



PEACEMAKERS

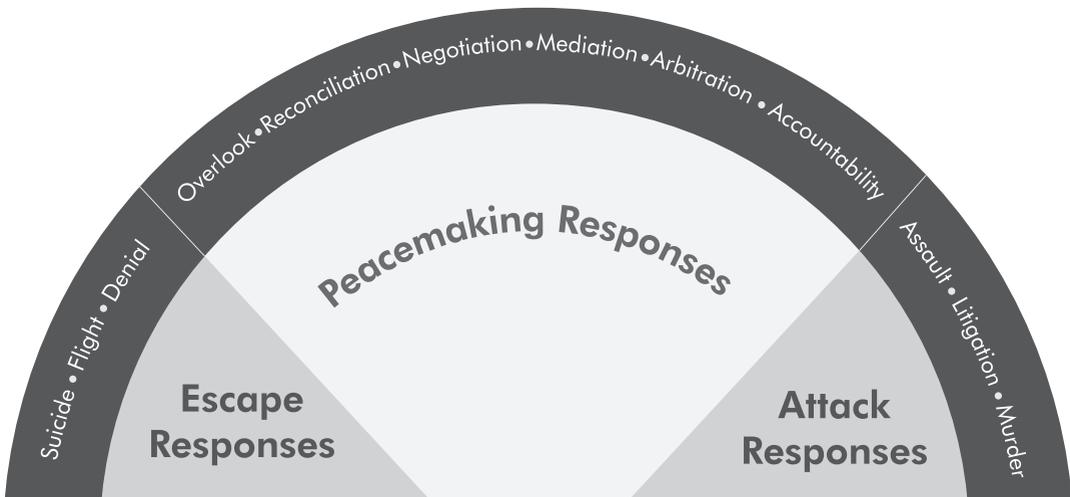
CONNECT GROUP SERIES

Matthew 5:9

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Personal Peace- making	Overlook an offense (Prov. 19:11) Reconciliation (Matt. 5:23-24) Negotiation (Phil. 2: 3 -4)
Assisted Peace- making	Mediation (Matt. 1:16) Arbitration (1Cor. 6:18) Accountability (Matt. 18:17 -20)



The Slippery Slope

As you get started

Each group session is divided into four sections

- **Learning Together** involves a 25-minute video presentation in which Ken Sande teaches the core principles of biblical peacemaking.
- **What Do You Think?** provides an opportunity to discuss challenging peacemaking concepts and explore ways to apply them in real life.
- **Pray for One Another** allows members of the group to share and pray for one another regarding specific habits they want to change or relationships they are working to reconcile.
- **My Next Step** provides practical homework assignments designed to help you apply what you have learned.

Reading and Preparation

Enhance your study by memorising the Memory verse and Key Principle given for each session. By hiding these words in your heart and meditating on them repeatedly, you will be prepared to draw on them for prompt and reliable guidance when conflict strikes.

If you are unable to complete the reading or memory work every week, please participate in the meetings anyway! All the key concepts will be presented in the teaching video, so you will still be able to participate comfortably and fully in the group discussion.

Finally, after each session, take the time to complete the suggested Next Step, then share your experience with the others in your group. God often works most powerfully as you reflect on and seek to apply the principles you learn during each session.

Session One

Conflict starts in the heart

MEMORY VERSE

*What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?
(James 4:1)*

KEY PRINCIPLE

God uses conflict to reveal our idols.

Part one: Get the log out of your eye

How can I show Jesus' work in me by taking responsibility for my contribution to this conflict?

Group Study

Learning Together (video)

1. The progression of an idol:

- I _____.
- I _____.

But those who trust in idols, who say to images, 'You are our gods,' will be turned back in utter shame (Isa. 42:17).

An idol is anything apart from God that we depend on to be happy, fulfilled or secure. It is something other than God that we set our hearts on (Luke 12:29), that rules us (Eph. 5:5), or that we trust, fear or serve (Isa. 42:17; Luke 12:45; Matt. 6:24). Given its controlling effect on our lives, an idol may be referred to as a "functional god."

- I _____.

Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it (James 4:11).

- I _____.

Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him (Gen. 4:8; see Prov. 27:15).

2. Expose idols by asking " _____ " questions.

Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord (Lam. 3:40).

- With what am I preoccupied?
- How would I complete the statement: "If only _____, then I would be happy, fulfilled and secure?"

- When a certain desire is not met, do I feel frustration, anxiety, resentment, bitterness, anger or depression?

3. The cure for an idolatrous heart:

- _____ and receive God's refreshing forgiveness.

Repent, then, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord (Acts 3:19).

- Worship and _____ yourself in the Lord.

Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart (Ps. 37:4).

Key Principle: God uses conflict to reveal our idols.

