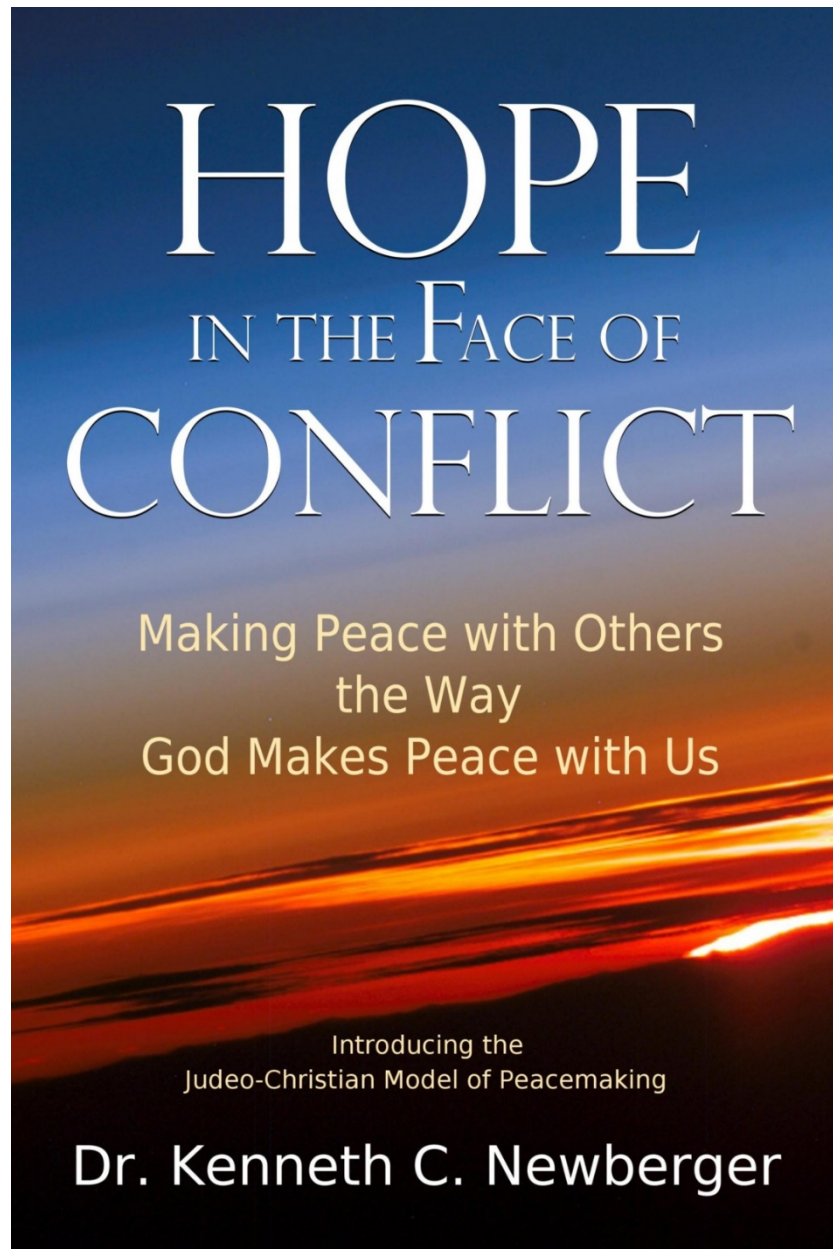


SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



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Hope in the Face of Conflict

Making Peace with Others the Way God Makes Peace with Us

Group Discussion

Chapter 1

The Key that Unlocks the Door to the Judeo-Christian Model of Peacemaking



Opening Bell

INSIDE THIS LESSON

- 1 Opening Bell
- 1 Scriptural Basis
- 1 Brief Discussion

Note to Participants

Numbers in parenthesis refer to the book page numbers in "Hope in the Face of Conflict."

Numbers in parenthesis refer to the book page numbers in "Hope in the Face of Conflict."

Note to Facilitator

Given the brevity of this chapter, discussion of chapter 2 should follow immediately after during the same session.

What do you consider to be the essential component(s) to the process of making peace? For example, two roommates are in a dispute. One is very neat. The other is not. What process would you advise them to follow to make peace? Is there a universal "key" that you can identify that would be applicable to this dispute and all other conflicts?



Scriptural Basis for This Stage

1. Read aloud Matthew 5:9. (15)
2. What does the phrase, "sons of God" mean? How would have the 1st century audience understood it? (15)
3. Do you agree with the premise of the book that if we want to be like God in the area of peacemaking ("like father, like son"), we need to ask and answer the question, "how does God make peace with us?" Why or why not?



Brief Discussion

In the first century, sons learned their trades from their fathers. If a person learns a skill by apprenticing, even today, how closely would you think his world would be patterned after his or her teacher? How closely should we pattern our process of peacemaking after God's pattern? Though this is early in this study, discuss what you think that pattern might entail.



Hope in the Face of Conflict

Making Peace with Others the Way God Makes Peace with Us

Group Discussion

Chapter 2

The Three Major Characteristics of the Judeo-Christian Model of Peacemaking

INSIDE THIS LESSON

- 1 Opening Bell
- 1 Brief Review
- 1 Scriptural Basis: The First Characteristic
- 1 Discussion
- 2 Scriptural Basis: The Second Characteristic
- 2 Discussion
- 2 Scriptural Basis: The Third Characteristic
- 2 Discussion
- 3 Application

Note to the Group Facilitator

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Note to Participants

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Opening Bell

If you had to venture a guess as to what might be three important features of a peacemaking process, what would they be? Why these three?



Brief Review

What is the foundation of the Judeo-Christian model of peacemaking (chapter 1)?



Scriptural Basis: The First Characteristic of the Model: Love is the First Foundation

- 1. Read John 3:16-17 aloud and the footnote associated with it on p. 19. What is God's attitude toward mankind?
- 2. How does the basis of the Judeo-Christian model of peacemaking differ from the goal of peacemaking efforts in the charter to the United Nations? (18)



Discussion

- 3. Why is justice alone insufficient to create peace?

