

2019 Men's Leadership Conference Callaway Gardens

Be at peace with all men.

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Initial Thoughts

- Conflict with others is assumed in the Bible. Why do we need verses on peace if there isn't any conflict?
- Conflict with fellow Christians is assumed, but so is resolution of the conflict (Mark 9:50; 1 Thes 5:13). Obedience leads to peace.
- Conflict with non-Christians is assumed, but not resolution (Hebrews 12:14). In this case, obedience is about effort, not necessarily resolution. Obedience may, or may not, lead to peace.

Peace defined negatively

- Peace is not passivity.
- Peace is not ignoring sin in our own lives.
- Peace is not avoiding confronting sin in relationships.
- Peace is not the absence of tribulation in our lives.
- Peace is not a cold war where nothing is resolved but the parties simply ignore one another.
- Peace is not peace if we have to sin to achieve it.

Key Verses

- “The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.” Isa. 53:5
 - Jesus suffered for us to have peace. We shouldn’t cheapen the price He paid by settling for earthly definitions of peace.
- “Six things the Lord hates...a man who spreads strife among brothers.” Proverbs 6:19
 - Why would we want to be a part of anything the Lord hates?
- “... and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, he uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously...” 1 Peter 2:23
 - Always remember Jesus’ response when He was being reviled. He didn’t return it.

Romans 12:18 – Peace among believers

- Earlier we said peace among believers is assumed.
 - Is that a good assumption?
 - Euodia and Syntyche in Philippians 4:2
 - Barnabas and Paul in Acts 15:36-40
 - Peace first, offering second Matthew 5:23-24
 - “One another” verses in the NT:
 - Love one another John 13:35, 15:12,17
 - Romans 12; 14:13,19
 - 1 Corinthians 6:7
 - The fact that pursuing peace may be difficult or may not be convenient is not an excuse not to make the effort

“If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.” Romans 12:18

- Paul could have just as easily have said: “Be at peace with all men.” So why didn’t he?
- Romans 12 is full of commands. Actually chapters 12-16 are full of commands
- Depending on how you count them there are 20+ commands in chapter 12 alone.
- I’ve read through all of the commands in chapters 12-16 as well as the NT.
- All but one are stated clearly without condition. The exception? Verse 18.

...so far as it depends on you...

- These words are not here to give us an out when we don't feel like pursuing peace.
- The “so far as it depends on you” part of this verse focuses on us.
- As Christians, we are to make every effort required for peace. There is no end date given for our efforts at peace.
- We are not to be responsible for:
 - Starting quarrels OR
 - Continuing them (Ephesians 4:30-32)
- Our attempts at peace should all be within bounds of Biblical doctrine.
- *“If our neighbor’s temper is gunpowder, we should not light a fire near them.”* Spurgeon

If possible,...

- These words are not here to give us an out when we don't feel like pursuing peace.
- This is not meant to narrow our responsibility or to lessen your efforts. It is meant to broaden it. We should always look for ways to obey His word, not to avoid it.
- The “if possible” part of this verse focuses on the other party.
- Continue to make the effort.
- We may not be able to bring about peace, but we are to make every effort possible within Biblical standards.
- *We are to pursue peace. We aren't responsible for the results. We are responsible for effort.*

...be at peace with all men

- At peace with God
- At peace with yourself
- (You can control these two)

- I would suggest that without the first one, true and lasting peace is not possible
- “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Rom 5:1
- “...that in Me you may have peace...” John 16:32
- We cannot know true peace until we experience God’s grace

- *“We cannot receive what He gives unless we receive who He is.”* Adrian Rogers

“...be at peace with all men.”

- At peace with family
- At peace with friends
- At peace with neighbors
- At peace with anyone else not mentioned above
- We can't control the people in this category, so we have to approach peace with them differently.
- So how do we do it? Are there some basic things that must be true before we can have peace?

Pre-requisites for Peace=> GOSPEL

- Grace (17 NT books “grace and peace”)
 - Obedience (Romans 12; Philippians 4:9)
 - Salvation/Justification (Romans 5:1)
 - Prayer and Petition (Philippians 4:6-7)
 - Effort (Hebrews 12:14)
 - Love and Forgiveness (1 John 3:23)
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- *You MAY NOT reach peace with obedience, but you WILL NOT find peace with disobedience.*

Final Thoughts

- We must be at peace with God
 - We must be at peace with ourselves
 - We must be at peace with other Christians
 - We must pursue peace with everyone else
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- *The ultimate reason for seeking peace with others (beyond obedience) is to create opportunities to share our faith with the lost or to encourage fellow believers.*