What Do You Think?

1. What desires do you have that sometimes grow into controlling demands or idols that trigger or aggravate conflict? Is there an X-ray question that is particularly revealing for you?
2. How do you judge and punish those around you when your idols are not being satisfied? How does your behaviour affect others? Is there a "punishment technique" that you tend to use?
3. What attributes, promises or activities of God can you celebrate and depend on for happiness, fulfilment and security, to diminish the appeal and power of idolatrous desires?
4. What could you and others in your group do to diminish the influence of hidden idolatry within your families and your church?

Pray for One Another

My Next Step

I will think of someone who has been affected by one of my idols. I will write a brief but clear description of the progression of that idol (the initial desire, why it became a demand, and how I judged and punished the other person).

Next week I will learn how to use confession to cast down this idol and repair the damage it has caused.

Session Two

Confession brings freedom

MEMORY VERSE

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy (Prov. 28:13).

KEY PRINCIPLE

Confession brings freedom.

Part one: Get the log out of your eye

How can I show Jesus' work in me by taking responsibility for my contribution to this conflict?

Group Study

Learning Together (video)

The Seven A's of Confession

- A _____ everyone involved (Luke 19:8).
- A _____ if, but and maybe (Ps. 51).
- A _____ specifically.

Sinful desires/ idols

- Inherently sinful cravings or attitudes, such as pride, lust, greed or hatred.
- Good things that we want too much, without which we feel we cannot be content, fulfilled, secure or happy.

Sinful words

- Harsh, reckless or worthless words (Eph. 4:29).
- Grumbling and complaining.
- Falsehood – any deception or twisting of the truth.
- Gossip – revealing or discussing personal information about others with people who are not part of the problem or the solution.
- Slander – speaking false and malicious words.

Sinful action

- Not keeping your word.
- Not respecting authority.
- Not treating others as you want to be treated (Matt. 7:12).

- A _____ the hurt. Express sincere sorrow for the way affected others.
- A _____ the consequences (Luke 15:19; Luke 19:8).
- A _____ (change) your behaviour (Eph. 4:22 -32).
- A _____ for forgiveness and allow time (Gen. 50:17).

Key Principle: Confession brings freedom.

What Do You Think?

1. Why do we often find it so difficult to confess our wrongs? What are some of the ways we minimize or avoid admitting our sin?
2. Which step in the Seven A's of Confession is the most difficult for you to do sincerely and thoroughly? Why?
3. How can your celebrating and meditating on God's grace and forgiveness help you to confess your sins more easily and quickly?
4. Describe the most encouraging and effective confession you have ever received, given or heard about within your church. What made it so compelling?

Pray for One Another

My Next Step

Referring to the “progression of an idol” description I wrote in the Next Step last week, I will write a complete “Seven A” confession of how my desires and actions have affected the other person. I will go to that person this week and make a sincere and thorough confession, asking God to bring about a genuine reconciliation.

Session Three

Take one or two others along

MEMORY VERSES

- *Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently (Gal. 6:1).*
- *But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that “every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector (Matt. 18:16-17).*

KEY PRINCIPLES

Constructive correction is a sign of genuine love.

Discipline is God’s gift and blessing to the church.

Part two: Gently Restore

How can I lovingly serve others by helping them take responsibility for their contribution to this conflict?

Group Study

Learning Together (part one)

1. **God calls us to lovingly correct one another.**

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over (Matt. 18:15).

2. **Correcting means more than confronting.**

What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? (Matt. 18:12; see Matt. 18: 21 -35; Gal. 6:1).

3. **Sooner or later, talk face-to-face.** (see Gen. 32-33; 50: 15-21; Sam. 14: 24; Matt. 5:23-24).

4. **Go when someone's sins are too serious to overlook.**

- Is it dishonouring God? (Rom. 2:21-24)
- Is it damaging your relationship?
- Is it hurting others (or you)? (Luke 17:2-3; Cor. 5:6)
- Is it hurting the offender?

My brothers if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins (James 5:19-20).

5. **Special consideration:**

- First get the log out of your own eye.
- Approach non-Christians gently.
- Respect those in authority.

- Deal cautiously with abuse.
- Go tentatively... go repeatedly.

Key Principle: Constructive correction is a sign of genuine love.

Learning Together (part 2 - video)

1. **Step One:** Overlook minor offenses (Prov. 19:11).
2. **Step Two:** Talk privately (Matt. 18:15).
3. **Step Three:** Take _____ or _____ others along.

But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that "every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses" (Matt. 18:16).

- To meditate or arbitrate (1 Cor. 6: 1-8);
- To encourage self-control and courtesy;
- To ask questions, clarify facts;
- To counsel and admonish by God's Word;
- To observe conduct and report to church or churches.