**Discussion cont.**

4. God's love for sinners is relentless because love is at his very core. (19) Can the same thing be said about human beings? Is love central to our very existence? (If you have the time, read Appendix 1 of the book, "When Love Fails," to delve into this topic).
5. What does the concept "the will to embrace" mean? (20) What relevance does it have with respect to peacemaking? (20-21)
6. If you have ever found yourself entangled in conflict, before you began working your way out of it, were you willing to express any kind of loving concern for your adversary? Why or why not? How would such a foundational attitude at the beginning of a conflict effect its outcome?

**Scriptural Basis: The Second Characteristic of the Model: Reconciliation is the Goal**

7. Read 2 Cor. 5:19 aloud. With respect to rebellious mankind, God's love is directed toward the goal of reconciliation. Discuss how all three concepts (love, reconciliation, and mediation) are represented in this one verse?

**Discussion**

8. In conflict, do you find it easier to cut off relations than try to work the problem out? What is involved for true reconciliation to occur? Have you ever felt like you were forced to reconcile when there were still matters left unresolved? Can you give an example? (This subject will be examined in much greater detail later in the study). Can you give an example when you have been involved in a conflict and true reconciliation was the result. Why do you think it turned out so well?

**Scriptural Basis: The Third Characteristic of the Model: Mediation is the Means**

9. Read 1 Timothy 2:5 aloud. What does it mean to be a mediator? (24)
10. The concept of there being a mediator between God and people is not unique to the New Testament. It can also be found in the Old Testament. At the birth of the nation of Israel, who served as a mediator between God and the people? Read aloud Exodus 19:6 and Exodus 20:19. (25-26)



Scriptural Basis cont.

11. What mediatorial offices did God establish in the Old Testament? (23, 26) How did God reveal his will to the Israelites? How were people's sins addressed? How was God's law to be carried out?
12. From a Biblical perspective, what should a peacemaking mediator do? (27)



Discussion

13. Throughout the Old and New Testaments what means did God establish to make peace with mankind? In light of Mat 5:9 (see discussion in previous chapter) what implications should this pattern have for us?
14. Has anyone in the group ever been involved in a mediation process? (If so, what was the experience like? How effective was the mediator?) Has anyone in the group ever experienced mediation in a church? If the answer is no, why do you think this is?



Application

15. Chapter 2 concludes, "According to the Scriptures, God's decision to make peace with mankind is rooted in his love. The goal of the peacemaking process God established is to reconcile us to himself. The means by which he has chosen to accomplish this is through mediation." (28) Is there any reason why we shouldn't adopt the same three characteristics when we need to make peace with another? What changes would this require you to make in your thinking about conflict and peacemaking?



Hope in the Face of Conflict

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Way God Makes Peace with Us

Group Discussion

Chapter 3 The Conflict Between God and Mankind



Opening Bell

INSIDE THIS LESSON

- 1 Opening Bell
- 1 Brief Review
- 1 Scriptural Basis
- 2 Discussion
- 2 Application

Note to Participants

Numbers in parenthesis refer to the book page numbers in "Hope in the Face of Conflict."

For the most part, Christians do not have difficulty with the concept that God and mankind are in conflict. This is not necessarily the case with non-Christians. Why do you think this is the case? What does this say about their concept of God? Their concept of humanity? Why is it difficult to maintain the idea that every human being is basically good, untainted by evil? (32-34)



Brief Review

If God and mankind were not in conflict, there would be no need for God to make peace with us. Looking back to chapter 2, what are the three major characteristics of the Judeo-Christian model of peacemaking?



Scriptural Basis for This Stage

1. Describe the nature of God according to the Scriptures. (35-36)
2. Describe the nature of man according to the Scriptures. (36-40)
3. Describe "the Fall" of mankind. What was the original sin? (37-38)



Scriptural Basis cont.

4. What has been the result of the Fall? Does being sinful mean that human beings have no inherent goodness? Please explain. (38-40)
5. Read aloud any three of the texts found on p. 40.
6. Why does a person's sins bring that person into conflict with God? (41-42)
7. What is God's reaction to our sins against him? (42-43)



Discussion

8. What was life like for you before you made peace with God? In what particular manner had you turned away from God? At what point did you come to realize that you were heading in the wrong direction?
9. Miroslav Volf was a man who could not accept the concept of God's anger. What experience changed his mind? (42) Having been made in the image of God, does the anger we feel over injustice reflect the sense of what is right in all of us? Considering the holiness of God, why would it be impossible for God *not* to be angered by sin?
10. Why is the concept of God's righteous anger difficult for some people to accept?



Application

11. The reality of God's righteous anger is evidence that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not an impersonal force but a person. To what extent does this aspect of God's character actually affect your daily life? Is it a deterrent to sin? Should it be, and if so, *how* can God's anger against sin become a greater incentive for you not to commit it?
12. Given what we have studied thus far, especially chapters 2 and 3, if you were to share the gospel with a non-believer, what would be the major elements of your presentation?



Hope in the Face of Conflict

Making Peace with Others the Way God Makes Peace with Us

Group Discussion

Stage 1

The Aggrieved Party Initiates the Process by Contacting a Peacemaking Mediator



Opening Bell

INSIDE THIS LESSON

- 1 Opening Bell
- 1 Brief Review
- 1 Scriptural Basis
- 2 Like Father, Like Son
- 2 Discussion: Unresolved Conflict Needs Outside Intervention
- 3 Application for the Local Church
- 3 Closing Discussion

Note to the Group Facilitator

There may be more questions than there is time to address in your overall timeframe. Select as many questions as will best fit your schedule.

Note to Participants

Numbers in parenthesis refer to the book page numbers in "Hope in the Face of Conflict."



Brief Review

In the conflict between God and mankind, who is the aggrieved party & who is the offending party (chapter 3)?



Scriptural Basis for This Stage

1. In the four passages that are listed in the book for this stage, which side initiated peace, the aggrieved or the offending party? (52-53)
2. What was God's motive for sending the mediator? Was it for good or bad with respect to those with whom he was in conflict?
3. Would you think to bring in a peacemaker during a conflict? Why or why not? How do you think such a move would be viewed by your adversary? How should it be viewed?



