

# **New Testament Challenge**

**March 1 – May 2, 2009**

**United Baptist Church – Old Town, ME**

## **Small Group Questions – Week #7 – Starting April 12**

### **Quick Facts about Titus:**

- Titus was a Gentile who was probably converted through Paul's ministry.
- Titus accompanied Paul on his crucial 2<sup>nd</sup> visit to Jerusalem.
- Titus was Paul's trusted friend and sent on difficult assignments.
- The primary theme of the book is – Be devoted to what is good.
- Titus was written by Paul as a reminder of Christians to live so as to make the teaching about God our Savior attractive to all.

### **Quick Facts about Philemon:**

- At this point in history approximately 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire made up a critical component of Rome's social and economic structure. Runaways were considered criminals. Punishment could include death.
- Philemon, a member of the church at Colosse, was the owner of a slave, Onesimus, who was a runaway.
- Onesimus got to Rome, met Paul, and became a follower of Jesus.
- This letter is Paul's attempt to persuade Philemon to forgive the crime and receive Onesimus as he would have receive Paul himself.
- The primary theme of Philemon is radical forgiveness.

### **Quick Facts about Hebrews:**

- Hebrews seems to be a written sermon directed to Jewish Christians who were considering whether or not it was worth holding on to Christ any longer.
- It is clear they had suffered great persecution and may have been considering a return to Judaism as a way of lessening these tensions.
- Hebrews was written to encourage these beleaguered Christians to hold on, to persevere, and to hold unswervingly to the hoe we profess so they would not compromise Jesus and lose the blessing he has won for them.
- Hebrews is a marvelous portrait of Jesus Christ. It shows him to be superior over the prophets, angels, Moses, priests and the whole Old Testament system.

### **Devoted to What is Good (Titus)**

1. In what situation do you least exhibit your faith: In a checkout line? In a fender bender? After a tough day? At the company party? In athletics? Something else?

2. What do you notice about the list of leadership qualifications given in Titus? Why are they important? Which one do you need to work on most?
3. What does Paul have to say about the importance of mentors?
4. What do we learn about God's character?

### **Radical Forgiveness (Philemon)**

1. What do you learn about Onesimus in this letter?
2. What do you learn about Philemon?
3. Does the fact that Onesimus has become a Christian lessen the seriousness of his crime?
4. What does Paul want Philemon to do?
5. When do you feel obligated to forgive someone: When they confess their sin? When they change their behavior? When someone else intercedes for them?
6. Is there someone you might serve as a "Paul" in bringing about reconciliation?

### **Jesus – Superior in Every Way (Hebrews 1-7)**

1. What does this passage teach about angels?
2. What is the relationship of Jesus to angels? What is our relationship to angels?
3. How is our relationship to God different from His relationship with angels?
4. How does Jesus compare to Moses?

### **Jesus – Our Complete Sacrifice (Hebrews 10)**

1. Why is the law insufficient to produce holiness?
2. What is one positive function of animal sacrifice?
3. How did Jesus' one-for-all sacrifice make future sacrifices unnecessary?
4. In the context of verse 14, in what sense are Christians already made perfect, while still in the process of being made holy?
5. How much of your time is spent with a gnawing and vague sense of guilt? What does this chapter have to say to you?

### **Faith (Hebrews 11)**

1. As you consider the people in your community group, what's one positive adjective you would use to describe each person?
2. How is faith described?
3. Why is Abel's sacrifice seen as better than Cain's (see Genesis 4:1-12)?
4. Which example of faith gives you the greatest understanding of faith?
5. How do verses 29-40 encourage you in light of your own suffering and the questions that suffering brings to mind?
6. Who are some contemporary heroes of faith that inspire you?
7. What are some verbs that describe your present level of faith?