

FINDING YOUR MISSING PEACE
Don't Worry - Be Happy!
Part 7 of 8
Rick Warren

Matthew 5:9 "Happy are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons of God."

1. Misconceptions about Peacemaking

- * It's not _____
- * It's not _____

2. Why be a Peacemaker?

Because unresolved conflict:

- * Blocks my _____ I John 4:20-21, 1:3-4
 - * Prevents _____ I Peter 3:7
 - * Hinders my _____
- "You are only hurting yourself with your anger." Job 18:4 (LB)

3. How to Become a Peacemaker

P.E.A.C.E.

Plan _____

"If . . . you remember your brother has something against you . . . go at once to make peace . . ." Matt 5:23-24 (GN)

Empathize _____

"None of you should think only of his own affairs, but consider other people's interests also." Phil 2:4 (Ph)

Attack _____

"A gentle answer quiets anger but a harsh one stirs it up." Prov. 15:1 (GN)

"Do not use harmful words, but only helpful words, the kind that build up and provide what is needed. . . ." Eph. 4:29 (GN)

Cooperate _____

"Do everything possible on your part, to live at peace with all men." Rom 12:18 (GN)

". . . Peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of goodness."
James 3:17 (LB)

Emphasize _____

". . . God has reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gives us the ministry of reconciliation." 2 Cor. 5:18

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." Col :15

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Last week my three year old, Matthew, had a friend over and he was having a tough day. He was arguing about the toys and was grumpy. He just wasn't very nice. When Kay put him down for his nap she said, "Matthew, Luke is one of your very best friends. You ought to be nicer to him." He said, "Well, Mom, sometimes I'm mean, sometimes I'm not. Like father, like son." Out of the mouth of babes.

Whenever one of my boys does something I'm proud of, I say, "He's just like his father!" Whenever one of my boys does something I'm embarrassed by, my wife says, "He's just like his father!" Either way they're just like me.

Jesus says there's one thing you can always know when we're like our heavenly father, Matthew 5:9 *"Happy are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons of God."* You are a son of God when you're a peacemaker.

It doesn't say, "Happy are the peace lovers", everybody loves peace. Or, "Happy are the peaceable", those who never get disturbed by anything. It says, Happy are those who make peace -- who actively seek to resolve conflict.

Misconceptions about Peacemaking

1. It's not avoiding.

It's not running from the problem. It's not pretending it doesn't exist. "I don't want to talk about it" is not peacemaking, it's cowardice. None of us like conflict so we avoid it, postpone it, put it off but it only gets bigger.

2. It's not appeasement.

When you always give in and let the other person have their own way. You let people run over you. That's passivity. Jesus was a very controversial person. He stood his ground on a number of issues.

Once in a while I read a marriage books that says you ought to be a doormat and always let the other partner have their own way and always give in -- for the sake of peace be a doormat. Jesus never said that. Jesus never said you ever had to give up your identity or be a chameleon.

It's not appeasement and it's not avoiding. It's actively seeking to resolve the conflict.

Why should I be a peacemaker?

1. Unresolved conflict blocks my fellowship with God.

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The Bible says you cannot have close fellowship with God and be out of fellowship with other people at the same time. I John 4 says "*How can a man say 'I love God' and hate his brother at the same time?*" If you're growing close to God and the other person is growing close to God it's inevitably going to pull you closer together. When you're out of fellowship with people -- horizontal -- you're out of fellowship vertically.

2. It prevents answered prayers.

I Peter 3:7 "*Husbands, if you don't treat your wife right forget about praying.*" Matthew 5 says reconciliation is a prerequisite for worship. When you come to church and you're ready to give your offering and you remember somebody has something against you, it says go, get that right and then come back. Nothing can substitute for reconciliation. Not giving, sharing, reading the Bible. If you're having a hard time getting an answer to prayer, maybe you'd better check out your relationships.

3. It hinders my happiness.

When I'm in conflict with Kay I'm miserable. Job 18:4 "*You are only hurting yourself with your anger.*" Resentment is dumb. When you get resentful it monopolizes your attention. That's all you can think about is that other person. You're just bugged by that other person. They're having a great time and you're the one who's upset.

You need to learn to be a peacemaker.

Five things of how to be at peace. How to resolve conflict at home, at work, at school, with your friends... P.E.A.C.E.

PLAN a Peace conference.

Matthew 5:24 "*If you remember your brother has something against you go at once to make peace.*" He says, you take the initiative. Don't wait for them to make the first move. It doesn't matter if you're the offended or the offender, it's always my move.