Like Father, Like Son

In the same way God, the aggrieved party, initiated the process to make peace with humanity by sending his Son as mediator, so the aggrieved party initiates the process of making peace by contacting a qualified peacemaker. (53)



Discussion: Unresolved Conflict Needs Outside Intervention

1. Define the concept of closed systems. (54)
2. Explain how this concept applies to conflict.
3. Discuss the \$20 auction and related church cases. (55-56) What happened? What are some of the negative attitudes that developed within these “closed conflicts”?
4. How does the concept of closed conflict apply to churches? (56-57)
Read aloud the statements made by the two pastors. (57)
5. Have you had any similar experiences in your own life? If you are comfortable to do so, please share what occurred.
6. Why do you think most people don’t call upon the services of a peacemaker to help resolve their conflicts?
7. Who should initiate the peacemaking process and why? (57)
8. Why is conflict messy in terms of determining who is in the right and who is in the wrong? (58) From the standpoint of the peacemaker, does he or she need to make that determination when contacted by one of the sides? Why or why not? (59)
9. What makes Egypt’s President Anwar Sadat a profile in courage? (60-61) Why would courage be required in taking the first step of calling in a peacemaker?
10. The next time you become involved in ongoing conflict, how willing might you be to contact a peacemaking mediator? Does the fact that God sent his son to be the mediator to resolve the conflict between himself and mankind provide you greater assurance of the correctness of using this approach?

Application for the Local Church

1. What is the unrealistic expectation of congregants discussed on pages 62-63.
2. How does this expectation impact the handling of conflict? (62-63)
3. Describe the church conflict management process and its rationale on pages 63-65. What is the point of referring to the Great San Francisco earthquake of 1906? (63)
4. If you were visiting a church that had such a system in place, what would you think of that church's leadership?
5. Would you expect this church to be different from other's you've attended? Why or why not?
6. Review the ideal characteristics of a peacemaker mentioned on pages 65-66. Do you believe that you have all or most of them? What are your thoughts about learning to become a peacemaker?

Closing Discussion

1. Please summarize the major point of Stage 1, its basis and its rationale.
2. Is there any reason why the pattern of peacemaking that God established between himself and mankind would not be applicable for the church, your home, place of work, etc.? (see chapter 1)



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Group Discussion

Stage 2

The Peacemaking Mediator Immerses Himself or Herself in the Perspective of Each Side of the Conflict Aggrieved Party Initiates the Process

INSIDE

THIS LESSON

- 1 Opening Bell
- 1 Brief Review
- 1 Scriptural Basis
- 2 Like Father, Like Son
- 2 Discussion: Entering the Perspectives of the Parties
- 2 Closing Discussion

Note to the Group Facilitator

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Note to Participants

Numbers in parenthesis refer to the book page numbers in "Hope in the Face of Conflict."



Opening Bell

To people in group A, Rick is loud, obnoxious, and unapproachable. Group B, by contrast, say things about Rick such as, "Rick is just being Rick. He means no harm." What might contribute to the differing opinions about Rick between these two groups?



Brief Review of Stage 1

When two parties are in conflict, which one should take the first step to initiate the peacemaking process? Why?



Scriptural Basis for This Stage

1. Read Philippians 2:5-8, and any others you would like to read aloud on pages 73-74.
2. What do these texts say in terms of Jesus's identity? Was he fully immersed into the experience of both divinity & humanity? Referring back to the verses, please explain.
3. According to Hebrews 4:14-16, why does Jesus' solidarity with both God and mankind make him the ideal go-between for the two? (75)



Like Father, Like Son

In the same way Jesus was fully immersed in the identity, perspective, and experiences of both God and man as mediator between the two, so the peacemaking mediator immerses himself or herself in the perspective of each side of the conflict. (76)



Discussion: Entering the Perspectives of the Disputing Parties

1. What is the peacemaker's "first order of business" at the beginning of the process? (77)
2. Were you ever in the position where you had to build rapport? What did you do? Were you successful?
3. Do you think that Dr. Groopman's approach to building rapport is useful to a peacemaker when dealing with people in conflict? Why or why not? (77)
4. What is "Miles Law"? It would seem to show that we are more subjective in our thinking than we might otherwise realize. Do you agree with this law? Why or why not? (77-78)
5. Does "understanding of" necessarily mean "agreement with"? How does the distinction help peacemakers in their work? (78)
6. Review 1 Cor. 9:19-23. What do you think Paul meant by, "I became ... a Jew, under the law, outside of the law, weak, etc." Was Paul endorsing these different belief systems? What was he doing? (79)
7. Summarize the story of John Howard Griffin. What insight or insights does his experience provide for you in terms of the role of a peacemaker? (79-81)



Closing Discussion

1. Please summarize the major point of Stage 2, its basis and its rationale.
2. How would this stage of peacemaking that God established between himself and mankind be applicable in your home, church, place of work, and elsewhere?



Hope in the Face of Conflict

Making Peace with Others the Way God Makes Peace with Us

Group Discussion

Stage 3

The Peacemaker Learns from the Aggrieved Party How Justice Would Best Be Served

INSIDE THIS LESSON

- 1 Opening Bell
- 1 Brief Review
- 1 Introduction: The Absence of Justice
- 1 Scriptural Basis
- 2 Like Father, Like Son
- 2 Discussion: The Importance of Justice
- 2 Application for the Local Church
- 3 Closing Discussion

Note to the Group Facilitator

There may be more questions than there is time to address in your overall timeframe. Select as many questions as will best fit your schedule.

Note to Participants

Numbers in parenthesis refer to the book page numbers in "Hope in the Face of Conflict."

Opening Bell

Can you think of a time when you were treated unjustly? What was the circumstance? How did you feel about it? What happened in the end? What life lessons, if any, did you draw from this situation?

The Absence of Justice

What impact can the absence of justice in the face of evil have on a person's faith in God? (84-86) To what extent, if any, have you struggled with this issue?

Brief Review of Stage 2

What is "mediator immersion" and why is it important?

Scriptural Basis for This Stage

1. Read aloud these two illustrative texts: Ecclesiastes 12:14 and Hebrews 4:13 (87, 88).
2. What is the Biblical perspective on human evil and God's relationship to it? (87)

3. What impact has this Old and New Testament vision of God's justice had in dealing with social injustice in our world, such as in the U.S.A. or South Africa? (90-91)
4. What significance does this Biblical understanding of justice have for you? In what way, if any, does it impact your life?



