

Study Series: The Good Life

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Lesson Title: “Happy Are the Peacemakers” (pp. 80-93)

Session 6

July 9, 2023

The main point of this lesson is: The good life only comes to those who help facilitate peace.

Focus on this goal: To help adults expand their peacemaking efforts

Key Bible Passage: Matthew 5:9

Before the Session

1. Prepare a large writing surface. (Step 1)

2. Continue using “The Good Life” chart begun in Session 1. (Step 1)

3. Consider carefully and prepare to share how God is leading you to pursue intentional relationships in order to make peace in your community. (Step 7)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Write peace on the writing surface. Say: This is a word we all know, but how might we define it? After a brief discussion, turn peace into peacekeeper.

Engage learners in discussing what a peacekeeper might look like and the responsibilities involved. Under that, write peacemaker. Help learners see that keeping peace is not always the same as making peace.

Read Matthew 5:9 and add Peacemakers to “The Good Life” chart.

Step 2. Peace Seems Like a Good Idea Until . . .

Say: Since today’s topic is on peacemaking, let’s consider one of the most powerful battlefield images in the New Testament.

Invite a volunteer to read Ephesians 6:10-18. Point out the word “peace” in verse 15. State: In the midst of an ongoing battle with evil, we are called to peace.

Use Day One content (pp.80-81) to emphasize that a lack of peace is a result of sin in our world. Read the Day One pull quote (p. 80) and engage learners in considering why most people don’t concern themselves with attaining peace in their workplace, families, and so forth.

Step 3. Life Reimagined

Read the opening paragraph of Day Two (p. 82), encouraging learners to see the Beatitudes not as a to-do list but as an imagination for life in God’s kingdom.

Ask: According to Matthew 5:9, what happens to peacemakers? Stress that a person who actively pursues peace has already been filled with the peace of Christ through saving faith. Read the Day Two pull quote (p. 83).

Use the remainder of the Day Two content (pp. 83-84) to help learners see that Jesus lived in a brutal, violent Roman world; calling for peace was not only radical but seemed impossible. Explain that’s exactly why we must hope for it and live it out.

Step 4. Family Resemblance

Observe: Since peacemakers are called sons of God, we must consider that we are called to resemble our Father in the way we live.

Read the author’s questions in the first Day Three paragraph (p. 85). If you are willing, honestly answer one or two of the questions for yourself. Encourage learners to personally consider the questions this week. Summarize the second Day Three paragraph (p. 85).

Invite a volunteer to read Colossians 1:19-20. Point out that these verses summarize the gospel, with peace at its center. Use Day Three content (pp. 85-86) to explain how God’s peace and reconciliation work together for our peace with Him and others.

Step 5. A Theology of Racial (Ethnic) Reconciliation

Invite a volunteer to read Matthew 28:19. Explain that the word “nations” translates the Greek word ethnos from which we get our word ethinic. Emphasize that, as the author pointed out, our race, or ethnicity, should not separate us in the body of Christ.

Use Day Four content (p. 87) to point out how racial tension and oppression most certainly created much of the conflict in the biblical storyline.

Recount the author’s experience and observations under the heading, “Stop Talking About Race!” (p. 88). Invite volunteers to verbally add to the list of ethnic issues that were clearly revealed in the Bible. Point out that much of the unity found in the book of Acts and the epistles involved people of different races coming together through faith in Jesus.

Read the Day Four pull quote (p. 88).

Step 6. Ethnic Peacemaking

Invite a volunteer to read Galatians 3:8. Acknowledge that, even as far back as Abraham, God had a plan to bring the nations together for His glory.

Using Day Five content (p. 88-90), briefly lecture on the five different ways to become a cross-cultural peacemaker in the home, in the workplace, in the community, and in the church.

Invite a volunteer to read Ephesians 2:14-16. As a group, brainstorm how the peace of the gospel enables and empowers us to have reconciliation between ethnic groups.

Read the Day Five pull quote (p. 89). Challenge learners to reflect on their own personal commitment to God’s multi-ethnic plan for them (Day Five, activity 2, p. 90).

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Invite one volunteer to reread Matthew 5:9 and another to read the final Day Five paragraph (p. 90).

Share how God has been speaking to you about your own engagement in peacemaking and some steps you plan to take to carry out the gospel in your own relationships.

Close in prayer,thanking God for making us—all of us—His children and giving us peace with Him.