In 1979, Sadat won the Nobel Peace Prize because he took the initiative. He broke the blockade, flew over to Jerusalem and opened up peace talks with Israel that eventually awarded accords.

Always take the initiative. Why? Because Jesus said so. You take the initiative. And because you're more mature. Go first. Schedule a sit down, face to face meeting. Conflict is not resolved accidentally. It doesn't resolve itself. You must intentionally deal with it.

When do you deal with it? "...at once ..." Circle that. Do it now. Don't postpone it. If you avoid or delay it only grows worse. The longer I wait to resolve a conflict the more difficult it's going to be to resolve it.

EMPATHIZE with their feelings.

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Phil. 2:4 *"None of you should think only of his own affairs, but consider other people's interests also."* Circle "consider". The word in Greek is the word "scopos" from which we get the word scope. It means pay attention to their needs.

When you're upset, who are you thinking about? Me, my needs, my hurts, you hurt me. I don't care about you. God says reverse that. Hold a peace conference and think about what are his needs, what can I do to help them? Focus on their needs, not my own needs.

Parents have to be peacemakers -- tug of war over toys, in house fighting. You have to listen to your kids and be sensitive and empathize with their needs and figure out why are they hurting. Why are they arguing over this? One of the values of conflict is when you solve it, it usually leads to greater intimacy because you understand them better. You've been listening.

ATTACK the problem not the person.

You can't focus on fixing the problem and fixing the blame at the same time. It's impossible. If you go to the meeting thinking you're going to blame the other person, then forget it. Proverbs 15:1 *"A gentle answer quiets anger but a harsh one stirs it up."* Engage your mind before you engage your mouth. Be sincere, not sarcastic. You don't get the point across by being cross. Attack the problem not the person. Don't criticize, condemn and compare.

Ephesians 4:29 *"Do not use harmful words, but only helpful words, the kind that build up and provide what is needed."* Don't go condemning the person. Don't be criticizing and comparing. Say things that build people up, not put them down.

The Language of Love by Gary Smalley will teach you how, in conflict, to say the right thing and not the wrong thing.

COOPERATE as much as possible.

Be a bridge builder and not a bridge tearer down-er. Go with the spirit of compromise -- what can we agree on? What can we do together?

Romans 12:18 *"Do everything possible on your part, to live at peace with all men."* The hallmark of a Christian ought to be your ability to get along with other people. It's not how much you pray, read the Bible, sing, give. But, do you get along with other people? That's the mark of a Christian. Jesus said, *"By this shall all men know that you're My disciples, that you have love for one another."*

Circle the phrase, "on your part". There are some people you can't get along with. They are just not going to get along. They are irregular people.

Do everything possible. Peace always has a price. If you want peace in your home, your marriage, there's always a price. It costs your ego. It costs your self centeredness, your selfishness. You've got to be willing to give in. Maybe my wife is right. Maybe my husband does have a point. Maybe my kid has a legitimate gripe. Maybe my parents does know what they're talking about. You've got to give up your pride, your ego. That's the cost for the price of peace.

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The three most difficult words in the English language is "I was wrong." That's compromise, cooperation. The two most difficult words are "I'm sorry". The five: "I'm sorry. I was wrong." Six: "I'm sorry. I was wrong, a lot."

Eric Seagle's book made into a movie Love Story -- "Love means never having to say you're sorry." He was dead wrong! Love means saying you're sorry. Over and over. In relationships you get hurt and you hurt other people. Accidentally, intentionally, you just do it.

James 3:17 *"Peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of goodness."* Whatever you sow is what you're going to reap. If you want people to cooperate with you, you have to cooperate. If you want people to be nice to you, you've got to be nice to them. If you want people to compromise with you, you've got to compromise with them. Whatever you're dishing out is what you're getting back. If you've got conflict in your family, somehow you're dishing some of it out. It takes two for conflict. So you look and say, "What can I do? What seeds am I planting?" If you are always planting seeds of griping, complaining, arguing, hassling, and putting down your mate guess what you're going to reap. Conflict. Whatever seeds you're planting in your marriage is what you're going to grow. Start planting seeds of peace and compromise. Empathize with their feelings and take the initiative, don't wait for them. Go to them first. Matthew 5 and Mark 11 -- one of them says when somebody offends you, go to them, the other says when you offend them you go to them. Either way you take the initiative. If you want to be a peacemaker that's what it means to be like God.

EMPHASIZE reconciliation not resolution.