Like Father, Like Son

In the same way God set forth a vision of ultimate justice for the sins we commit against him, so the peacemaker learns from the aggrieved party what they would consider a just outcome for the wrong they suffered. (91)



Discussion: Why Justice is So Important to Our Well-Being and to the Process of Making Peace

1. How do you define injustice? Would you add anything to the definition provided in the book? (92)
2. Why is justice “a basic human need” and so important to peaceful relationships? (92)
3. What do you think about Ronald Cummings's reaction when he learned of his daughter's abduction? (92).
4. Why do you think our initial ideas about justice often involve “overkill” and revenge? (94-95) Discuss this question in light of the story found on pages 93-94.
5. What should be a peacemaker's attitude toward the initial emotions and demands for justice made by an aggrieved party? (94, 96-97).
6. Would you be willing to share an incident out of your own about life how your initial reaction to injustice changed over time (either softened or hardened), and why?



Application for the Local Church

1. Though we often use the word “conflict” to describe what may be occurring in a given church, the word “injustice” is not often used. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
2. Does the concept that Christians engage in injustice surprise you? (98)

3. Summarize the injustices described in biblical examples found in four different first-century churches (99-101). What do you think was the basis for the injustice in each case?
4. Read aloud the middle paragraph on page 101, and then comment.



Closing Discussion

1. Please summarize the major lessons to be learned from this chapter on injustice and justice?
2. How would this stage of peacemaking that God established between himself and mankind be applicable in your home, church, place of work, and elsewhere?



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Making Peace with Others the Way God Makes Peace with Us

Group Discussion

Stage 4: Envisioning What Shalomic Peace Looks Like

The Peacemaker Helps the Parties Envision the Shalomic Peace that Could Be

INSIDE THIS LESSON

- 1 Opening Bell
- 1 Brief Review
- 1 Augustine's Insight
- 1 Review of Stage 3
- 1 Scriptural Basis
- 2 Like Father, Like Son
- 2 Discussion: Peacemaking Requires Vision
- 2 Application for the Local Church
- 3 Closing Discussion

Note to the Group Facilitator

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Note to Participants

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Opening Bell

Generally speaking, to what extent does one's vision of the future effect one's behavior in the present?

Augustine's Insight

Augustine observed that no one makes war without a larger vision of peace for which they are fighting. (104-105) If you have been in a what was the good end you were seeking?



Brief Review of Stage 3

Why is justice so foundational to peacemaking?



Scriptural Basis for This Stage

1. In your own words, how would you define "shalomic peace"? (105)
2. How did the events on Christmas day, 1914, in the midst of WWI, illustrate shalomic peace? (106-107)

3. Read Isaiah 11:5-9 aloud. (109) What does this passage tell you about the nature of shalomic peace?
4. At the time God gave these visions of shalomic peace, what was his relationship with mankind? (108-109)



Like Father, Like Son

In the same way God set forth a vision of shalomic peace that includes sinful mankind, so the peacemaker helps disputing parties paint a picture of shalomic peace that is inclusive of the other side. (109)



Discussion: Peacemaking Requires a Vision of Peace

1. When God set forth his vision of shalomic peace with us, mankind was in conflict with him. Yet his future vision was inclusive of us. Why is envisioning a future that involves peaceful relations with one's enemy so important to the peace process?
2. Why is the illustration between the Palestinians and Israelis on pages 111-112 instructive?
3. What term did Gottman coin when it came to repairing fractured marriages? (110) Why is this concept so important to making peace in a marriage or other situations?
4. At this stage, what must those who serve as peacemakers do to help the parties find a basis on which to build a new future together? How would a peacemaker do this?
5. Have you ever engaged in this process, either in a relationship you were in, or as a third party peacemaker? If so, describe the situation. What was the outcome?
6. For people or groups in conflict, could such a vision ever materialize without a concurrent vision of justice? (Stage 3). Please explain.



Application for the Local Church

1. Pages 113-119 provide a biographical study of the apostle Peter. The specific focus is on his prominent standing among the other disciples and his failure of leadership when he denied Christ. After the crucifixion and

resurrection of Jesus, it wasn't immediately clear what future role Peter would play among the disciples, if any. What was Jesus' vision for Peter? (118, 117)

2. Why was this vision instrumental in reconciling Peter to Jesus's other disciples as well as restoring him to his former position of prominence? (118-119)

3. How might have you handled Peter?

4. What are your thoughts about people's reactions to the fall of Ted Haggard? (119-120) What did you think of the third response, in particular?

5. What do you think about the way things ended at his church? Even though we know very little about the whole story, given what you do know, are you surprised by the way he was treated by his church? Why or why not?

6. Overall, what should our general attitude be toward fallen Christians? (121) What should be the overall vision that guides us? Does it make a difference if they are in a leadership role? Why or why not?



Closing Discussion

1. Please summarize the major lessons to be learned from this chapter on having a vision of peace.

2. How would this stage of peacemaking be applicable in your home, church, place of work, and elsewhere?



Hope in the Face of Conflict

Making Peace with Others the Way God Makes Peace with Us

Group Discussion

Stage 5: Humanizing One Side to the Other

The Peacemaker Helps the Parties in Conflict Understand that There are No Inherent Differences Between Them

INSIDE THIS LESSON

- 1 Opening Bell
- 1 Review of Stage 4
- 1 Scriptural Basis
- 2 Like Father, Like Son
- 2 Discussion: The Way People Treat Each Other
- 2 Application for the Local Church
- 3 General Application and Closing Discussion

Note to the Group Facilitator

There are more questions than there is time to address in your overall timeframe. Select as many questions as will best fit your schedule.

Note to Participants

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Opening Bell

What is the one thing that disappoints you most about people in general?



Brief Review of Stage 4

Why is justice so foundational to peacemaking?



