

Peacemaking Primer

A 3-Week Introduction to Peacemaking

The Bible is a story of a peacemaking God. From the very beginning, God has been creating peace, and though we make choices that disrupt that peace, God continues to call us back to repentance and restoration. He sent Jesus as the ultimate Peacemaker, and if we claim to follow Christ, we are also called to be peacemakers. Over the next 3 weeks, we invite you to engage with daily content that will help you to understand what it means to be a peacemaker and how you can join in with God's restoration of a broken world.

Week 1: Peacemaking is Essential to Discipleship

Sunday

We heard Vanessa Stricker talk about how *Peacemaking is Essential to Discipleship*. If you weren't able to join us, make sure to check out the recording [here](#).

Reflect:

- What is a “dividing wall of hostility” that you have constructed or supported?
- How might God be calling you to tear down that wall and begin to hold the tension of the goodness and brokenness that exists?
- What area of injustice breaks your heart the most?
- How can you join in with the work of restoration in that area?

Monday

Take a few minutes to watch this short video from the Bible Project on the Hebrew word shalom, which is translated as peace.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLYORLZOaZE>

Reflect:

How is the meaning of shalom different from how you have understood peace in the past?

Tuesday

Read Ephesians 2:11-22

¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)—¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Reflect:

Sometimes we focus more on the part of the gospel that talks about an individual being reconciled to God. How does it change your understanding of the gospel and following Jesus when you consider that Jesus’ life and death was also about creating a new, reconciled humanity?

Wednesday

Read this excerpt from John Stott’s commentary on Ephesians 2...

“It is simply impossible, with any shred of Christian integrity, to go on proclaiming that Jesus by his cross has abolished the old divisions and created a single new humanity of love, while at the same time we are contradicting our message by tolerating racial or social or other barriers within our church fellowship. I am not

saying that a church must be perfect before it can preach the gospel, but I am saying that it cannot preach the gospel while acquiescing in its imperfections.

We need to get the failures of the church on our conscience, to feel the offence to Christ and the world which these failures are, to weep over the credibility gap between the church's talk and the church's walk, to repent of our readiness to excuse and even condone our failures, and to determine to do something about it. I wonder if anything is more urgent today, for the honour of Christ and for the spread of the gospel, than that the church should be, and should be seen to be, what by God's purpose and Christ's achievement it already is – a single new humanity, a model of human community, a family of reconciled brothers and sisters who love their Father and love each other, the evident dwelling place of God by his Spirit. Only then will the world believe in Christ as Peacemaker. Only then will God receive the glory due to his name."

Reflect:

What are some of the "failures of the church" that have caused "the credibility gap between the church's talk and the church's walk"?

What would "a family of reconciled brothers and sisters who love their Father and love each other" look like?

Thursday

Read this quote from Osheta Moore in her book *Shalom Sistas...*

"Shalom is the breadth, depth, climate, and smell of the kingdom of God. It's a counter-story, with nothing missing and nothing lost for everyone who reads it. We become peacemakers when we, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, catch glimpses of shalom, and pull our friends to stand in our line of vision so that they too can see the beauty of the kingdom...We can all be peacemakers because we can all seek and access the love of God to heal our broken places."

Reflect:

We can only bring shalom to the world around us when we have experienced it ourselves. What broken places has God healed in your life? What broken places still need to be healed?

Friday

Choose one of the following verses to meditate on and call to mind any time that you are feeling anxious or angry or when you need a reminder of God's desire to bring about his shalom. Consider using it as a breath prayer in which you take deep breaths as you repeat the verse to yourself.

Ephesians 2:14a - Jesus himself is our peace.

Isaiah 26:3 - You will keep in perfect peace the one whose mind is steadfast, because they trust in you.

Matthew 5:9 - Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Reflect:

What might God want to say to you through this verse?

Week 2: Peacemaking in Local/Global Contexts

Sunday

We heard from Matt Stricker as he shared about *Peacemaking in Local & Global Contexts*. If you weren't able to join us, make sure to check out the recording [here](#).

