEEK 3

PHILEMON 1:13-14

¹³I WOULD HAVE BEEN GLAD TO KEEP HIM WITH ME, IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT SERVE ME ON YOUR BEHALF DURING MY IMPRISONMENT FOR THE GOSPEL,¹⁴BUT I PREFERRED TO DO NOTHING WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT IN ORDER THAT YOUR GOODNESS MIGHT NOT BE BY COMPULSION BUT OF YOUR OWN ACCORD.

Scripture

Observation

Prayer

Application





TRANSLATIONS



CROSS REFERENCES



WORD STUDY

? QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever taken someone in as your own family? This can be physically in your home or in a supportive nature outside of your home. What encouraged you to do that? How was the experience? Use the next page if you need more space.

2. What does the word "integrity" mean to you?

How important is integrity to you?



DAY TWO

WEEK 3

PHILEMON 1:15-16

¹⁵FOR THIS PERHAPS IS WHY HE WAS PARTED FROM YOU FOR A WHILE, THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE HIM BACK FOREVER,¹⁶NO LONGER AS A BONDSERVANT BUT MORE THAN A BONDSERVANT, AS A BELOVED BROTHER—ESPECIALLY TO ME, BUT HOW MUCH MORE TO YOU, BOTH IN THE FLESH AND IN THE LORD.

Scripture

Observation

Prayer

Application





TRANSLATIONS



CROSS REFERENCES



WORD STUDY

? QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever cut people out of life that you felt hindered your personal growth?

How do you feel they were holding you back?

How did you change, if at all, after removing them from your life?

Would you be able to accept that person back into your life today if you could see evidence of change? If so, what would be the steps to make this happen?

2. Read John 15:12-17.

DAY THREE

WEEK 3

PHILEMON 1:17

SO IF YOU CONSIDER ME YOUR PARTNER,
RECEIVE HIM AS YOU WOULD RECEIVE ME.

Scripture

Observation

Prayer

Application



 TRANSLATIONS

 CROSS REFERENCES

 WORD STUDY

? QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think it is difficult for us to receive people the same way Christ receives us?
2. Paul was confident in Philemon's trust in him. Do those close to you have the same trust in you?
3. Write a prayer of forgiveness below. Use the next page if you need more space.



A series of 21 horizontal lines for writing notes, spaced evenly down the page.



DAY FOUR

WEEK 3

PHILEMON 1:18-19

¹⁸IF HE HAS WRONGED YOU AT ALL, OR OWES YOU ANYTHING, CHARGE THAT TO MY ACCOUNT.¹⁹I, PAUL, WRITE THIS WITH MY OWN HAND: I WILL REPAY IT—TO SAY NOTHING OF YOUR OWING ME EVEN YOUR OWN SELF.

Scripture

Observation

Prayer

Application





TRANSLATIONS



CROSS REFERENCES



WORD STUDY

? QUESTIONS

1. Was someone instrumental in your salvation? Who was it and what happened?

2. If you are able, contact that person to reminisce. If you are not able, write a prayer thanking God for their impact. Use the next page if you need more space.







SO IF YOU CONSIDER ME
YOUR PARTNER, **RECEIVE HIM**
AS YOU WOULD RECEIVE ME.

PHILEMON

WEEK FOUR

DAY ONE

WEEK 4

PHILEMON 1:20

YES, BROTHER, I WANT SOME BENEFIT FROM YOU
IN THE LORD. REFRESH MY HEART IN CHRIST.

Scripture

Observation


Prayer

Application



 TRANSLATIONS

 CROSS REFERENCES

 WORD STUDY

? QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to "benefit in the Lord?"

2. How can you refresh someone else's heart in Christ?



DAY TWO

WEEK 4

PHILEMON 1:21

CONFIDENT OF YOUR OBEDIENCE, I WRITE TO YOU, KNOWING THAT YOU WILL DO EVEN MORE THAN I SAY.

Scripture

Observation

Prayer

Application



 TRANSLATIONS

 CROSS REFERENCES

 WORD STUDY

? QUESTIONS

1. Do you struggle with obedience? Why is it such a struggle?

2. Think about a time you went above and beyond for someone else. What did you do? How did it make you feel?

3. Think about a time someone went above and beyond for you. What did they do? How did it make you feel?



DAY THREE

WEEK 4

PHILEMON 1:22

AT THE SAME TIME, PREPARE A GUEST ROOM FOR ME, FOR I AM HOPING THAT THROUGH YOUR PRAYERS I WILL BE GRACIOUSLY GIVEN TO YOU.