Scriptural Basis for This Stage

1. The Scriptural basis for this stage is provided in chapter 3 (see pages 38-40). Read aloud two passages from page 40.
2. Read aloud the third paragraph on page 128.
3. What do these passage about human nature say about who we are?
4. Is there any basis for saying that one group of people are inherently better or worse than another?
5. How do you explain the differences that do exist between people? Where do you think upbringing, education, experience, culture fit into the equation?



Like Father, Like Son

In the same way God created humanity with no essential differences, so the peacemaker helps parties in conflict understand that there are no inherent differences between them. (128)



Discussion: How Can Some People Treat Other People So Badly & What Can Be Done About It?

1. Read aloud page 129-130 (including the footnotes).
2. Do you agree with Dinur's statement, "I saw I am capable to do this. I am capable exactly like he." (129) Why or why not?
3. According to what is written on page 13, what was the one difference between the Nazi's and the Jews?
4. Describe the process of dehumanization. (131)
5. What role and impact does dehumanization have in conflict? (131-132)
6. What must a peacemaker do to begin to make peace? (133)
7. What is the "reframing process" and why is it important? (134-138)
8. What are "two specifics" must a peacemaker engage in when seeking to reframe one person's view of another? (138)
9. What is your opinion of the way John Howard Griffin framed the white man who gave him a lift? (138-140)



Application for the Local Church

1. Does dehumanization occur in a local church? (140-141)
2. Why does such labeling hurt community building? (141)
3. Has labeling been a problem in any church you have been a part of? Please explain?

➡ General Application and Closing Discussion

1. If you are involved in a conflict, do you find yourself “dehumanizing” your adversary? Please explain.
2. Do you relate to C.S. Lewis’ statement on page 135. Do you find this much harder to do with others? If so, why?
3. What is the major lesson you have learned from studying this stage?
4. How is this stage of peacemaking applicable in your home, church, place of work, and elsewhere?



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Group Discussion

Stage 6: Seeing the Error of One's Ways

The Peacemaker Helps Offending Parties See the Error of Their Ways

INSIDE THIS LESSON

- 1 Opening Bell
- 1 Review of Stage 5
- 1 Scriptural Basis
- 2 Like Father, Like Son
- 2 Discussion: Approaches for People to Discern the Error of Their Ways
- 3 General Application and Closing Discussion

Note to the Group Facilitator

There may be more questions than there is time to address in your overall timeframe. Select as many questions as will best fit your schedule.

Note to Participants

Numbers in parenthesis refer to the book page numbers in "Hope in the Face of Conflict."

Opening Bell

What is the one thing that disappoints you most about people in general?



Brief Review of Stage 5

Why is humanizing one's opponent important to the peacemaking process?



Scriptural Basis for This Stage

1. What is the central concept behind the N.T. word, "repentance"? (144-145) Is it first and foremost an emotion or a mindset? What is the difference?
2. Why is it so difficult for people to admit that they have been wrong? (145)
3. The Old and New Testaments are filled with exhortations to repent. Why do you think many of these exhortations are so closely associated with God? In other words, why is a change of thinking not only associated with one's actions but with one's relationship with God? (146-149)



Like Father, Like Son

In the same way sinners are urged to change the erroneous thinking that has brought them into conflict with God, so the peacemaker helps offending parties see the error of their ways. (149)



Discussion: Approaches for People to Discern the Error of Their Ways

1. Summarize the presentation on “facilitated communication” outlined on pages 150-153.
2. What makes this story so stunning? (153-154) Why is it so useful when it comes to considering the error of our own ways?
3. The book identifies three factors that contribute to making wrong assessments: subjectivity, self-centeredness, and nonrational emotionality. Please summarize each. To what extent have you seen any of these factors play out in your own life?
4. The book identifies six ways a peacemaker can help parties get it right. (157-165) Identify and summarize each one. Discuss how you may have seen one or more of these techniques play out in your own experience.



General Application and Closing Discussion

Author Walter Wangerin Jr. wrote the following:

“In mirrors I see myself. But in mirrors made of glass and silver I never see the *whole* of myself. I see the me I want to see, and I ignore the rest. Mirrors that hide nothing hurt me. They reveal an ugliness I'd rather deny. Yow! Avoid these mirrors of veracity! My wife is such a mirror. When I have sinned against her, my sin appears in the suffering of her face. Her tears reflect with terrible accuracy my selfishness. My *self*! But I hate the sight, and the same selfishness I see now makes me look away. "Stop crying!" I command, as though the mirror were at fault. Or else I just leave the room. Walk away. Oh, what a coward I am, and what a fool! Only when I have the courage fully to look, clearly to know myself - even the evil of myself - will I admit my need for healing. But if I look away from her whom I have hurt, I have also turned away from her who might forgive me. I reject the very source of my healing. My denial of my sin protects, preserves, perpetuates that sin! Ugliness in me, while I live in illusions, can only grow the uglier.”

Please comment on Wangerin's statement. How would you relate it to the overall discussion of this stage of peacemaking?



Hope in the Face of Conflict

Making Peace with Others the Way God Makes Peace with Us

Group Discussion

Stage 7: Making a Genuine Apology

The Peacemaker Encourages the Offending Party to Verbally Apologize to the Aggrieved Party for Their Problematic Behavior

INSIDE THIS LESSON

- 1 Opening Bell
- 1 Review of Stage 6
- 1 Scriptural Basis
- 2 Like Father, Like Son
- 2 Discussion: Distinguishing a Genuine Apology from One that Falls Short
- 3 General Application and Closing Discussion

Note to the Group Facilitator

There may be more questions than there is time to address in your overall timeframe. Select as many questions as will best fit your schedule. Conversely, you may want to consider devoting two sessions to this topic given its importance.

Note to Participants

Numbers in parenthesis refer to the book page numbers in "Hope in the Face of Conflict."

Opening Bell

When was the last time you apologized to someone? If you are able and comfortable in doing so, briefly explain the details around the event. Was it easy or hard to do? Why?



Brief Review of Stage 6

Why is seeing the error of one's ways so important to the peacemaking process?



