



KEEPING THE PEACE

Matthew 5:9

- *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”* (Matthew 5:9 NIV)
- **One of the most important life skills we have to learn is conflict resolution.**
- **Peacemaking is not: 1) avoiding conflict, 2) appeasing people, or 3) acting like we care, but doing nothing to resolve conflict.**
- **When there is unresolved conflict in our lives it:**
 - **Blocks our fellowship with God**
 - *“If someone says, ‘I love God,’ but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don’t love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see?”* (1 John 4:20)
 - **Keeps our prayers from being answered**
 - *“Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. . . . Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered.”* (1 Peter 3:7)
 - **Stymies our happiness**
 - *“Those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.”* (James 3:18)
 - **We will reap what we sow in our lives (Galatians 6:7).**
- **One of the proofs that we are a *Child of God* is that we want to become a *Peace-maker* rather than a *Peace-breaker*.**
- ***What can we do to become a Peace-maker?***

Becoming A ‘Peace-maker’ Requires:

MAKING THE FIRST MOVE

- Jesus - *“If you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar . . . and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.”* (Matthew 5:23-24)
- **Many people practice procrastination or avoidance when it comes to reconciling broken relationships.**
- **It takes intention to resolve broken relationships, so the only way to resolve conflict is to face it and deal with it.**
- **Fear is what keeps most people from striving to resolve a broken relationship.**

- *“The man and his wife . . . hid from the LORD God among the trees. Then the LORD God called to the man, ‘Where are you?’ He replied, ‘I heard You walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.’”* (Genesis 3:8-10)
- **We’re often afraid of being vulnerable or exposed - which causes us to become distant, demanding and defensive.**
- *“God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but a spirit of power, and love and self-discipline.”* (2 Timothy 1:7)
- **We need to rely upon the Lord’s power to overcome our fears so we can move to reconcile our broken relationships.**

Becoming A ‘Peace-maker’ Requires:

ASKING GOD FOR WISDOM

- *“If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and He will give it to you.”* (James 1:5)
- **The Lord will help us know when to approach the other person, where to approach them, and how to approach them.**

Becoming A ‘Peace-maker’ Requires:

ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR WRONGS

- **Even if the conflict is 99% of the other person’s fault, we need to start with our flaws and faults.**
- **Self-centeredness is always one of the major causes of conflict.**
- *“What causes fights and quarrels and conflict among you? They are caused by the selfish desires that are continually at war inside you.”* (James 4:1)
- **When we’re at peace on the *inside*, most of what happens on the *outside* doesn’t trouble us in significant ways.**
- **Immaturity and selfishness, not incompatibility, is what causes marriages to fail.**
- **Pride is also a major cause of conflict in a relationship.**
- *“Pride only leads to arguments.”* (Proverbs 13:10)
- **When we can say, “I have to share the blame, I’ve been thinking primarily of myself,” we are able to remove the log jam that keeps us from reconciling relationships.**
- **Even the best have *blind spots* or weaknesses in our lives.**
- Jesus - *“Why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own? . . . Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye.”* (Matthew 7:3, 5)

Becoming A ‘Peace-maker’ Requires:

LISTENING TO THE OTHER PERSON’S PERSPECTIVES

- *“Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.”* (James 1:19)
- **There is always *hurt* when there is a conflict, because our emotions become so engaged.**
- **The people who need our love the most are those who deserve it the least.**

- **When people feel like they're not being listened to, they become angry.**
- **We need to always listen before speaking and assessing blame (James 1:19).**
- *"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 2:4-5)
- **Becoming more focused on others' hurts and needs over our hurts and needs helps us to resolve conflict.**
- *"We should all be concerned about our neighbor and the good things that will build his faith."* (Romans 15:2 GW)

Becoming A 'Peace-maker' Requires:

SPEAKING THE TRUTH LOVINGLY

- *"We will speak the truth in love."* (Ephesians 4:15)
- **When we say things offensively, they will be received defensively - (we are never persuasive when we're abrasive).**
- *"The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."* (Proverbs 12:18 NIV)
- **Certain words should never be used in a marriage or relationship if we want that relationship to survive and thrive.**
- *"Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them."* (Ephesians 4:29)

Becoming A 'Peace-maker' Requires:

FOCUSING ON THE PROBLEM RATHER THAN THE BLAME

- **We need to attack the problems rather than one another.**
- *"Now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language."* (Colossians 3:8)
- **Whenever we focus on fixing the blame, rather than fixing the problem, we wind up wasting energy, hurting the other person, and damaging the relationship further.**

Becoming A 'Peace-maker' Requires:

PURSUEING RECONCILIATION RATHER THAN RESOLUTION

- **Resolution requires resolving every disagreement - which is virtually impossible for us to do.**
- **Reconciliation involves mending the relationship even when we don't agree on everything.**
- **When we focus on reconciliation in broken relationships, sometimes the issues become insignificant.**
- *"God has given us this task of reconciling people to Him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And He gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation."* (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

- Jesus - *“God blesses those who are peacemakers. They will be called the children of God.”* (Matthew 5:9)
- **Peacemakers will have godly reputations on earth, and we will receive great rewards in Heaven.**
- *“Since we are God’s children, we will share His treasures – for everything God gives to His Son is ours, too.”* (Romans 8:17 TLB)
- **We can’t be *Peacemakers* until we have the peace of God in our hearts and lives (Romans 5:1).**

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- **What has caused much of the conflict that I’ve experienced with others in my life?**
- **Why should I seek to resolve my conflict with others?**
- **What are some steps that I need to take to resolve some unresolved conflict with others?**