Reflect:

- What area of injustice breaks your heart the most?
- How can you join in with the work of restoration in that area?

Monday

Watch this short video from Global Immersion about the four practices of everyday peacemaking: See, Immerse, Contend, Restore.

<https://vimeo.com/231609790>

Reflect:

Which phrase stands out to you most? What seems most challenging?

Tuesday

Read Matthew 16:24-26...

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?

Reflect:

There is a cost involved with following Jesus and being a peacemaker. Sometimes that cost stops us from truly engaging in the work that God has given us to do. What barriers are stopping you from embracing your call to be a peacemaker? What might God be calling you to release?

Wednesday

In light of the holiday that just passed and the current state of our nation, watch this video of five descendants of Frederick Douglass reading excerpts of his speech, *What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBe5qbnkqoM&feature=youtu.be>

If you'd like, you can read the entire speech here...

<https://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/what-to-the-slave-is-the-fourth-of-july/>

Reflect:

As we SEE and IMMERSE, there will be difficult truths that we have to face and grieve. While we honor what's good, we also have to be willing to confront the areas in which we are still far from the shalom that God desires. What difficult truths from this video do you need to lament today?

Thursday

Read this quote from Archbishop Desmond Tutu...

“Forgiving and being reconciled to our enemies or our loved ones are not about pretending that things are other than they are. It is not about patting one another on the back and turning a blind eye to the wrong. True reconciliation exposes the awfulness, the abuse, the hurt, the truth. It could even sometimes make things worse. It is a risky undertaking but in the end it is worthwhile,

because in the end only an honest confrontation with reality can bring real healing. Superficial reconciliation can bring only superficial healing.”

Reflect:

Is there an area of injustice in which you have turned a blind eye to the wrong for the sake of superficial reconciliation? What is one step you can take to begin to pursue “an honest confrontation with reality”?

Friday

Read this quote from Thomas Merton...

“There is a pervasive form of contemporary violence to which the idealist most easily succumbs: activism and overwork. The rush and pressure of modern life are a form, perhaps the most common form, of its innate violence. To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender to too many demands, to commit oneself to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything, is to succumb to violence. The frenzy of our activism neutralizes our work for peace. It destroys our own inner capacity for peace. It destroys the fruitfulness of our own work, because it kills the root of inner wisdom which makes work fruitful.”

Reflect:

There are so many areas of injustice in our world and so many needs in our community. While it is important to let our hearts break for all the things that break God’s heart, we also have to recognize our own limits. If we try to do too much, we will burn ourselves out. Part of peacemaking is allowing the Holy Spirit to lead you. Spend some time with God today and ask...

- How do you want me to engage in peacemaking today?
- What do I need to release today so that I can engage in the work to which you’ve called me?

Week 3: Peacemaking in Relationships

Sunday

We heard from Dave Wang as he shared about *Peacemaking in Relationships*. If you weren’t able to join us, make sure to check out the recording [here](#).

Reflect:

Which of the following points resonates with you the most?

- The ultimate goal for relationships is shalom.
- Shalom is only possible when both sides choose to speak the truth of themselves and heart the truth of the other.
- Shalom is often not possible even with those who are important to us.
- There is always risk in the work of peacemaking. The justification to pursue peace is not tied to the final outcome but rather to whether the relationship is worth fighting for.

Monday

Read Romans 12:9-21 to see what peacemaking looks like in relationships...

⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Reflect:

As you read through the Scripture, is there a specific verse or phrase that stands out for you? Meditate on that verse or phrase and ask God what he might want to speak to you through it.

Tuesday

Romans 12:18 say, "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

Reflect:

As Dave shared on Sunday, there are times that the shalom we seek is not possible because the other person may not be willing to do their part. It is important to discern when we need to actively pursue peace and when we need to accept that we have done all that we can.

Ask God these questions today...

- Is there a relationship where I need to be willing to speak some truth that I've been holding back?
- Is there a relationship where I need to accept that shalom may not ever happen? What might God want me to release in that relationship?

