

Life on the Vine
Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit in Christian Community

Lesson Three: **Peace**

Introduction

“Peace” is another one of those words that carries several meanings for us.

1. Inner serenity—sitting by a mountain stream without a care in the world—being “at one with nature.”
2. The cessation of a war or a conflict—the state of not being at war
3. Living in harmony with those around us

To which of the above meanings does the Biblical word “peace” most often refer?

How do we attempt to use our faith to pursue inner serenity?

How might our approach change if we come to view the peace that God offers us as living in harmony with both God himself and the people around us?

Lesson Plan

1. The Gospel of Peace

Only the _____ can live in peace. (See Isaiah 60.17-18 and Psalm 85.8-10)

The fact that peace depends on _____ explains why peace is so elusive. (Read and discuss Romans 3.10; 4.22-25; 2 Corinthians 5.21; and Colossians 1.19-20)

Questions:

- a. In Romans 5.1, Paul writes, “Therefore, since we are justified (made righteous) by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” If “righteousness” means “living in a right relationship with God”, what does it mean that God has given righteousness to us as a gift?
- b. How does our faith that God has given us righteousness shape our relationship with him?
- c. Do we ever doubt that our relationship with God is right? What feeds these doubts? What can relieve these doubts?

2. Peace with Others

God is a peacemaker, and those who love him are called to make peace, too.

Numerous Scriptures urge us to practice peace with those around us but let's look at one in particular: Romans 12.14-19

Questions

- a. What are the specific suggestions Paul makes in this passage that would contribute to living at peace with others?
- b. If God could grant us peace with him only through his grace, will it require our grace to grant peace to others?
- c. Why is it so important for us to do everything we can to live peaceably with others?
- d. Why is it so important for others that we do this?
- e. Besides grace, what other characteristic is necessary to practice peace among others? (cf. Colossians 3.14-15). Does an absence of peace reflect an absence of love?

3. Read James 3.16-18

Questions:

- What in this passage sounds like the Romans passage?
- James indicates that sowing peace produces a harvest of righteousness. Is this speaking of our right relationship with God or our right relationship with others? Of is it both?
- How does “sowing peace” make righteousness possible for others?