



Lesson #3 – Peace: *The atmosphere of our ministry*

²⁷ *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.* John 14:27

¹⁸ *Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.* James 3:18

In this lesson we consider...

- *How to transmit peace to others in our ministry*
- *How to cultivate inner peace as we serve*
- *How to be a peacemaker in relationships as we serve*
 - *How to work in teams*
 - *How to resolve conflict*

What is the “peace of God?”

Definition: *Peace is a state of order, tranquility, interpersonal harmony and well being, imparted by the Holy Spirit, even in situations for struggle.*

- The Hebrew word, *Shalom*, implies holistic well being; not merely absence of struggle.
- Not of this world – supernatural!
- “Surpasses all understanding” – not based in circumstances
- The security that God is in control of my present and my future
- Transmits to those around us
- Promotes harmony and trust among those we serve



Example of Peace-full Ministry

Irene – A Cell Hostess who transmits the peace of God

Irene hosts a cell meeting in her house every Thursday evening. Her life has not been easy, as she has had to struggle to raise two children by herself and adapt to a new culture and society. But in the midst of her many challenges and hard times, the Holy Spirit has given her a supernatural peace that has sustained her. Whether facing financial difficulties or parenting challenges, Irene has learned how to cast her anxiety upon the Lord. She takes time to pray about her worries and enjoys a calm that seems impenetrable.

Her home reflects this inward stillness. One can almost breathe easier after entering her door. She prepares the living room before the meeting, arranging the seating in an “cozy” fashion that promotes interaction among her guests. She anoints each seat with oil and prays, “*peace to the one who sits in this chair.*” She plays some soft praise music in the background, creating an inviting atmosphere of praise and spiritual rest. The first to arrive feel a sense of relief as they enter the room, as if they can let out a deep breath and let the tension of the day lift away. Regardless of the rain, snow or traffic that complicates the arrival of the guests, they can finally relax in this place of spiritual refuge and refreshment.

She makes a point of expressing words of welcome at the beginning of the meeting, and seems to know how to tell a joke that sets the newcomers at ease. One hears laughter and natural spontaneity in the conversations, as if people can feel free to “be themselves” in the group. The inevitable disagreements and annoyances of community life are softened by this atmosphere of trust and security. No need to walk on eggshells or be overly self-conscious in this setting. Irene is an instrument of peace, ministering in the shalom of the Holy Spirit.

Mention some specific ways that Irene transmits peace to the members of her cell group?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Heart check: *Does your ministry transmit peace?*

We ask ourselves...



- Do you sometimes feel anxiety, fear or worry as you serve God?
- Do you find yourself running from one crisis to another, rarely stopping to rest or laugh?
- Are you a “team player,” or do you often end up working on your own?
- Do you inspire trust and confidence in others?
- Do you find yourself often complaining about those with whom you serve in ministry?
- Do you see yourself as having “bad luck” in this respect – that you often end up serving with problematic people who make your life difficult?
- Do you have a mental list of “enemies” in the church or workplace?
- Do you intentionally avoid speaking to some members of the church for long periods of time, or even years?
- If someone contradicts you publicly in a meeting, do you look for a chance to make them “look bad,” even in subtle ways?
- How do you respond if someone in your ministry has superior gifts to your own?

The Art of Cultivating Inner Peace: *Repent, Relax and Rejoice*

To minister in peace, we must be “healed” of anxiety

1. ***Repent*** – ... of worry... and lack of faith...
 - a. ...in storms
 - b. ...in daily problems

2. **Relax** -; *God is in control!*

- a. Pray ... breathe in the peace of God
- b. Have faith – cast your cares on Him

3. **Rejoice**

Step #1 – Repent of worry!

Anxiety is a type of sin! When we choose to worry we choose not to trust that God will take care of us in the storms of life and in our daily challenges. Anxiety weighs upon us when we lose our focus on God’s sovereign control. As a result, we try to “take things into our own hands.” Repentance, therefore, is the first order of business.

Case #1 – Peace in the storms of life... Read Mark 5:35-41

Ministry will inevitably lead us through storms. Mention some storms, (headaches, worries), that “come with the territory” in your ministry.



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How do we observe the contrast between Jesus’ attitude and that of the disciples?

The disciples scold Jesus: “Lord, don’t you care that we are about to die!!??” How did they perceive Jesus’ attitude in the midst of this danger.

How was the disciples’ attitude in this situation sinful?

Case #2 – Worry in God’s Service - Read Luke 10:38-42: Martha and Mary

Why was Martha so “worked up” in this situation?