Scriptural Basis for This Stage

1. Is the word apology used in the Bible? What words are used? Do either of these words convey the meaning of remorse? (168. See also 144-145)
2. Even though remorse is not part of the definition of repent or confess, why does the author argue that be sorry for one's wrongdoing is a necessary component of the repentance and confession process? (168-169)
3. In the Old and New Testaments, what were the two ways people confessed their sins to God? (169-171)



Like Father, Like Son

In the same way a person's confession of sin to God is expected after repentance, so the peacemaker encourages the offending party to follow up the recognition of wrongdoing with a verbal apology to the injured party. (171)



Discussion: Distinguishing a Genuine Apology from One that Falls Short

1. What is your reaction to East Germany's first act of parliament? Do you think the apology was genuine? Why?
2. Are repentance and confession the same thing? Does repentance automatically lead to confession? How does the Woody Allen film illustrate the difference?
3. In general, what might we say about the genuineness of someone who says he/she is repentant for having done something wrong but refuses to confess or apologize for it to the appropriate party? (173, 175)
4. The text lists five inadequate apologies. (175-182) They are:
 - (a) The Non-Communicated apology
 - (b) The "Get-Out-of-Trouble" apology
 - (c) The Conditional apology
 - (d) The Excuse-filled apology
 - (e) The Bulletproof Vest apology

For each, identify the meaning of each one and explain how it falls short of a genuine apology. Feel free to discuss the illustrations.

5. Can you recall instances from your own life when you either saw or engaged in one of the above "apologies." Please explain.
6. What are the three essential components of a genuine apology? (182-183)
7. Why do apologies need to be made in person? (183-184) Have you ever received an apology when the other person purposely avoided having to make it in person? Please explain. Conversely, having you ever purposely made an apology that was not in person? Why? How effective are such apologies?
8. Why is a face-to-face, genuine apology so essential to peacemaking? (185-186)

9. Why is offering a genuine apology so difficult? (186-188)
10. How do you know when someone is really sorry? (189-192)
11. What should a peacemaker do to help genuine apologies become a reality? (192-193)

General Application and Closing Discussion

1. How often do you think people confess their sins to God but fail to apologize to the person against whom the wrong was committed?
2. How often do you think people confess / apologize for something without actually being genuinely repentant?
3. Can you share any stories where you either gave a genuine apology or received one? What difference did it make to the relationship? Why are genuine apologies so important in the peacemaking process?
4. What is the most important concept you learned in this study?



Hope in the Face of Conflict

Making Peace with Others the Way God Makes Peace with Us

Group Discussion

Stage 8: Making Reparations

The Peacemaker Encourages the Offending Party to Make the Injured Party Materially Whole Again

INSIDE THIS LESSON

- 1 Opening Bell
- 1 Review of Stage 7
- 1 Scriptural Basis
- 2 Like Father, Like Son
- 2 Discussion: Insights into the Nature and Timing of Forgiveness
- 3 General Application and Closing Discussion

Note to the Group Facilitator

Discussion of this stage may not take a full session. Please plan accordingly.

Note to Participants

Numbers in parenthesis refer to the book page numbers in "Hope in the Face of Conflict."

Opening Bell

Have you ever received a verbal apology after you were damaged in some way, but felt that such words alone were not sufficient? Please share the situation, and why do you think you felt that way?

Brief Review of Stage 7

Why is making a genuine apology so important to the peacemaking process?

Scriptural Basis for This Stage

1. The Hebrew word "shalem" is closely associated with the Hebrew word, "shalom" (peace). What does shalem mean? Why does it make sense that these two words are so closely related? (196)
2. On p. 196 it is states, "Establishing justice where there was injustice and bringing restoration where there has been loss is a significant component of what shalomic peace is all about." How is this statement carried out in the texts that are listed in the pages that follow?
3. Why is making reparations evidence that the person's previous apology was genuine? (199)



Like Father, Like Son

In the same way God expects those who sinned against him and hurt others to make reparations to those harmed, so the peacemaker encourages the offending party to make the injured party materially whole again. (200)



Discussion: The Relevance of Reparations to the Peacemaking Process

1. Summarize the Cathleen Crowell Webb story. (200-204) Why is this account an excellent example of making reparations?
2. How are reparations related to justice? (204)
3. How are repentance, confession, and repair related? (205)
4. Comment on Sam Anta's attitude and actions after his criminal conviction. (205-206)
5. What options are available when it is not possible to make the injured party whole again? (206-208)
6. What is the peacemaker's role in this stage? (208-209)



General Application and Closing Discussion

1. We are familiar with people suing for damages in civil court. Do you know of any cases or have you been involved in any non-legal situation where reparations were part of the apology? If so, what was the effect on the relationship? What about if there was an apology but no reparations? What effect did that have on the relationship?
2. What is the most important lesson you gleaned from this study?
3. Any final thoughts?



Hope in the Face of Conflict

Making Peace with Others the Way God Makes Peace with Us

Group Discussion

Stage 9: Exercising Faith

The Disputants Trust the Peacemaker to Make Peace Between Them



Opening Bell

INSIDE THIS LESSON

- 1 Opening Bell
- 1 Review of Stage 8
- 1 Scriptural Basis
- 2 Like Father, Like Son
- 2 Discussion: The Relevance of Faith
- 3 General Application and Closing Discussion

Note to the Group Facilitator

Discussion of this stage should easily fit into a regular session.

Note to Participants

Numbers in parenthesis refer to the book page numbers in "Hope in the Face of Conflict."

Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711-1776), told a story about two farmers who didn't trust each other. "Your corn is ripe today; mine will be so tomorrow. It is profitable for us both that I should labor with you today, and that you should aid me tomorrow. I have no kindness for you, and know that you have as little for me. I will not, therefore, take any pains on your account; and should I labor with you on my account, I know I should be disappointed, and that I should in vain depend upon your gratitude. Here then I leave you to labor alone: You treat me in the same manner. The seasons change; and both of us lose our harvests for want of mutual confidence and security."

What are your thoughts on this story? Why is it so difficult to trust those we are in conflict with? Why might it be easier to trust a third party peacemaker?



Brief Review of Stage 8

Why are reparations so important to the peacemaking process?



