

# Peacemaking

## 1. Introduction

-Share your heart and background with peacemaking.

-This teaching is an overview of Peacemaking for Families. Healthy relationships start in the home. Church really should be a FAMILY. We're not there yet, but that's what our value is and what we are growing towards.

-This is an overview, and not exhaustive. We are offering a class for deeper study. Beyond that, we will offer a study of "the Peacemaker" that has more advanced principals.

-We need to look honestly and say that our church has been hurt because we do not know how to handle the conflicts amongst us. We all need to be willing to submit ourselves in love to one another. We can ALWAYS do this, because ultimately we trust GOD.

## PRAYER

## 2. John 17:20-23

"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as we are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved me."

- Our unity confirms the Truth of the Gospel message.
- If we want to impact the world around us, we have to be united in Spirit, and no longer recognize one another according to the flesh.
- However, when the flesh does rise up, we need to recognize it and deal with it in the way God would intend us to. These are NOT formulas, but some principles for doing this. Peacemaking is usually messy and that does not mean that it was done wrong.

## 3. The Slippery Slope of Conflict

suicide-flight-denial-overlook-reconciliation-negotiation-mediation-arbitration-church accountability-assault-litigation-murder

### **Escape Responses**

-These are also called "peacefaking" responses. People who chose the escape responses are more interested in avoiding the conflict than resolving it.

-Escape is all about "me"; escapers are looking for what is non-threatening, easy, and feels temporarily better for them. Appearances are more important than reality.

### *Denial*

- Denial is pretending that a problem does not exist, or failing to address or resolve it. Often people who are operating under this escape mechanism will tell others that there is a problem, but will not engage the people needed to resolve it.

### *Flight*

- When denial no longer takes the pressure off, often people totally run from the situation. They break a relationship, quit a job, leave a church, or get divorced.
- Flight is not the same as taking a break. It can often be beneficial to take a period of time to “cool off”, pray, etc. Sometimes it is better to let the “sun go down on your anger”...escape is when you are avoiding or refusing to deal with an issue by actively fleeing from it.

### *Suicide*

- When there is a conflict, either internal or in relation to others, that can no longer be escaped, people sadly resort to suicide. Suicide is the perception that there is no hope, however we know that there is always hope in Christ.

### **Attack Responses**

-These are tactics used by those who are more interested in winning a fight than preserving a relationship.

-Attack is all about “you”. What “you’ve” done wrong, what can be blamed on others...others need to change in order for an attacker to be happy.

-Another word for attack responses is “peacebreaking”.

### *Assault*

- Not just physical...assault can come in the form of words. It is a lashing out: harsh criticism, nagging, verbal attacks, etc. that do not seek to resolve conflict, but to temporarily alleviate that attacker of the angry/resentful/hurt feelings.

### *Litigation*

- This is not commonly practiced, yet it is practiced more than we think. I’m not really going to touch much on this...it is complex and deserves deeper study than we can really get in to.

### *Murder*

- This could actually mean little murder...however most Christians will never physically murder someone. But Matthew 5:21-22 tells us that if we harbor bitterness, anger, or hatred in our hearts towards another, we are guilty of murder in God’s eyes.

*Overlook*- the offering of immediate forgiveness and forgottenness.

*Reconciliation*- confession, loving confrontation, forgiveness

*Negotiation*-a way of working through substantive matters, ex. “Where should holidays be spent?” “Should we buy a home or rent?” “Who does what chores?” etc.

*Mediation, Arbitration, Accountability*- these employ the entrance of others to help sort through a conflict.

## 4. Where does Conflict come from?

James 4:1-3

“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? **You want something, but don’t get it.** You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God [pray]. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives.”

The progression of an idol= desire, demand, idol

-Many of our desires are good and God given. He puts them inside us to pursue. The problem becomes when we begin to pursue that desire above God Himself. Let me explain: A godly desire can quickly become a demand:

“I want to my husband to open up and be more in tune with me”

“I want to use my God given abilities to advance my career”

“I want my adult children to be successful”

“I want to use my giftings to their fullest potential”

All good desires, however if we allow them to rule us, we will begin to see it as something that we need and deserve. The more convinced we become that we are entitled to a desire, the more that we begin to see as something that we need to be fulfilled. And that my friends, is an IDOL. Anything outside of God Himself that is needed for fulfillment is an idol.

-Can you think of a few idols? (list yours: people pleasing, peace, a balanced budget, etc.)

