

Home Study 1: Desiring God's glory – SEEKING HIS PEACE IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS**I. Introductory materials:**

Only The Incarnation - the death of Christ for us on the cross and the coming of the Holy Spirit allow us to reverse the separation and alienation brought on by our fall to sin. As we develop genuine intimacy with God on his terms we will learn to love each other more and more. We will pursue healthier Biblical relationships.

“We are praying and asking God to transform us into a people of deep unity and rich community.”

Jesus is identified as the author of peace, in Isaiah 9:6 he is called the “prince of peace”, and at his birth the angels declared God's peace and good will. Yet in our day we have anything but peace. There is international, national, local and personal conflict all around us. Families have little peace and the divorce rate is evidence of this. One of the biggest areas we lack peace in is our own souls. We are conflicted and restless and torn up inside much of the time. Few have genuine peace with God.

Jesus came to bring his peace to us, he offers: Peace with God, peace with others and peace within ourselves (John 14:27). As we consider koinonia (God's miraculous power of unity and community) it is important that we understand this peace that Jesus brings. Paul writes in Ephesians 4:3 telling us to “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. What is that peace and how do we experience it in our relationships? In this study we will look at three areas that Jesus offers us his peace. We will look at them in the order of their importance. Jesus offers us...

II. Peace with God

All real peace begins with God. In order to benefit from receiving the offer of peace with God given to us in Christ we must begin with an understanding of what he offers and how by our experiencing his peace we bring more glory to him entering into koinonia.

A. When Jesus offers us peace with God what's in the offer?

The peace Jesus offers has two dimensions to it. They are parallel and in some ways overlap each other. Initially we will distinguish between them. One is spoken of in Philippians 4:6, 7 and Isaiah 26:3. Look these verses up and write down what this peace is like and how it benefits the recipient:

Philippians 4:6, 7

Isaiah 26:3

The second dimension of the peace he offers is spoken of in the following passages; Look up each and discuss what Jesus is offering us in them:

Colossians 1:19-20

Romans 5:1-2

Summarize the peace with God that Jesus offers us:

- B. How does experiencing peace with God bring more glory to him and bring about richer unity and greater community?

III. Peace with others

- A. When Jesus offers us peace with others what's in the offer?

Read Ephesians 2:11-18 to help answer this question:

Now look at Colossians 3:15-17:

- B. How does receiving his peace bring more glory to him and bring about unity and greater community?

From our opening study remember that Jesus said, "...I seek not to please myself but him who sent me" (John 5:30). He prayed for our unity and our oneness, "that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." (John 17:22-23). Draw a parallel (How are they similar; work together; head in the same direction?) between "peace with others" and "our unity" –

In Ephesians 4:3 God tells us through Paul to "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. What are we being called to?"

Specifically what is "the bond of peace"?

IV. Peace within ourselves

A. When Jesus offers us peace within ourselves what's in the offer?

This is probably the one we all want the most. In many ways we will not experience this peace unless we first have peace with God and are beginning to have peace with others. This peace is probably where the two dimensions of peace come together the closest. Look up 1 John 3:21-22; how does having hearts that do not condemn us and having confidence before God go hand in hand?

According to Isaiah 26:3 (looked at earlier) how do we experience his peace within ourselves?

How do we "Let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts?" (From Colossians 3:15 also looked at earlier)

B. How does receiving this peace bring more glory to him and bring about richer unity and greater community?

Jesus speaks to us in John 14:26 and 1 saying; "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid...Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.

How does a troubled heart (a non-trusting, non-peace filled heart) limit our ability to experience richer unity and greater community?

How does letting Christ's peace rule in our hearts help promote deep unity and rich community?

Wrap-up: Share and pray for each other asking God in Christ to bring and grant us His Peace with Him, with others and within yourselves to a much greater degree.