

Our vertical relationship with God is suspect if it does not affect our horizontal relationship with people fruitfully. Around the world today various religious and ethnic groups are in conflict. In the ancient world the Jewish man's morning prayer included thanks to God for not being born a Gentile, a slave or a woman. The Jewish temple was segregated into these areas from outer to inner respectively: Court of Gentiles, Court of Women, Court of the Israelites and Court of the Priests. Stone tablets between the Court of Gentiles and the Court of Women had inscriptions that warned Gentiles to proceed no further at the risk of death. We also know the hatred the Jews had for half-breed Samaritans. The proud Greeks labeled all others as 'barbarians'. Jesus ended such class separation - Ephesians 2:11-22. We are to make great efforts to live in peace with all people - Hebrews 12:14.

'In Christ' we are all on equal footing as He put an end to racism, classism and sexism.

**There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male or female,
for you are all one in Christ. - Galatians 3:29 NIV**

Family feuds, ethnic hostilities etc. reach nearly impossible resolution when bitterness becomes rooted in the antagonists. - Hebrews 12:14-15. God calls us to keep peace through unity in the Spirit. - Ephesians 4:3. Peace is kept by overcoming evil with positive steps - Romans 12:18-21. Romans 14 deals with disputable matters (gray matters). Too many divisions occur over trivial matters - Romans 14:19. Gentle words can keep wrath away. - Proverbs 15:1.

FALSE PEACEMAKING

1. **Passing prohibitions** - Laws will not bring lasting peace as a change of heart and mind is needed
2. **Peace at any price** - Sin cannot be overlooked as the true issues must be faced. Winston Churchill foresaw trouble when Neville Chamberlain tried to appease Hitler and made too many concessions before World War 2 and Hitler took advantage of this. The apostle Paul preached the gospel of peace, but we must remember that the response was often either revival or riots! Peace, righteousness and truth are needed to bring the full counsel of God. - Psalm 85:10, Matthew 10:34, Hebrews 4:12 (Jesus brought a sword!), Acts 20:26.

**To overlook flagrant sin or embrace doctrinal heresy for the sake of
peace only cheapens it. - Charles Swindoll**

3. **Personal profit or motive** - Peacemakers need to be neutral

Helga and Henry were a Swedish couple who had been married for sixty years. They fought like cats and dogs every day of their married lives. Their 60th anniversary day finally arrived. That morning began with a heated argument and they continued fighting all day long. At the end of the day, Helga said to her husband: 'Henry, tonight I tink ven ve pray, ve better pray for peace. Ve been fighting each other for sixty years, Henry. May the Lord give us peace. So tonight, I tink I'll pray that the Lord vill take you home and I'll go live with my sister Olga.

Olga had a personal agenda and was not a neutral peacemaker. Besides, true peace is not just the absence of conflict but a resolution that ends in full reconciliation and total forgiveness. The role of a peacemaker is often messy and even precarious. Police know that some of the difficult events to handle are domestic quarrels as family feuds can be explosive. On one of my first home visits as a social worker I encountered a family conflict. As I entered their rural home I found the husband and wife throwing things at each other and shouting.

**Negotiating between conflicting parties is like crossing a river walking on
slippery rocks. It's risky, but it's the only way across. - Hubert Humphrey**

People often want to be popular and well-liked, but instead, Christians should want to be remembered as being Christ-like. Jesus did not desire to be a popular people-pleaser but instead he sought to be a prophetic God-pleaser. We should seek to magnify God and not ourselves.

A good name is more desirable than great riches - Proverbs 22:1.

Jesus said that **peacemakers will be called Sons of God** - Matthew 5:9. The phrase '**will be called**' is a Hebrew way of saying 'shall be acknowledged to be' or 'shall receive the status of' or 'shall be owned and regarded as'. - Insights from William Barclay

Hebrew has no adjectives, so instead it uses the phrase '**son of**' plus some virtue or quality. For example, Barnabas was an encouraging person, so he was called 'son of encouragement.' A peaceful man would be a 'son of peace'. James and John had stormy characters so they were called 'sons of thunder'. When Jesus used the term '**sons of God**' He meant that the persons were '**God-like**'.

Sons = Greek/ huioi = a mature son whose conduct gives evidence of the dignity of their relationship and likeness to His (father's) character. - Vines Expository Dictionary

Blessed are those who produce right relationships in every sphere of life for they are doing a God-like work. - William Barclay

Inscribed on a wall near the United Nations Building in New York City are these words from Isaiah 2.

'They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, no more will they train for war.'



Those are worthy words from the Book of Isaiah, but they omit the key to world peace in the passage. **"He will teach us His ways so that we will walk in His paths."** Isaiah 2:3-4 Who is the He?

The He is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ and His kingdom rule is like no other.

THE RULERSHIP OF KING JESUS

- Righteousness, Peace and Joy
- Compassionate and Caring
- Just and True
- Gracious and Generous
- Security and Serenity
- Humble and Serving
- Honorable and Praiseworthy
- Prosperous and Fruitful
- Satisfying Contentment
- Adventure and Creative Exploration
- Beauty and Awesome Splendor
- Total Harmony in every aspect of living
- Perfect Health and Life Giving Foods
- Fantastic Fellowship
- Wondrous Testimonies and Stories
- Continuous Enjoyable Learning

The United Nations will not bring lasting peace, for it is run by those who are more in tune with anti-christ views and activities. On my first speaking engagement in Siberia, Russia in 1993, I spoke on Isaiah 2 at church in a small town. I was touched after the meeting when a journalist came up afterward and told me that she had just given her life to Jesus after the message. She had entered into eternal peace with God. Praise be to God.

God calls all Christians to be His Peace Corps to the world. As peacemakers we can 'beseech, implore, beg and entreat others to be reconciled to God. - 2 Corinthians 5:20. What a privilege and joy to bring others to peace with God!

The day I finished writing this course in 1994, I was working with a church that had a School of Languages and Missionary Orientation in London. That late afternoon I decided to go to the church and meet some friends. While there I saw two of the Brazilian students and they began speak loudly in Portuguese with each other and then they started pushing each other. At first I thought they were just goofing around, but then I realized they were fighting, so I went over to break up the fight. Was I the peacemaker? No. I called the Pastor who then came to the church and brought reconciliation. Pastor Boyd had been a missionary in Brazil for a few years and knew Portuguese, so he was able to bring reconciliation between the two students. God had given me quick illustration of what it means to be a real peacemaker the very day I finished writing about it.

Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called 'Sons of God'.