



Class 2. Live at Peace Romans 12:18

- Last week we defined conflict as a difference in opinion or purpose that frustrates someone's goals or desires
- Conflict is an opportunity to solve common problems in a way that honors God and offers benefits to those involved
- There are three basic ways that people respond to conflict. These responses may be arranged on a curve that resembles a hill. On the left slope of the hill we find the escape responses to conflict. On the right side are the attack responses. And in the center we find the peacemaking responses.
- Today, we're going to discuss our goal of living at peace
- 1. Peace is part of God's character - He is frequently referred to as "the God of peace" (see Rom. 15:33; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:9; Heb. 13:20).
- 2. Peace is one of the great blessings that God gives to those who follow him (see Lev. 26:6; Num. 6:24-26; Judg. 5:31; Ps. 29:11; 119:165; Prov. 16:7; Micah 4:1-4).
- 3. God repeatedly commands his people to seek and pursue peace (see Ps. 34:14; Jer. 29:7; Rom. 14:19; 1 Cor. 7:15; 2 Cor. 13:11; Col. 3:15; 1 Thess. 5:13).
- There are three dimensions to the peace that God offers to us through Christ:
 - Peace with God
 - Peace with one another
 - Peace within ourselves
- Many people care little about their relationships with God and other people, but they still want peace within themselves.
- As we will see, it is impossible to know genuine internal peace unless you also pursue peace with God and others.

- Peace with God

- Peace with God does not come automatically. All of us have sinned and alienated ourselves from him ([Isa. 59:1-2](#)).
- Through the sacrifice of his son, God has made it possible for us to have peace with Him. ([Col. 1:19-20](#); [Rom. 5:1-2](#))
- Believing in Jesus means more than being baptized, going to meeting, or trying to be a good person.
- Believing in Jesus involves admitting that you are a sinner and acknowledging that there is no way you can earn God's approval by your works ([Rom. 3:20](#); [Eph. 2:8-9](#) - ["For by Grace are you saved through faith"](#)).
- As you believe in Jesus, accept God's gracious gift of salvation, and draw closer to him through the study of his Word, the privilege of prayer, and the fellowship of his Ecclesia, his peace can fill every part of your life.

- Peace with Others

- This peace, which is often referred to as "unity" ([Ps. 133:1](#) - [Behold, how good a thing it is...](#)), is not simply the absence of conflict and strife. Unity is the presence of genuine harmony, understanding, and goodwill between people.
- This peace is the direct result of obeying the second great commandment - "Love your neighbor as yourself"
- This study is all about Unity - It's all about showing us how to pursue peace with others when conflict has disrupted our relationships

- Peace within Yourself

- Internal peace is a sense of contentment, tranquility, order, rest and security
- This kind of peace alludes most people
- That is because it can't be attained through our own efforts, it is a gift that God gives to those who believe in his Son and obey his commandments
- In other words, Internal Peace is a by-product of righteousness ([Isa. 26:3](#) - [I will keep him in perfect peace](#) - [Isa 32:17](#))
- So, Internal Peace only comes from being reconciled to God and obeying what he commands - (["And this is what he commands, to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another"](#) - [1 John 3:23](#))

- Therefore, if you want to experience Internal Peace, you must be reconciled to God and seek harmonious relationships with those around you
- This theme of peace and unity is an important part of Jesus' message - ("Blessed are the peacemakers" - Matt. 5:9)
- The Enemy of Peace
- Our own sinfulness is our greatest enemy against peace in our lives
- Our natural inclination is to look out for ourselves, and we often hurt others in the process
- As long as we see other people as our adversaries and focus our attacks on them, we will give no thought to dealing with the real cause of our problems
- Every letter in the New Testament contains a commandment to live at peace with each other
- Ephesians focuses heavily on peacemaking
- Eph 4:1-3
- Make **EVERY** effort
- Unity does not mean Uniformity - Eph. 4:7-13
- Paul continues to show the importance of harmonious relationships - Eph 4:29-32
- Questions to ask ourselves:
 - 1) Are we truly reconciled to God by admitting that we are sinners and that there is no way that we can earn God's approval by our works?
 - 2) Are we at peace with other people?
 - 3) Are you experiencing the kind of internal peace that you desire?
 - 4) Has the unity of the Ecclesia been disrupted by your dispute?
 - 5) Is there someone who might have something against you?
 - 6) Why and how might your own sinfulness be aggravating this dispute?