


THE SIX PRACTICES OF WHOLE-HEARTED DISCIPLESHIP

# THE PRACTICE OF PEACEMAKING

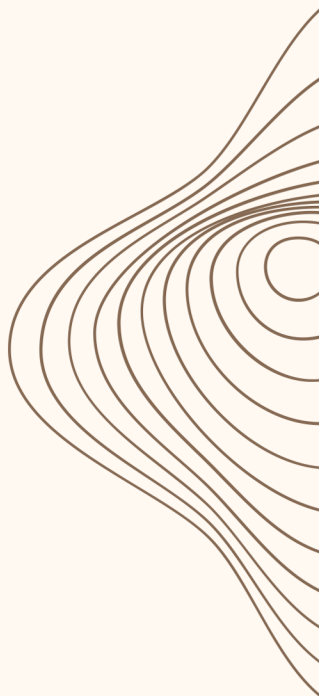


COMMUNITY PRACTICE GUIDE



“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.


“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.



Jesus, Matthew 5:38-48

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Colossians 1:19-20





## PAUSE

Take sixty seconds and pause, silently remembering God's presence with you today.

Pray through this image of God's kingdom from Isaiah 2:3-5:

"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,  
to the temple of the God of Jacob.  
He will teach us his ways,  
so that we may walk in his paths."  
The law will go out from Zion,  
the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.  
He will judge between the nations  
and will settle disputes for many peoples.  
They will beat their swords into plowshares  
and their spears into pruning hooks.  
Nation will not take up sword against nation,  
nor will they train for war anymore.  
Come, descendants of Jacob,  
let us walk in the light of the Lord."

## READ & REFLECT

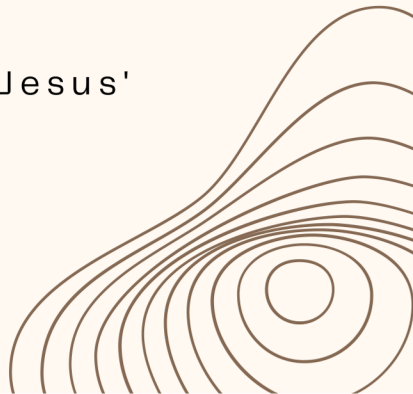
Read Matthew 5:38-48 and Colossians 1:19-20 twice out loud.

When you hear "peacemaking," what's the first thing that comes to mind?

How did your family tend to deal with conflict growing up? How do you tend to deal with conflict today?

Why is conflict hard for **you**?

What surprises you or challenges you about Jesus' teaching on peacemaking?





# THE PRACTICE OF PEACEMAKING

The Practice of Peacemaking means this:

**We seek understanding and cultivate peace across our social, racial, ethnic, economic, and political differences.**

In Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:22, he identifies a cycle that keeps our world violent: **anger** towards someone leads to **othering**, where I empty someone of value through my language and attitude toward them. And when I empty someone of value, it makes it much easier to be **violent** against them, which only deepens the anger between us.

Jesus calls his followers to a different way: **the way of nonviolent peacemaking and proactive love for your enemy**. Peacemaking is not passivity; rather it confronts false peace, anger, evil and injustice through transformative action and forgiveness. In each of the three examples Jesus gives (the slap, the coat, and the carry), each response confronts the reality of evil without succumbing to a similar evil in response. Jesus' peacemaking is nonviolent. This requires a willingness to be vulnerable and humble in the face of evil, just as Jesus made himself vulnerable and humble when we were his enemies.

It is in our peacemaking love that we look most like our Father in heaven, who made "peace through the blood of the cross," transforming a weapon of Roman oppression into a place of redemptive love. As followers of the crucified King, we are called to do the same: to confront false peace and injustice not with violence and power, but with self-sacrificial love for those who stand against us in hopes to see reconciliation and restoration between them and God and between us and them.

The practice of peacemaking directly confronts our prejudices, anger, and "othering" which often keep us content with injustice and violence so long as it doesn't challenge our comfort. Loving friends is easy; loving enemies is Christ-like. Furthermore, Jesus says elsewhere, our unwillingness to reconcile demonstrates a failure to live into the truth of the reconciliation we've received from God (Matt. 6:14-15). Peacemaking is not an option in the way of Jesus, but it comes with this promise:

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." (Matt. 5:9)







## ASK

God warns his people in Jeremiah 6:14 about looking the other way and covering up violence and injustice:

"They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace."

Take a few moments and prayerfully ask God these questions:

How am I guilty of holding onto anger and "othering"?  
Show me the specific attitude or prejudice you want to confront in me.

Where have I accepted a false peace rather than the true peace you desire?

## YIELD

Each week we will consider a few yielding practices, ways that we can begin to make space in our lives and our habits for Jesus to lead. The practice of peacemaking invites us to consider three circles of relationships:

- **Making peace between you and God.** Our willingness to forgive others is indicative of our understanding of God's grace. The power of peacemaking comes not from ourselves, but from the knowledge of God's peacemaking love for us. Reconciliation is the heart of the gospel: our sin made us God's enemies, but Jesus dies to bring us back to God. In response, we confess our sins and return to him.
  - **Making peace between you and a brother/sister.** "False peace" avoids conflict; true peace deals with conflict. Christians aren't called to avoid conflict; instead we deal with conflict directly with those with whom we have issue. Is there someone in your life with whom you need to disrupt a false peace in order to truly make peace?
  - **Making peace in the conflicts around you.** Being a peacemaker implies that you're in the middle of conflict, not to foster anger but to seek understanding and cultivate the nonviolent peace of Jesus' kingdom in your community. This might include (1) cutting out voices of anger and bitterness in your life; (2) seeking to understand those who view an issue differently that you through reading or listening to their story; (3) committing to nonviolent approaches to conflict resolution; or (4) engaging a place of pain or conflict as a peacemaking presence.
- 