Wednesday

Watch these two short videos from Brené Brown...

Brené Brown on Empathy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw>

Brené Brown on Blame

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZWf2_2L2v8

Reflect:

One important aspect of peacemaking in relationships is empathy. We have to listen to the truth of the other and try to understand. Empathy leads to connection, in which both people feel seen, heard, and valued. Blame on the other hand, causes us to miss out on opportunities for empathy.

Think about a relationship in which you are experiencing conflict or misunderstanding. Has blame caused you to miss out on opportunities for empathy? How might you be able to seek understanding in that relationship?

Thursday

Read the following quotes and verses about enemies...

“Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence but also internal violence of the spirit. You not only refuse to shoot a man, but you refuse to hate him.” - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Matthew 5:43-44 – You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

An enemy is someone just outside your empathy. – Osheta Moore

Reflect:

Even when we have accepted that we might not ever see the shalom that we desire in a relationship, we are still called to love our enemies. That might look different for each relationship and situation, and it may include accountability, firm boundaries, or even a severing of the relationship. And yet, God does not want us to hold hate in our hearts for our enemies.

Is there someone that you have considered your enemy? Ask God what it might look like to love your enemy (even if it is from a distance)?

Friday

Read this prayer from Saint Francis of Assisi...

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

Reflect:

Commit to praying this prayer each morning for a week. How does it begin to shape your heart and your actions?

Thank you for joining us in these three weeks of peacemaking content. Remember, this is only the beginning. You are called to be a peacemaker, and it is a lifelong journey. Please see the list of additional resources below to continue learning and engaging.

Additional Resources:

Books

Mending the Divides: Creative Love in a Conflicted World by Jon Huckins & Jer Swigart

Shalom Sistas: Living Wholeheartedly in a Brokenhearted World by Osheta Moore

Disunity in Christ: Uncovering the Hidden Forces that Keep Us Apart by Christena Cleveland

Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation by Latasha Morrison

How to Be an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi

Raise Your Voice: Why We Stay Silent and How to Speak Up by Kathy Khang

Roadmap to Reconciliation 2.0: Moving Communities into Unity, Wholeness, and Justice by Brenda Salter McNeil

Thou Shalt Not Be a Jerk: A Christian's Guide to Engaging Politics by Eugene Cho

Talking Across the Divide: How to Communicate with People You Disagree With and Maybe Even Change the World by Justin Lee

Drop the Stones: When Love Reaches the Unlovable by Carlos Rodriguez

Peacemaking Organizations

Global Immersion

- Website: globalimmerse.org
- Facebook: [@globalimmerse](https://www.facebook.com/globalimmerse)
- Instagram: [@globalimmerse](https://www.instagram.com/globalimmerse)

Be the Bridge

- Website: bethebridge.com
- Facebook: [@beabridgebuilder](https://www.facebook.com/beabridgebuilder)
- Instagram: [@bethebridge](https://www.instagram.com/bethebridge)
- Podcast: Be the Bridge Podcast with Latasha Morrison

Christian Community Development Association (CCDA)

- Website: ccda.org
- Facebook: [@iamccda](https://www.facebook.com/iamccda)
- Instagram: [@iamccda](https://www.instagram.com/iamccda)

Preemptive Love

- Website: preemptivelove.org
- Instagram: [@preemptivelove](https://www.instagram.com/preemptivelove)

The Happy Givers

- Website: thehappygivers.com
- Instagram: [@thehappygivers](https://www.instagram.com/thehappygivers)

Other Leaders

Osheta Moore

- Website: osheta.com
- Facebook: [@shalominthecity](https://www.facebook.com/shalominthecity)
- Instagram: [@oshetamoore](https://www.instagram.com/oshetamoore)
- Podcast: Shalom Y'all

Dr. Brenda Salter McNeil

- Website: saltermcneil.com
- Facebook: [@drbrendasaltermcneil](https://www.facebook.com/drbrendasaltermcneil)
- Instagram: [@saltermcneil](https://www.instagram.com/saltermcneil)