Mention some situations in your life or ministry in which you often feel “worried and concerned?”

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What is Jesus’ counsel to Mary?

How can we avoid the “Martha syndrome” in our service for Jesus?

Step #2 – Relax – Pray!

“Relax, God is in Control.”

He says, “Be still, and know that I am God;

I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” Psalm 46:10

³ *You will keep in perfect peace*

those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. Isa. 26:3

Don’t forget to breathe! Take a deep breath

Inhale the Shalom of God... Exhale the burdens and worries

Inhale – We must receive (breathe in) the peace of God!

³³ *For God is not a God of disorder but of peace... 1 Corinthians 14:33*

²⁷ *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. John 14:27*



Exhale – We must expel (breathe out), our burdens to him in prayer

⁶ *Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.* ⁷ *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.* 1 Peter 5:6-7

Step #3 – Rejoice – God is near!

Joy is antithetical to anxiety!

Read Philippians 4:2-9: Counsel to two Christian women in conflict

List some specific pieces of advice about how to cultivate the peace of God.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Application: Think of a situation in your life right now that causes you anxiety.

What is the situation? _____.

Write a *prayer/petition*, related to this situation: _____

_____.

Write a *phrase of thanksgiving*, also related to this situation. _____

_____.

Think of a *person whom you admire*. What would this person's attitude be in a comparable situation? How would they handle it?

_____.

How to be a “peace-maker”

1. *Team-work*
2. *Conflict resolution*

Our ministry should transmit peace to others

“Peace to you...” A powerful benediction!

- Paul’s used this blessing to begin and end his letters
- Jesus said used this phrase to the “woman with the flow of blood” and the “sinful woman” who anointed him
- Jesus said this to the disciples after his resurrection
- Jesus taught his disciples to say “peace to this home” and if a “man of peace” lived there, his household would receive it. Otherwise, the peace would “bounce back” to the disciples. Luke 10:5
- The priests could “put God’s name” upon the people of Israel by blessing them!

²² *The LORD said to Moses,* ²³ *“Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: ²⁴ “‘The LORD bless you and keep you; ²⁵ the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; ²⁶ the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.’”*

“So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.” Numbers 6:22-27

Think of someone to whom you minister in some way. Try pronouncing a “blessing” upon them: “Peace to you” – and watch what happens!!

1. Peacemakers know how to work in teams!

The Lone Ranger v. the Team Player

The team player....

1. *Is humble* -- Knows that he is not the “be all and end all” (The last coca cola in the desert)
2. *Is wise* -- Understands the inter-dependence in nature and human relationships
3. *Is grateful* - Appreciates the value of his co-ministers



1. The team player is humble...

The Lone Ranger believes he is the last coca cola in the desert!

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves... Philippians 2:3

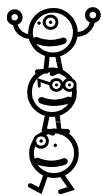
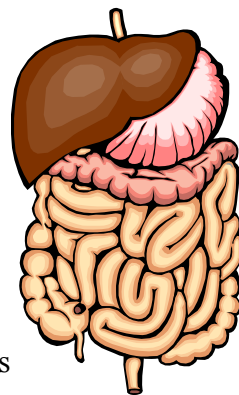
³ For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. ⁴ For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. Romans 12:3-5

Why is it necessary to be humble in order to work well with others _____

2. The team player is wise – and knows that he cannot “go it alone!”

We are one body, with diverse members, which need one another. 1 Corinthians 12

God has fashioned each one of us to serve in a distinctive way.



We are inter-dependent = We need one another!

What are some “members” of the human body which are not as visible or “attractive” as others, but in fact more important to the health and life of the body as a whole?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What are some ministries in God’s service which are not “visible,” but in fact indispensable?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Unity in Diversity – It is necessary to work with those that are different!

¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13



What are some of the types of differences between people that are mentioned in this text?

1. _____
2. _____

What are some of the differences between members in your church?

1. _____
2. _____

According to 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, what holds us together, in spite of our differences?

3. The team player values his co-workers in ministry



Paul gives thanks for the Philippians!

³ I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. ⁷ It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. Philippians 1:3-7

How do we observe the intensity of Paul's feelings towards the Philippians in this text?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

We are on the same team!

³⁸ "Teacher," said John, "we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us." ³⁹ "Do not stop him," Jesus said. "For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, ⁴⁰ for whoever is not against us is for us. Mark 9:38-40

We see in the text above how the disciples saw themselves as competitive rivals of other “Christian” groups. Give an example of this attitude in our time.