Reconcile means to reestablish a relationship. It does not mean you resolve all the problems. A lot of times there are some legitimate, honest differences between husbands and wives, employees and bosses, men and women. There are major differences between men and women. We think differently. The average man speaks 15,000 words a day. The average woman speaks 27,000 words a day. When you say, my husband just won't listen to me, you have to realize he doesn't have the brain with the capacity to hold that much! Our little brains can only handle about 15,000 words a day. You've got a 12,000 word excess that's going to fly right over his head. Women are more verbal, it's a fact of life.

There are honest differences and many times you're not going to resolve those. Reconciliation means you bury the hatchet, not the issue. You keep talking about it but you talk about it in harmony. You can disagree, agreeably. You can walk arm in arm together without seeing eye to eye. You can have reconciliation without having resolution of every problem.

Reconciliation focuses on the relationship. Resolution focuses on the issue, the problem. When you focus on A, B often becomes insignificant. When you focus on A, Reconciliation -- "We're married, let's be on the same team. Why are we fighting each other? We're supposed to be on the same team. We have a major disagreement on how to raise the kids, or how to spend the money, or how to have sex -- that's the issue." -- first, focus on reconciliation of the relationship and often, when you do that then (A) this starts to resolve itself out, or (B) it becomes immaterial, or

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(C) at least now you've got two people working in the same direction to resolve it. You focus on emphasizing reconciliation not resolution.

2 Cor. 5:18 *"God has reconciled us to Himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation."* Circle "reconciled" and "reconciliation". God models what He wants you to do. The synonym for peacemaker is reconciler -- one who brings people together. God sent Jesus Christ to bring us to Him so we could have peace with God. God is the original peacemaker. Jesus is the Prince of Peace. What He has modeled He now wants us to do with other people.

When you help restore relationships you're doing what God would do. When you help bring people together who have been estranged that's the most Christlike thing you could do. The ministry of reconciliation. When God looks down on you and you're taking the initiative to restore harmony in that marriage or harmony in that office or with that parent or child or estranged relative -- when you're doing that God looks down on you, "That's my girl!" or "That's my boy!" That person is a child of God.

"Happy are the peacemakers for they will be called the children of God." God says, "They are doing exactly what I would do if I were in that situation. I would be trying to bring harmony where there is disharmony. I would be trying to bring unity where there is conflict." God has given us that ministry of reconciliation, of peacemaking.

Who can be a peacemaker? You can. Anybody can become a peacemaker. But first you must have peace on the inside of you. You can't spread peace if you're at war on the inside. Only what you have can you offer to others.

Many of us were of the generation that was involved in the Peace movement of the 60's. I used to go to those peace rallies and I never saw such a group of angry people. It is no wonder that they didn't have much of an effect. You can't bring peace if you don't got it! If you don't have peace in your heart you certainly can't offer it to anybody else.

You're looking to other people to meet your needs instead of God. When you do that you're asking for trouble. When I'm expecting everybody else to meet my needs and they don't then I get ticked off and we have conflict. God says I never intended for you to have all of your needs met by another person. There are some of those spiritual, emotional needs that only God can meet. When you look to God and you have peace with God then your relationships can get better. The reason why some of you have rotten relationships is because you have a war going on inside. You're asking other people to meet needs that they never will be able to meet -- the deepest needs of your heart.

What do you do? How do I find the missing peace? Where is the missing peace in my life? It's the peace of God. How do you get it? You meet Jesus Christ. You invite Him into your life. He's called the Prince of Peace. Jesus said, *"My peace I give to you, not as the world gives, but My peace."* It's peace that can't be taken away. It's not based on circumstances, whether there's a traffic jam on the freeway or not. It's inner peace, peace that you can have in the midst of chaos, when everything's falling apart -- you can still be at peace. That's the kind of peace that God wants to give you. When you have that in your life, then you can become a peacemaker.

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Col. 3:15 *"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts."* Circle "rule". The word in Greek is the same word as we get the word "umpire". That means somebody who calls the shots, who keeps you in boundaries, a referee, somebody who keeps the game going and keeps it in focus. He's saying, "Let the peace of God umpire your heart." When you have peace with God then you get the peace of God. And when you have the peace of God then you can have peace with other people. That's the order. You let the peace of God rule in your heart.

This is the missing peace that a lot of you are missing in your life. You say, "I tried a lot of stuff to find peace of mind. I tried making it, the acquisition trip, and got all the things, but I still was unhappy. I tried fame, sex, drugs, going to Disneyland -- all the different things but still don't have peace." The missing peace is Christ. He created a God shaped vacuum in your life. And only He can fill that vacuum.

I meet a lot of people who think they have peace with God, but really all they have is a cease-fire. They have a truce. And there's a big difference. They say, "God, You stay on Your side of the fence and I'll stay on my side of the fence and never the twain shall meet. You stay up there in heaven and do the thing with the angels and let me run my own life. If You won't bother me I won't bother You." That's no peace with God, folks. That's a truce. And it's not going to last.