-One of the big problems with Idols is that they demand sacrifices. These sacrifices often come in the form of judgment and punishment. Like it says in James, we quickly turn on those that fail to satisfy our demands and expectations. Usually we employ an unhealthy response on the slippery slope such as lashing out verbally, gossiping, slamming doors, withholding affection, giving the “cold shoulder”, or ending a relationship.

## 5. A Biblical Framework for Peacemaking

### **Glorify God**

The number one question that we should ask in a conflict is: How can I glorify and honor God in this situation? This quickly takes the emphasis off of “me” or “you” (both focuses in peacekeeping and peacebreaking) and puts it back where it belongs: on Christ. Two very real things happen when we truly seek to glorify God in a conflict:

1. We are focused on the loving relationship that we share with the Father; it is easier to resist sinful responses such as bitterness, judgment, etc. We are in the Spirit, and there is not room for the flesh.
2. We will be less dependant on the responses of others. Even if someone responds negatively or not at all to our peacemaking efforts, we can have peace in the knowledge that our ultimate goal was to bring glory to God with our response. We no longer have to control the responses of others.

### **Get the Log Out of Your Own Eye**

Matthew 7:5

After we have focused fully on Christ, we can turn and look at ourselves. Not to justify our actions or to reaffirm our rightness, but to honestly examine our own wrongs in a situation. We need to be grieved over our own sin and mistakes. When we know that we have been forgiven, it is easier to extend the same forgiveness to others.

## **Go and Show Your Brother His/Her Fault/Gently Restore**

More on this later.

### **Go and Be Reconciled**

Through the death of Jesus Christ, we have been fully reconciled to God. Through Jesus' blood, our sins are not remembered and we are given complete and final forgiveness. And yet we so often refuse to extend this same forgiveness to others.

### 6. Overlook

Proverbs 12:16; 17:14; 19:11

-We need to deal with others the way that God deals with us (Psalm 103:8): If God hammered home on every sin and every failing, we would be utterly hopeless. Jesus convicts and speaks to us about areas of our lives, while overlooking others in love. He is not a nit-picker.

-There is no "neat list" of offenses that can be overlooked or not...but there are some guidelines that can help as you begin to sort this out:

1. You should not overlook something that does lasting damage to your relationship with the other.
2. You should not overlook an offense that does serious damage to God's reputation, to other people, or the offender.

-If an offense does not cross one of these lines, you should probably overlook it and trust in God to work in the person's life to bring about needed change.

### 7. Reconciliation

#### *Confession*

Not all 7 steps are always necessary.

**Address everyone involved**

**Avoid if, but, maybe**

**Admit Specifically**

**Apologize**

**Accept the consequences**

**Alter your behavior**

**Ask forgiveness and allow time**

#### *Confrontation*

Proverbs 12:18

If you have decided that an issue is big enough that it can not be overlooked and you have already gone through the first 2 G's (glorify God & get the log out), it is time for a loving confrontation.

-Be quick to listen. This involves waiting, attending, clarifying, reflecting, and agreeing.

-Show wisdom in when and how you choose to confront.

-Use wise words.

-Minister Christ.

-If needed, get help. There are times to back off for awhile and pray and in a sense, let the other person go his or her own way. There are also times to actively seek help.

#### *Forgiveness*

Matthew 6:12

-Forgiveness is an act of the will. It is an active process to choose to “cancel a debt”. It is not forgetting...it is choosing like the Father, not to remember.

1. I will not dwell on this forgiven offense.
2. I will not use this offense as a weapon against you.
3. I will not talk negatively to others about this forgiven offense.
4. I will not allow this offense to stand between us or hinder our relationships.

“Good thought, hurt you not, gossip never, friends forever”

### **Roadblocks to forgiveness**

-What is the problem is not with a lack of forgiveness, but a genuine lack of repentance from the offender? It may need to be brought up again, employing the 4 G's. You may have to choose forgiveness that has not been sought. You may need counsel.

-Expecting others to “earn forgiveness”. Matthew 18: the unmerciful servant.

-“The Replacement Principle”

### 8. Conclusion

- A lot of material, this is a big topic that we will spend a lifetime working through.

-How is God asking us to respond? Is there an idol that has ruled our hearts and caused conflict? Have we been in denial about a conflict or a sin issue in a friend's life, racking up bitterness and resentment? Have we refused to take the log out of our own eye? Are we caught in a cycle of peacefaking and breaking? Are we harboring unforgiveness?

-Prayer and confession.