



STUDY GUIDE

BE: Week 8 11.23.14

[set up]

Read through the entire list of beatitudes and Matthew 5:3-10. Which of these has been the most challenging for you to personally put to practice? How specifically have you lived differently in the last few weeks to put to practice one of the beatitudes?

How do all of the other preceding qualities (Matthew 5:3-8) in the Beatitudes actually equip and qualify a person to be a peacemaker?

Name someone you know who has been a peace-breaker in your family, among your friends, at your workplace, or in a church setting. What are some characteristics that made that person unique?

Name someone you know who has been a peacemaker in your family, among your friends, at your workplace, or in a church setting. What are some characteristics that made that person unique?

[digging deeper]

On a Post-it or on a large piece of paper, make 3 columns with 3 headings: Peace-breaker, Peace-faker, and Peacemaker. As a group, brainstorm as many defining characteristics under each column as you can in 3 minutes. (Record the answers and post it in a prominent place to refer back to throughout your LifeGroup meeting.)

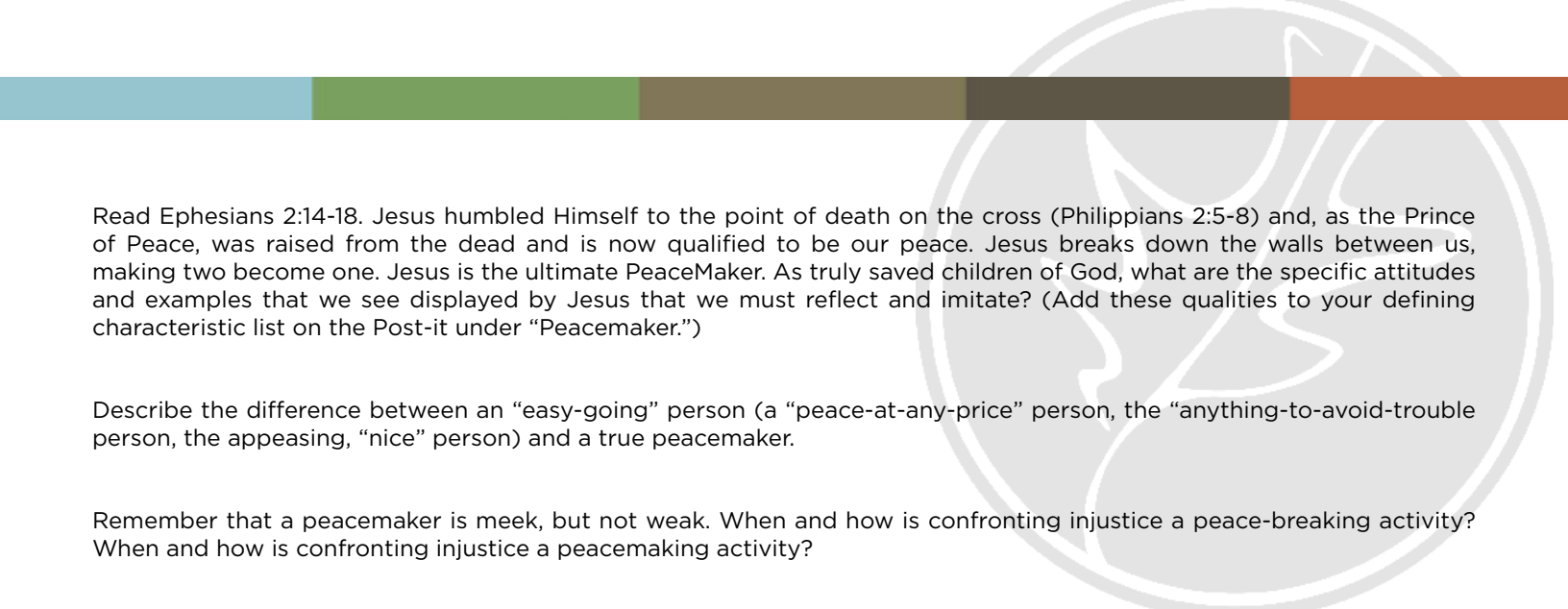
The primary purpose of the United Nations is “to maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace...” Why does this organization (and others like it) continually fail to accomplish such a noble mission?

Where do discord, conflict, quarreling, and warring come from? (See James 4:1-4.) What has God done to bring about peace?

How do worldly peacemaking and Christ-centered peacemaking differ?

Re-read Matthew 5:9-10 to connect the dots between the 7th and the 8th Beatitudes. Discuss why peacemakers might often suffer wrong and injustice so that peace can be produced.

Read Hebrews 13:20. Think about the saying “like Father, like son.” Share how peacemaking demonstrates that you are a true child of God.



Read Ephesians 2:14-18. Jesus humbled Himself to the point of death on the cross (Philippians 2:5-8) and, as the Prince of Peace, was raised from the dead and is now qualified to be our peace. Jesus breaks down the walls between us, making two become one. Jesus is the ultimate PeaceMaker. As truly saved children of God, what are the specific attitudes and examples that we see displayed by Jesus that we must reflect and imitate? (Add these qualities to your defining characteristic list on the Post-it under “Peacemaker.”)

Describe the difference between an “easy-going” person (a “peace-at-any-price” person, the “anything-to-avoid-trouble person, the appeasing, “nice” person) and a true peacemaker.

Remember that a peacemaker is meek, but not weak. When and how is confronting injustice a peace-breaking activity? When and how is confronting injustice a peacemaking activity?

Peacemaking has both negative and positive qualities. Negatively, a peacemaker is not a quarrelsome person; he does not incite trouble. Positively, the peacemaker does all she can - she goes out of her way - to produce peace and keep it. Which aspect - positive or negative - is hardest for you to live out? Why?

Ungodly conflict illustrates the brokenness in our world. It’s not a part of God’s design. The gospel is the good news that in spite of our ungodly conflicts Christ loves us so much that He died and rose to forgive us. How can repenting and believing the gospel as an ongoing way of life defuse our quarreling and lead us to increasingly experience more and more of the peace that is part of God’s design?

[living it out]

Where and how are you currently experiencing conflict? How is God calling you to be a peacemaker? How might God be calling someone else to be a peacemaker in your situation?

Which of the following peacemaking behaviors is most prevalent in your life and most absent in your life?

- 1) being slow to speak,
- 2) refusing to repeat things that hurt others,
- 3) doing good to enemies,
- 4) praying for people who hurt you,
- 5) being approachable,
- 6) apologizing to those you’ve hurt,
- 7) seeking to be friendly,
- 8) acting selflessly,
- 9) other _____.

How is God calling you to grow in this area?

(Note: The previous question could be printed as a handout for each person in your LifeGroup. Give everyone sufficient time to complete the exercise. Draw out insights from each LifeGroup member that reveal strengths and growth areas. Highlight the general needs and observations of the group.)

Ask each person in the LifeGroup to share the name of someone they are burdened about who does not have peace with God - who is at war with God - and who is not yet a son or daughter of God. As a group, strategize ways that a believer might invest in that person’s life to gain the opportunity to share the gospel of Jesus with them. (Write their answers down on a Post-it or a large piece of paper that you can make visible.)

Close your time in prayer. Break up into groups of 2-3. Pray for one another regarding the conflict(s) that each person is currently experiencing. Then spend some time praying for the salvation of those mentioned earlier who do not have peace with God.