The Bible says that until you invite Christ into your life and let Him fill you with His peace you're at war with God. Because you want to do your own thing, be your own boss, call your own shots. God says, "How can we ever be at peace if you're totally ignoring the purpose for which I made you?" You're not here by accident; God made you for a purpose. Peace comes when you find your niche in life, when you find your purpose, when you meet God and you have a relationship. I'm not talking about religion, I'm talking about relationship. Then, when you have that peace in your heart, you can be at peace with others.

If you have not done that, I'd encourage you to do it today. Open your life to Christ and invite His peace in and experience the Price of Peace. Most of you have made that decision at some point in your life. So my question to you is, What do you want to be remembered for? What do you want people to write on your tombstone? Peacemaker? or Troublemaker? What do you have a reputation for at work, peacemaker or troublemaker?

St. Francis of Assisi used to pray "Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace." That's a great prayer to pray. Wherever there is hostilities, let me bring peace. Let me do the thing that is the most Christlike thing I could do, bring people together. Bring harmony where there is disharmony, restitution where there is conflict. Every time you go out and win somebody to Christ, every time you tell somebody about the Lord you're being a peacemaker. Every time you tell that friend next door or somebody at work, "Jesus loves you and He wants to make a difference in your life and He has a purpose for you and He wants to forgive every sin you've ever done wrong and give you a real meaningful life" and you introduce them to Christ, you're being a peacemaker.

Happy are the peacemakers. Why? First, they're at peace with themselves. Second, they will be rewarded for it by God. Some of you need to get on the phone and make a peace conference. You need to call up that person you have been estranged from, relative, friend, former friend,

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employee, employer -- somebody who there is still resentment in your life toward. How do you know that it's not settled? Do you still remember it? Are you still thinking about it? Are you still rehearsing it in your mind over and over and it still hurts today? Then it's not resolved. I'm not saying you're going to resolve all the issues. I am saying, you need to take the initiative. What if you call the person up and say, "I'd like to get together and see if we can patch things up" and they say No. You have done your part. The Bible says, "*Do everything possible on your part to live at peace with all men.*" You're not responsible for their response. Maybe you need to write a letter. I'm not saying you should bury the issue. You probably still have meaningful differences with that person. But to be able to say to that person, "In my heart I've released the resentment that I had toward you." That's what it means to be a peacemaker. Their attitude is up to them. In fact, it doesn't matter how they respond. You have done your part and God looks down on you and says, "That's my boy!"

Prayer:

Do you have the peace of Christ ruling in your heart? Have you been looking for the missing peace? Do you realize that unresolved conflict blocks your fellowship with God. It prevents answered prayer, it hinders your happiness. If you're still stewing over it, if you're still frustrated over it, it is still unresolved. The Bible says you're only hurting yourself with your anger. Some of you need to open your life to Jesus Christ, "Jesus, come into my life right now." Just say that in your heart. He's not here to scare you, He's here to save you. He's not going to turn you into some fanatic. He wants to turn you into what you're meant to be. Would you say, "Jesus Christ please forgive all the things I've ever done wrong." He's promised that He will. God says, He'll wipe the slate clean. "God, You know everything I've done wrong and I ask You to forgive me. Help me to forgive myself. And, Lord, help me to forgive others. As much as I know how, I give You my life today." That's the starting point. Say, I want the peace of Christ to rule in my heart.

Some of you need to say, "Lord, give me the courage to plan that peace conference. I don't want to do it but I know the longer I put it off the longer it makes me miserable." Some of you as parents, husbands and wives, need to say, "Lord, help me to empathize with the feelings of that person -- my wife, my husband -- the hurts they're feeling, the fears they're feeling, the problems and pressures they're under." Some of you need to say, "Lord, in our marriage, help us to attack the problem and not each other. And not to use harmful words but helpful words, and cut out the sarcasm, criticism and complaining and condescending. Help us to realize we're on the same team. Help us to cooperate as much as possible. Help us to emphasize reconciliation not resolution." There may be some issues in life you will never be able to resolve because of difference of opinion but you can disagree agreeably. Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart.

Maybe you're sitting next to your husband or wife and you would say, "Before God, I want a harmonious relationship. Things have been up and things have been down, but I really want our marriage to be one of harmony."

Father, You said in Your word, "*Happy are the peacemakers for they will be called the children of God.*" Help us to be like You, bringing people together by being instruments of

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Your peace, by living in peace with everyone as much as possible. Fill us with Your peace this week. Amen.