Scripture

Observation

Prayer

Application





TRANSLATIONS



CROSS REFERENCES



WORD STUDY

? QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important to be hospitable to people?

2. Paul understood the power of prayer for others. List three people below that you will commit to pray for this week.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

DAY FOUR

WEEK 4

PHILEMON 1:23-24

²³EPAPHRAS, MY FELLOW PRISONER IN CHRIST JESUS, SENDS GREETINGS TO YOU, ²⁴AND SO DO MARK, ARISTARCHUS, DEMAS, AND LUKE, MY FELLOW WORKERS.

Scripture

Observation

Prayer

Application





TRANSLATIONS



CROSS REFERENCES



WORD STUDY

? QUESTIONS

1. On day one during week one, you shared your definition of being a prisoner in Christ. Who in your life would you consider a prisoner(s) in Christ and would be confident in sending other people to them for help? Why? Use the next page if you need more space.

2. Read James 1:22-25 in The Message (MSG) translation. What does James say about not being hearers but doers of the Word?

DAY FIVE

WEEK 4

PHILEMON 1:25

THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST BE WITH YOUR SPIRIT.

Scripture

Observation

Prayer

Application



 TRANSLATIONS

 CROSS REFERENCES

 WORD STUDY

? QUESTIONS

1. Rewrite Ephesians 2:8-10 in your own words.

2. Write a prayer to Jesus giving thanks for His grace in your life and for those around you. Use the next page if you need more space.

An anatomical illustration of a human heart, rendered in a light blue color. The heart is shown from a slightly elevated, anterior perspective, with its major blood vessels (aorta, pulmonary artery, and pulmonary veins) clearly visible. The heart is surrounded by a series of dashed white lines that radiate outwards, creating a sunburst or halo effect. The background is a solid, light blue color.

**refresh my heart
in Christ**

PHILEMON

REFLECTION

REFLECTION

1. What has this study taught you about grace towards others?

2. How has your prayer life changed since the beginning of this study?

3. What are some similarities and differences among the people you've listed throughout this study?

4. How has God's Word changed your faith in Him?

5. What's one thing you've learned from this study that you plan to pay it forward?

APPENDIX

RECOMMENDED TOOLS

This appendix includes a few tools that we use and highly recommend for anyone doing a Bible study.

YOUR BIBLE

You should ALWAYS start with YOUR OWN BIBLE! It's God's inspired Word and the best way to connect with Him without outside influences on your interpretation. Also, the more you use your Bible, the more comfortable you'll get with it and the more likely God's Word will be written on your heart. In addition to Scripture, your Bible usually includes one or more of the following: a table of contents, cross-references (usually in the margins), topical indexes, a concordance, maps, and more.

STUDY BIBLE

A study Bible is similar to your normal Bible but sometimes includes historical research and/or commentary. To expand upon the historical research, study Bibles typically include everything in your regular Bible PLUS other resources such as timelines, charts, outlines, more maps, and commentaries. Commentary is simply someone else's opinions. ALWAYS REMEMBER that you want to develop your own opinion before you look at someone else's.

ONLINE TOOLS

As great as a tangible Bible is to have in your grasp, online tools can also come in handy, whether you're using your computer or mobile phone. A few tools that we recommend are:

- Blue Letter Bible (www.blueletterbible.org)
- YouVersion Bible app (www.youversion.com)
- RightNow Media (www.rightnowmedia.org)
- Bible Project (www.bibleproject.com)
- Logos (www.logos.com)

"How can I be saved?"

If you or someone you know has never accepted Christ and has the desire to obtain the gift of salvation, use this prayer as a guide:

"Heavenly Father, I am so thankful for Your Word that has led me to salvation. Thank You, Jesus, for dying on the cross and rising on the third day to conquer sin, just for me. I humbly welcome You into my heart and turn my life over to You as my Lord and Savior. Please forgive my sins and reveal Your will for my life so I am able to share this precious gift of salvation with others. Help me to remove everything from my life that is not like You. I believe in You and trust You with all that I am. Thank You, Jesus, for eternal salvation. In Your name, I pray, Amen."

Once you pray to God for salvation through Christ and willingly turn away from sin (repentance), you will join God's eternal family. That's it! Please do not neglect to celebrate this monumental moment of your life with a fellow believer.

What the Bible says about salvation...

*"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."
- John 3:16*

"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." - Romans 5:1

"but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." - Romans 5:8

*"But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ-by grace you have been saved"
- Ephesians 2:4-5*

"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life." - 1 John 5:13





harvestministries.org