



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Session 13: Restoration

Suggested Week of Use: November 28, 2021

Core Passage: Philemon 8-21

News Story Summary

For fifty years, John Spencer, a North Carolina veteran, lived with the stigma of an “other than honorable discharge.” Along with the shame that Spencer felt, his discharge status left him unable to access military health care and other benefits. John Brooker, Director of the Military and Veterans Law Clinic at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, heard about Spencer’s story. Brooker and his law students examined health and military records which eventually led to an appeal that found no serious misconduct on behalf of Spencer and no valid reason for the type of discharge he had received. Spencer’s records were upgraded to “honorable” making him eligible for benefits, and he was awarded the Purple Heart, his combat infantryman badge, and the Vietnam Gallantry Cross.

For more about this story, search “Law students help restore honorable discharge for Spencer”.

Focus Attention

To supplement the Suggest idea under Focus Attention, after the group has had the opportunity to share a life experience regarding forgiveness of an offense, ask them to read the news story about John Spencer. Lead the group to discuss John Spencer’s reaction to the news of his restoration.

Summarize and Challenge

To supplement the Conclude idea under Summarize and Challenge, after discussing the triangle of characters from today’s study, apply the same questions to the Spencer news story. Ask: *What role did each (students, Mr. Spencer, military review) play? What steps did each take towards restoration? How do the steps taken on behalf of Mr. Spencer compare to the steps taken on behalf of Philemon?*