No one can do it alone! We need to cultivate unity! Read Philippians 2:1-4

According to this text, what are some attitudes that promote peace in the church?



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Mention the names of two or three people who serve with you in ministry.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Describe a specific person with whom you serve in ministry who possesses gifts, talents or a style which is different from your own. Have you had difficulties with this person?



2. Peace makers resolve conflicts

Don't be a Peace-Buster!

Certain attitudes can lead to chronic conflict in ministries

1. Princes and Princesses -- Ambitious ministers who defend their "territory" and compete with others rather than working in partnership. Such Christians tend to feel threatened by those who are more talented or gifted than themselves.

- The cell leader who will not allow his members to visit other groups
- The preacher who speaks ill of other prominent ministries
- The singer in a worship team who feels jealous of the new sister with a better voice
- The cell leader who wants his group to be bigger than the other groups.

2. The Prickly Porcupine - Christians who experience chronic conflict in ministry.

- Those that hold grudges for perceived offenses
- Those that seek revenge, often subtly, against those that have slighted them
- Those that lack discretion and complain incessantly
- Those that express their opinions in ways that put others on the defensive

Are you a princess or a porcupine? You can change!

How to resolve conflicts

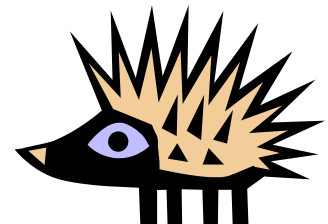
1. Do not allow resentment to fester

Conflict is unavoidable, but a mature Christian knows how to resolve it.

²³ "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:23-24

²⁶ "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. Ephesians 4:26-27

What should I do if the other person is partly (or mostly) responsible?



2. Follow the Biblical Steps – Read Matthew 18:15-20

According to this text, what are the three steps of the process of reconciliation?

- _____
- _____
- _____

3. Don't "talk too much"

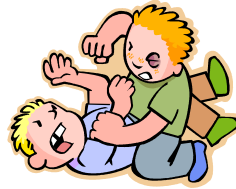
A conflict need not spread! With careful restraint in conversations, a conflict can be "contained" or even "smothered," much like a fire which goes out when deprived of oxygen.

²⁰ Without wood a fire goes out;
without a gossip a quarrel dies down. Proverbs 26:20

4. Work towards a "Win-Win" solution

Review: Ways to deal with conflict

1. Dominate: I win – you lose



We get what we want, but lose the relationship.

2. Yield: You win – I lose

We "give in," sacrificing our values, and allowing ourselves to be "walked on."

3. Vengeance: I lose – You lose

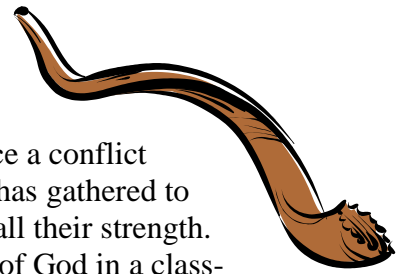
It does not matter if I lose, as long as the other one suffers as well.

How to get to "win-win?" – A solution which meets the legitimate concerns of both parties.

1. Work together – the "problem is the problem" – not the person!
2. Listen to one another
3. Put yourself in the other's shoes
4. Genuinely seek to *understand* the perspective and needs of the other
5. Express your perspective in a clear, respectful way
6. Seek solutions together that meet the needs of both parties



Example of Conflict Resolution – The call of the Shofar



On a particular Tuesday evening two activities experience a conflict regarding the use of space in the church. One group of brothers has gathered to cry out to God in prayer, blasting Shofars in the sanctuary with all their strength. The other group has gathered with the pastor to study the Word of God in a classroom on the second floor balcony, directly above the sanctuary. The ones studying could not be heard because of the holy raucous going on below them. Use your imagination to visualize different ways of attempting to deal with this situation, positive and negative.

Describe some less than ideal solutions.

Describe a “win-win” solution to this conflict.

Review Questions

Define “peace” _____
_____.

Mention three ways to cultivate inner peace.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Mention two primary qualities of a “peace maker” in ministry.

1. _____
2. _____.

Describe the “prince” or “princess” in ministry.

Mention three qualities of a “team player.”

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Describe the “Prickly Porcupine.”

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

List what must be done in order to work towards a “win win” solution.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Describe a conflict which you have experienced in ministry.

How did you handle the situation? What happened?

How could you possibly have handled the situation differently?

The God of peace be with you all. Amen Romans 15:33