



GROUP ICE BREAKER

If you could rid the world of one thing, what would it be?

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

- I will pray, "I need you God. I want your Word to take root in my life."
- I will pray, "God, soften my heart so that I'm tenderhearted toward you."
- I will take a deep unhurried time alone with God to share my heart this week.
- I will take responsibility for the development of my spiritual life.
- I will take responsibility for the spiritual practices that keep me rooted in Christ.
- I will remove the clutter in my life to make room for growth.
- I will be faithful in sowing seed, realizing it will land on good soil 1/4 of the time.

THIS WEEK'S SERMON RECAP

As society grows more divided, what is our role as Christ-followers in bridging that divide? Jesus was no stranger to opposing parties, two of the twelve men closest to him came with deeply divided views. But Jesus calls us to be peacemakers. Peacemakers work to create peace by reconciling things and people that are at odds with one another. The peace Jesus refers to means more than simply the absence of conflict. Peace is more about relationship, expressing desire that another person will have all the righteousness and goodness God can give. A peacemaker is one who actively intervenes in situations of conflict in order to establish peace. A peacemaker takes the first step, they have the broadest embrace and the fewest borders around their hearts. People are never the enemy, sin is our enemy. A peacemaker builds bridges rather than walls. Peacemaking wants God's highest good for the others. A peacemaker advances a kingdom rather than a cause. Is a cause greater than someone who needs to hear of the love and grace of God? We do the world a disfavor when we attempt to wrap our political ideologies with the teaching of Jesus. We're citizens of God's kingdom first. Are you willing to follow Jesus, even if and when following Jesus creates space between you and your political party?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you define peace?
2. Is it possible to discuss social or political issues with people from another viewpoint or party and value peace in the discussion? Why or why not?
3. Have you ever experienced a conflict that required you to actively build peace? What did you do?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONT)

4. Why is being a peacemaker so challenging? What about for you personally?
5. Read Galatians 5:13-15. How is peacemaking costly? What does it require from us?
6. Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. What do these verses teach us about being a peacemaker?
7. Read James 3:17-18. How might your personal relationships change if you started to pursue peace inside of them? How would it impact your influence with others?
8. Are you willing to evaluate your cause through the filter of faith rather than create a version of faith that supports your cause? What's the difference and why is it important?

NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)

Use these as a guide to take your next step and commit to what you learned this week:

- I will commit to the work of peacemaking.
- I will seek God's highest good for others.
- I will take a first step towards someone I don't agree with.
- I will build a bridge with someone who holds different views than my own.
- I will advance God's kingdom before my personal cause.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Matthew 5:9
- Romans 5:10
- Ephesians 2:14
- Ephesians 2:15-17