

Peacemakers

Ready:

“The peacemakers are blessed, for they will be called sons of God.” – Matthew 5:9

Set

Clinical psychologist Dr. Henry Cloud has said that we sometimes have to go through difficult conversations to find connection. But difficult conversations are often the last things we want to have in life.

In the Bible, Jesus tells us to be “peacemakers.” But what does that mean? Being a peacemaker doesn’t mean avoiding conflict. It’s possible to be a person of peace while dealing with conflict head-on, but it requires faith, vulnerability and courage.

Anywhere there are people, there is the possibility of conflict, but with it comes the opportunity for reconciliation. Consider the importance of camaraderie on a team. While skills are important, the importance of a cohesive team is critical. Being able to lift one another up—to know that someone has your back and that you are accepted and loved even when you mess up can make all the difference. That awareness can impact your performance for the better.

Coaches, teachers and parents know this well. That is why they get so upset when there is a breakdown in the cohesive unit. Not only should we avoid contributing to the breakdown, we should be people who encourage unity. I recently had the opportunity to witness reconciliation between two family members. For a few years I’d been praying for and talking about forgiveness with one of the family members. Sometimes they got tired and even upset with me for my persistence on the matter. But then we had a rare opportunity for a weeklong family visit. See, the family members weren’t fighting. They were speaking to one another on occasion. However, they weren’t dealing with the years of hurt and the distance between them. (It’s not always the things we say that are the problems, but the things left unspoken that can cause us so much hurt.) I prayed even more diligently before the visit, and I gave them plenty of time alone during the trip. Each day came with new breakthroughs. Key phrases were being used in these conversations that created a safe environment—a place where each wouldn’t feel judged or attacked. I was seeing the power of conflict and reconciliation.

The idea that people don’t change is a lie. People may be unwilling to change and not want to put in the work, but people are capable of change. If you have been praying for months or even years, hang in there. God hears every word spoken and sees every tear shed. And even if you don’t see it in the natural, your prayers are having an impact. You may be one more prayer away from an amazing breakthrough. If you are not praying, start. You don’t have to feel like it. You can be totally honest with God; He knows your heart anyway. You can express

your hurt to Him and that you are praying not because you want to but because of your obedience to Him. As much as He wants to heal the others, He wants to speak into your pain as well.

Matthew 5:44 says, *"But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."* In all circumstances know this: If people don't make progress, it is not your fault. If they do make progress, it is not to your credit. All things are in God's timing. All things are for God's glory.

Go

1. What are you burdened by today?
2. Who do you need to forgive?
3. From whom do you need to seek forgiveness?
4. Are you keeping anything from God because you are frustrated by His timing? If so, confess it to Him and ask Him to help you persevere in prayer even if you don't understand the timing.

Workout

- Proverbs 3:5-6
- Matthew 7:7-12
- Romans 12:17-21
- 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Bible Reference:

Matthew 5:9

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