

THE **crossing** **small groups**

Matthew 5:9 | The Hard Work of Shalom Making Sermon Discussion Participant's Guide

Purpose of Discussion: to discuss counterfeit and authentic ways of making peace.

Sermon Refresher: Because Jesus made peace between us and God, we are called to seek peace with others.

Icebreaker: Growing up, would you have been described as a peace-maker among your siblings or friends? Why or why not?

Transition: God's definition of peace-making is not shallow. When we find ourselves in a conflict, there are many counterfeit ways we can try to make peace. Three ways we attempt to make peace in a counterfeit way are stuffing/avoiding, exploding, and being passive aggressive.

1. What is wrong with stuffing and avoiding?

Stuffing and avoiding: *You assume it's better to go along with the other person's demands than risk a confrontation. "Rather than start another argument, whatever you want is fine." To you, a safe feeling is more important than a close relationship. **

2. What is wrong with exploding?

Exploding: *This is the "I win, you lose" or "I'm right, you're wrong" position. You seek to dominate the other person; personal relationships take second place to the need to win the argument. **

3. What is wrong with being passive aggressive?

Passive aggression: *You are not comfortable with conflict, but you still want the other person to know you're not happy. So, you cope by giving the "silent treatment" or by criticizing using underhanded comments.*

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4. Which one are you most tempted by? With your spouse, roommate, co-workers, etc.?
5. What is the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation?

*Leader note: Forgiveness is letting go of my right to hold it against them.
Reconciliation is a step towards the restoration of the relationship.*

6. Read Rom. 12:18. Is it possible to pursue peace, but not achieve peace? Why?

Romans 12:18

"If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all."

7. Read Colossians 1:21-22. Why does authentic peace-making often require self-sacrifice?

Jesus reconciled us to God by sacrificing himself.

Digging Deeper: Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-20. According to Paul, how is sharing the Gospel a peace-making ministry? What does it look like for us to be ambassadors of Christ's reconciliation?

Sharing and Prayer:

I suggest breaking up into groups of men and women because of the personal nature of this topic. Discuss this question: Is there a situation in your life that you need to pursue peace in right now? Spend time praying that God would give you the humility and strength it takes to pursue peace in these specific situations.

**Preparing for Marriage, David Boehi, Brent Nelson, Jeff Schulte & Lloyd Shadrach*