

“The Light of Peace”

Follow the Star #2

INTRODUCTION

In light of recent events in the news, we might find ourselves despairing that there can be no peace in the world. But through the Prince of Peace, Jesus, peace is possible despite our circumstances. In a dark world, the light of peace will in fact draw people God. But what does it take for us to shine the light of peace? This study examines how peace applies in four different aspects of our lives.

Ice Breaker (Optional):

Is there a special place where you go to experience peace?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

Peace with God through Atonement

Q1. Read Romans 5:1; Isaiah 53:5; 1 John 2:1-2

Romans 5:1 tells us we can have peace with God through our faith. But what is the object of our faith that enables that peace (1 John 2:2)? The only reason that sinners (that’s all of us) can have peace with a just and holy God is because of Jesus’ atonement¹. What does Isaiah 53:5 identify as benefits we received from the punishment Jesus endured?

¹ *hilasmos-Gr:a means whereby sin is covered and remitted*

Peace with Others through Grace

Q2. Read Psalm 34:14; 1 Peter 3:8-11

In Psalm 34:14 David recognized that peace must be sought, it does not happen without cultivation. Peter expanded on that idea in 1 Peter 3:8-11 and detailed how we can extend grace to others to promote peace. Look at those verses and share with your group which of these come easily and which are most challenging for you. Is there perhaps someone you feel has been unkind to you, but that God is calling you to bless (verse 9)? How can you extend grace and blessing to such a person this Christmas season?

Peace with Ourselves through Trust

Q3. Read Isaiah 30:15; Isaiah 26:3; Proverbs 3:5-6

Sometimes the most difficult place to be at peace is within ourselves. The scriptures offer a solution for that. When the Lord spoke through Isaiah to His people (Isaiah 30:15), what did He tell them that they

could gain through repentance, rest, quietness and trust?

Unfortunately this passage concludes with “... but you would have none of it.” Have you found yourself ignoring God’s call to rest and trust Him? How do Proverbs 3:5-6 and Isaiah 26:3 explain how we can trust in God? As a group, pause to enter a time of prayer, offering God your complete trust, and accepting the peace He offers you in exchange.

Peace in Our World through Reconciliation and Justice

Q4. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Isaiah 58:9-10

We have been given the ministry of reconciliation, but only after what is true of us (2 Corinthians 5:18)? We should be seeking more than the absence of conflict; we are Christ’s ambassadors, offering reconciliation with God to the world. We can extend the light of peace to the world through our deeds. What does Isaiah 58:9-10 include as some of the expressions of justice that will reveal God to the world around us? Isaiah includes both the things we are not to do, and the things we should do. How can your group engage in a project this Christmas that will address the needs of the hungry or oppressed mentioned in verse 10? Serving idea: help raise money for Salvation Army by bell-ringing – call Maureen Cosick 904-7549

WRAP-UP

God sent His son into the world as the Prince of Peace. He offers us more than the absence of conflict, He wants to reconcile us all to Himself. He did that through the atonement of Jesus on the cross, and He calls us to be at peace with others by extending grace and blessing. We are able to experience peace in our lives when we trust in Him, and the world will only know true peace and see justice reign, when it is reconciled to God.

Memory Verse

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6 NIV

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members’ needs:

Challenge: When you hear someone despairing over violence in the world this week, look for an opportunity to shine the light of God’s peace and his hope on the situation by expressing your trust in God.

Romans 5:1 NIV - 1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

1 John 2:1-2 NIV - 1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

Psalm 34:14 NIV - 14 Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

1 Peter 3:8-11 NIV - 8 Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. 9 Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For, "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. 11 They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it.

Isaiah 30:15 NIV - 15 This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says: "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it."

Isaiah 26:3 NIV - 3 You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.

Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV - 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

2 Corinthians 5:17-20 NIV - 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us

the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Isaiah 58:9-10 NIV - 9 Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. "If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, 10 and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.

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