Scriptural Basis for This Stage

1. How does the New Testament define faith? (212)

2. How essential is putting faith in Jesus, our mediator (1 Timothy 2:5, John 14:6)? (212-213)

3. Do you think the analogy between Jesus' mediatorial work and a "bridge" is a good one? Why or why not? (213)



Like Father, Like Son

In the same way people place their trust in Jesus as the mediator to make peace between them and God, so the parties in dispute place their trust in their mediator to make peace between them. (213)



Discussion: The Relevance of Faith

1. Summarize the description of a mediator's work on the top of page 214 and compare it to what President Carter did (also p. 214). Is this work the kind you can see yourself doing? Have there been situations where you have already played this role? Please explain.

2. What are the three major differences between Jesus as mediator and a human mediator? (215-217)

3. What factors contributed to Dr. Ralph Bunche's success in his work between Israel and the surrounding Arab states in 1947? (217-220)

4. Do you think this agreement would have been reached without his help? Why or why not?



General Application and Closing Discussion

1. Please explain why you agree or disagree with the following statement:

"Peacemakers do for others what they cannot do for themselves, that is, make peace."

2. Why is it that people reach a point where they can no longer resolve their own conflicts?

3. What is the most important lesson you gleaned from this study?

4. Final thoughts?



Hope in the Face of Conflict

Making Peace with Others the Way God Makes Peace with Us

Group Discussion

Stage 10: Granting Forgiveness

The Aggrieved Party Forgives the Offending Party

INSIDE THIS LESSON

- 1 Opening Bell
- 1 Review of Stage 9
- 1 Scriptural Basis
- 2 Like Father, Like Son
- 2 Discussion: Insights into the Nature and Timing of Forgiveness
- 3 General Application and Closing Discussion

Note to the Group Facilitator

Discussion of this stage will likely take at least two sessions. Please plan accordingly.

Note to Participants

Numbers in parenthesis refer to the book page numbers in "Hope in the Face of Conflict."



Opening Bell

If you are willing, please tell of a situation in which you either forgave someone or asked for forgiveness? What happened as a result?



Brief Review of Stage 9

Why is exercising faith in a peacemaking mediator so important to the peacemaking process?



Scriptural Basis for This Stage

1. What is the definition of the word forgiveness in the New Testament? (222)
2. What does it mean to be forgiven by God? (224-225)
3. How can God forgive and still be holy? (226-231)
4. What is God's attitude toward mankind with respect to forgiveness? (231-233)
5. Is God's forgiveness conditional or unconditional? If conditional, what condition needs to be fulfilled? (223, 233-234)



Like Father, Like Son

In the same way God forgives repentant sinners, so the peacemaker encourages aggrieved parties to forgive those who express genuine sorrow for the wrong they committed against them. (234)



Discussion: Insights into the Nature and Timing of Forgiveness

1. After someone does us harm, what should be our attitude toward that person? (234-236)
2. Is having a pre-existing attitude of love consistent or inconsistent with how people are hard-wired? (235, Appendix 1)
3. Is there a difference between unconditional love and forgiveness? (236-238, compare also pp. 18-20 with 233-234)
4. From a Biblical perspective, who is forgiveness for, the offended party or the transgressor? (238-239)
5. In the two Biblical examples given, does forgiveness precede or follow repentance? (pp. 240-241)

[Special study: In the 8 passages in the NT where repentance and forgiveness are mentioned in the same verse, in what order are the two words always found? See Mark 1:4, Luke 3:3, 17:3, 24:47, Acts 2:38, 5:31, 8:22]
6. What is your reaction to the Kairos Document signed by 156 South African theologians? (242-243)
7. How is Hebrews 12:4-8 used to argue that forgiveness without repentance is not love? (243-245)
8. How does the reference to Mat. 18:15-18 add to this discussion? (245)
9. What is your opinion regarding Scott and Janis Willis' attitude toward Gov. Ryan of Illinois? (248-249)
10. What is the core of human forgiveness? (248-249) In what way does it reflect God's forgiveness toward us?
11. Why do you think forgiveness is so transformational? (250-251)
12. What should a peacemaker do to help facilitate the forgiveness process? (252-254)

➡ General Application and Closing Discussion

1. How has this presentation impacted your thinking? How might it impact your future behavior?
3. Have you ever been in a situation where you felt pressured to forgive even though the offended showed no remorse for what he or she did to you? How did you handle that? Would you consider doing things differently now? If so, in what way?
3. Any final thoughts?



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Group Discussion

Stage 11: Building on the Spirit of Reconciliation



Opening Bell

INSIDE THIS LESSON

- 1 Opening Bell
- 1 Review of Stage 10
- 1 Scriptural Basis
- 2 Like Father, Like Son
- 2 Discussion: The Relevance of Faith
- 3 General Application and Closing Discussion

Note to the Group Facilitator

Discussion of this stage should easily fit into a regular session.

Note to Participants

Numbers in parenthesis refer to the book page numbers in "Hope in the Face of Conflict."



Brief Review of Stage 10

Why is forgiveness so important to the peacemaking process?



Scriptural Basis for This Stage

1. How important is the concept of reconciliation to Christianity? (256). Read aloud 2 Cor. 5:17-21 (257-258).
2. What is the essential meaning of this NT word? (256)
3. What is the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation? (257)
4. What is the typical difference in timing between reconciling with God and people reconciling with each other? (257, see also 214-215)
5. Read aloud the summary on p. 258, then comment.



Like Father, Like Son

In the same way God reconciles with those he has forgiven, so the peacemaker encourages the parties to build upon their spirit of reconciliation and work toward a future characterized by shalomic peace. (259)



Discussion: Building Upon the Spirit of Reconciliation

1. What is the difference between nonviolent coexistence and reconciliation? (257)
2. Why is reconciliation so important to the peacemaking process? (259-260)
3. There are some occasions when forgiveness and reconciliation between people is virtually simultaneous. The story of Eric Lomax and Nagase Takashi provides such an example. Please recount the story and share your reaction to it.
4. How does forgiveness and reconciliation apply or not apply to an offender and an aggrieved party who were strangers prior to the offence? (263-264)
5. What is the difference between the “spirit of reconciliation” and its reality? (264)
6. Recount the illustration given on pp. 264-265. Do you know of any similar situations where the spirit of reconciliation was present but its reality was not achieved?
7. After the apology-forgiveness interchange is successfully achieved, what must the peacemaker do next? (265) How might the parties vision of shalomic peace come into play here?