4. **Step Four:** Tell it to the _____.

If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church (Matt. 18:17a).

5. **Step Five:** Treat the other person as a _____.

And if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector (Matt. 18:17b).

- To convict and restore those who stray (1 Cor. 5:1 -13)

"Nothing is so cruel as the tenderness that consigns another to his sin. Nothing can be more compassionate than the severe rebuke

that calls a brother back from the path of sin.”

– Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

- To guard others from stumbling

Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? (1 Cor. 5:6; see 1 Tim., 5:20; Titus 3: 10-11)

- To protect God's name (Rom. 2:24)

6. **Step Six:** Forgive and _____ the repentant.

What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. In the same way, your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost (Matt. 18:12-14; see 2 Cor. 2: 5 -11).

Key Principle: Discipline is God's gift and blessing to the church.

What Do You Think?

1. Describe a situation from your experience in which a spiritually mature third party might have helped to resolve a conflict more quickly or effectively. How might that person have helped?
2. Many churches are reluctant to get involved in members' conflicts, as commanded in Matthew 18: 15-16 and 1 Corinthians 6:1–8, and even more reluctant to exercise formal church discipline, as commanded in Matthew 18:17. Why do you think this is?
3. Reread *Dietrich Bonhoeffer's* statement on the previous page. Describe a time when a church's failure to get involved in a conflict seemed like "tenderness" but actually "consigned another to his sin," or a time when a church's discipline may have seem "severe" to some people and yet "called someone back from the path of sin."
4. What might happen (both short-term and long-term) if more churches practiced loving, redemptive accountability and discipline? What would they need to guard against? What specific steps could you take to support loving discipline in your church?

Pray for One Another

My Next Step

I will think about a time where I had the wrong attitude in confronting someone – condemning rather than restoring. Using the guidelines from Session Two, I will prepare a confession related to this situation. Then I will go to that person this week and make a sincere confession. Later (probably not during the same conversation), if God opens the door, I will make another attempt to “gently restore” this person using a more loving and redemptive attitude, keeping the gospel at the centre of the conversation.

Session Four

Forgive as God forgave you

MEMORY VERSE

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother, then come and offer your gift (Matt. 5: 23-24).

KEY PRINCIPLE

Our forgiveness shows what we think of God's forgiveness.

Part three: Go and be reconciled

How can I demonstrate the forgiveness of God and encourage a reasonable solution to this conflict?

Group Study

Learning Together (video)

1. You _____ forgive in your own strength.
2. Forgiveness is neither a feeling, nor forgetting, nor excusing.
3. Sin creates a _____ that must be paid.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed (1 Pet. 2:24).

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors (Matt. 6:12).

- Will you _____ payments?
- Or _____ payments?

4. Forgiveness is a _____ modelled after God's forgiveness.

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you (Col.3 :13).

Love... keeps no record of wrongs (1 Cor. 13:4-5).

- I promise I will not _____ on this incident.
- I promise I will not _____ up this incident and use it against you.
- I promise I will not _____ to others about this incident.
- I promise I will not allow this incident to _____ between us or _____ our personal relationship.

5. God's forgiveness _____ our forgiveness.

Then the master called the servant in "You wicked servant, he said, I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to, shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?" (Matt. 18:32- 33).

Key Principle: Our forgiveness shows what we think of God's forgiveness.

What Do You Think?

1. Who is the most forgiving person you know? How does he or she make you or others feel forgiven?
2. Reflect on the statement, "Sin creates a debt that must be paid. "When others sin against you, what are some ways you are tempted to "take payments" on their debt? How could you deliberately "make payments" on their debt?
3. Which of the "I promise" statements from the previous page do you feel least like making or keeping? Why? How can focusing on the forgiveness God offers through the gospel help you to make and keep that promise?
4. Some churches are viewed as being unforgiving. How does that affect the willingness of members to confess and seek help with their sins? How could your church cultivate a reputation for being forgiving? How could that affect your people and your witness for Christ?

Pray for One Another

My Next Step

If I think of someone I need to forgive (or forgave in a superficial way in the past), I will go to that person and affirm my forgiveness, specifically making the four promises and explaining that they are modelled after the forgiveness God has given to me through Christ.

Answer Key

Session 1

I desire

I demand

I judge

I punish

Asking "X-ray"

Repent and

Delight yourself

Session 2

Address everyone

Avoid if

Admit specifically

Acknowledge the

Accept consequences

Alter (change)

Ask for

Session 3

One or two

To the church

A nonbeliever

And restore

Session 4

You cannot

Creates a debt

You take payments

Or make payments

Is a decision

Dwell on

Bring up

Talk to

Stand... hinder

Forgiveness inspires

