

Peacemakers

12-04-16 AM

Matthew 5:9 *"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God"*

The Command of being a Peacemaker

It does not take a very deep study of Scriptures to reveal that Christians, as children of God, are called to pursue and make peace.

Romans 12:18 *If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.*

2 Corinthians 13:11 *Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.*

1 Thessalonians 5:13b *Live in peace with one another.*

2 Timothy 2:22 *Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.*

Hebrews 12:14 *Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.*

James 3:18 *And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace*

Peacemaking is NOT Compromise

A great summary of the peacemaking lifestyle for a Christian is in Romans 14:19. There we are told to pursue the things which make for peace. Let us be clear: peacemaking is NOT compromising on areas of doctrine, nor is it permitting or tolerating error. When error was present and tolerated in Thyatira, God said that He intended to wage a war against them, and bring death to them. Tolerance DOES NOT make peace.

Putting Off to Obtain Peace

Perhaps we ought to define pursuing peace in terms of the things we must put off to obtain peace.

Romans 12:19 *Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.*

Ephesians 4:31 *Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.*

Colossians 3:8 *But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.*

1 Timothy 2:8 *Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.*

From passages such as these, we see that pursuing peace is done by putting off worldly attitudes and behaviors. If we are sharp in our speech, rude in our behavior, short tempered or quick to explode, we are not peacemakers.

The Fine Line of Peace

The more we consider what it means to be a peacemaker, the more we realize that it can be very hard. It is not just putting off worldliness that impacts us; we must also have a more spiritually discerning mind. Consider for example the words of Jude in Jude 3 and in Jude 16. In verse 3 he tells us to contend for the faith. But in verse 16 he warns us not to be fault finders. Contending for the faith or being contentious for the faith are a very slim distinction. It is hard sometimes to know when we are exposing the works of darkness (Ephesians 5:11) or simply trying to find fault in others.

Learning to be Peacemakers

If we want to be peacemakers, our first step could be accepting that we may NOT be living in peace. If we are guilty of outbursts of wrath, of fault finding, or other issues, then we must admit we are not behaving as sons of light (1 John 1:8-10). Instead, we are acting like the world. Worldly responses lack peaceful outcomes.

To be a peacemaker may require efforts we are not normally exerting. We must then learn to do what it takes to make peace. When someone sins against us (not a public sin, per Galatians 2 or 1 Timothy 5), we are told what to do to make peace (Matthew 18:15-18). If we have offended someone, we are told not to make offerings to God, but to make peace instead of that act (Matthew 5:23-26).

Peacemaking requires a sacrificial lifestyle. In Philippians 4:2 there are two sisters (Euodia and Syntyche) who appear to have an issue of strife. It is interesting that it is not described as a sin, but something they need to repair. Perhaps much of the letter of Philippians is written with that in mind. We are to esteem above ourselves (Phil. 2:3-4). Such enables us to be people of peace. We are to be spiritually mature (Phil. 3:15). Sometimes being a peacemaker is just being the spiritual grownup.

Peacemakers are Children of God

In James 3:15-18 James spoke about two wisdoms: one from above (Spiritual) and one from below (worldly). His point is that peacemaking, the heart of the wisdom from above, is not something we will naturally discern, but only spiritually. When we use natural wisdom, we are brute beasts (as Jude says in Jude 10). This is how we are children of light.

James 3:17-18 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.