General Application and Closing Discussion

1. Given that the central concept of Christianity is reconciliation with God, should this be our attitude when we are in conflict with another person?
2. Given the human need to love and be loved (Appendix 1), is having a spirit of reconciliation a natural inclination? Please explain.
3. What is the most important lesson you gleaned from this study? Any final thoughts?



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Making Peace with Others the Way God Makes Peace with Us

Group Discussion

Stage 12: Address Remaining Unresolved Issues

Opening Bell

INSIDE

THIS LESSON

- 1 Opening Bell
- 1 Review of Stage 11
- 1 Scriptural Basis
- 2 Like Father, Like Son
- 2 Discussion: What Should Peacemakers Do? The Nine Steps
- 3 General Application and Closing Discussion

Note to the Group Facilitator

Discussion of this stage should easily fit into a regular session.

Note to Participants

Numbers in parenthesis refer to the book page numbers in "Hope in the Face of Conflict."

When Jesus confronted the rich young ruler about selling all that he had and giving the money away to the poor and following him, it was too much for him to bear. He walked away sad, and Jesus walked away remarking how hard it is for the rich to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. The reality with this story and with this Judeo-Christian model of resolving conflict, and with much of what we face in life, is that we have to eventually stop talking about what we want to do and actually take the steps to doing it. You must commit to working the process.



Brief Review of Stage 11

People everywhere are exhorted to be reconciled to God. The goal of reconciliation extends to people who have been in conflict with each other as well. Regardless of what has happened in the past, the parties have now interacted in such a way that healing has begun. They are now able to face the future with goodwill to make the experience of shalomic peace a reality. To the extent that there are remaining issues that still need to be resolved, the parties will enter Stage 12 with that spirit of reconciliation and the goal of making reconciliation a reality.



Scriptural Basis for This Stage

1. Read aloud Philippians 2:12
2. How do you think we have to work out our salvation as it relates to reconciliation? Is this an ongoing process?



Like Father, Like Son

In the same way Jesus continues to serve as mediator for believers even after they have made peace with God, so the parties rely upon the ongoing work of their peacemaker to help them resolve all the remaining issues in order for reconciliation to be complete. (269)

Discussion: What Should the Peacemaker Do? The Nine Steps:

1. Identify all the remaining challenges and problems. (270-271)
 - A. Confirm each problem
 - B. Clarify each identified problem
 - C. View each problem as it relates to the whole
2. Organize issues by category (272)
3. Establish criteria to evaluate potential solutions (272)
4. Reframe positions into questions addressing underlying needs (273-274)
5. Brainstorm solutions (274)
6. Evaluate proposals (274-275)
7. Decide upon the solution for each problem (275)
8. Work out details of implementation and follow-up (275-276)
9. Record all agreements (276)

spirit of reconciliation a natural inclination? Please explain.

3. What is the most important lesson you gleaned from this study? Any final thoughts?

General Application and Closing Discussion

1. Do you think that it would be hard or easy to be a Mediator if you used this Judeo-Christian model of peacemaking?
2. This model is so basic and plain in Scripture, both in the Old and New Testaments. Why do you think it is so misunderstood or perhaps ignored in churches?
3. When this process has been done effectively, and peacemaking has occurred, the reality is that anyone from the outside coming in should not be able to recognize that a problem had ever occurred. Shalomic peace is restored and lived out. (278)



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Group Discussion

Chapter 6: An Examination of Matthew 18:15-18

INSIDE THIS LESSON

- 1 Note
- 1 Introduction
- 1 When Does Matthew 18 Apply?
- 2 How is Mat. 18 Misinterpreted and Misapplied?
- 2 Summary
- 3 Discussion

Note to the Group Facilitator

Discussion of this stage should fit into a regular session.

Note to Participants

Numbers in parenthesis refer to the book page numbers in "Hope in the Face of Conflict."

Note: This study, unlike previous ones, is strictly a Bible study on Jesus' words in Matthew 18:15-18. As between choosing which process to follow, Mat. 18 or the Judeo-Christian Model of Peacemaking, Mat. 18 takes precedence *if* it can be properly applied. Too often it is misapplied. The reason this study is so important is because it explains the proper understanding of what Jesus taught in Mat. 18.



Introduction

1. What is the major argument on page 300 with regard to Mat. 18 and its proper and improper use?



When Does Matthew 18 Apply?

1. What is the first condition that must be present for Matthew 18 to apply? (301)
2. Does Mat. 18 apply if your brother does **not** sin against you?
3. Would it apply if board members are having a difference of opinion over which ministries in the church should receive the most funding in next year's budget? Why or why not?
4. What is the second condition that must be present for Matthew 18 to apply? (301)
5. What does the word "witness" mean? (301-304).



When Does Matthew 18 Apply? (continued)

6. How many witnesses are needed to satisfactorily establish a given fact in Jewish law and culture? What if only one person witnessed a crime? Could this disciplinary process move forward? Why or why not? (303)
7. How stringent were the rabbi's in Jesus' day when it came to quality of the "witness?" Why? (303).
8. To which of the Ten Commandments does the issue of witnesses relate? (303).
9. Why was having multiple witnesses in Jesus' day so important? (303)
10. What are your thoughts on the bylaws statement cited on pages 303-304?



How is Matthew 18 Misinterpreted & Misapplied?

11. What is the common misinterpretation of Mat. 18:15, "If your brother sins against you"? (304-305)
12. What is the common misinterpretation of the reference to the "two or three witnesses" in Mat. 18:16? (305-306)
13. What is the practical problem of saying that the witnesses are witnesses of the conversation, not the sin? (305-306)
14. What is the "drastic misinterpretation" of the "two or three witnesses" in Mat. 18:16? (306-307)
15. How does Matthew elsewhere use the word "witness"? (307-308)
16. How does Paul use the word witness when it comes to a charge against an elder? (308-309)
17. How is the word "witness" used elsewhere in the NT? (309)



Summary

18. Please summarize the findings of this study (309-310)



Discussion

19. Please describe how you have seen Matthew 18 used in your experience. Was it used properly? What was the outcome?