



God. Self. Others. Trials. Purpose.

WEEK 3
Peace with Others
By: Pastor Gaylyn Kelly

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you,
live at peace with everyone.”

(Romans 12:18, NIV)



INTRODUCTION

When was the last time you had a relationship that was not peaceful? What were the circumstances that caused it to be lacking peace? Recall how you felt during that time, about the other person, about yourself. Were you filled with regret, anger, frustration, and at a loss as to what to do next?

This week, our sermon on Peace will move to the topic of Peace with Others. Humans are complex enough but when we are together in a relationship, it doesn't just double the complexity, but seems to exponentially increase the challenges to live in peace.

As disciples of Christ, we are empowered to not only experience the peace that surpasses all understanding in our own lives but also to be agents of reconciliation and peace to others. This calling invites us to discover the heart of God, to learn from His Word, and to be transformed by His Spirit, so that we may bear witness to the transformative power of His love.

The truth of the scriptures tells us that peace is not merely the absence of conflict but the presence of righteousness and reconciliation. Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace, He invites us to walk in His footsteps, to embrace His teachings, and to embody His love in all our interactions with others. In His earthly ministry, Jesus not only preached about peace but exemplified it in His life.

The pursuit of peace with others is not merely a noble aspiration but a profound calling—a divine mandate that beckons us to transcend our differences and to extend grace to those who have wronged us. We have all experienced the sting of betrayal, the anguish of rejection, and the bitterness of unforgiveness, but as Christ's followers we do not want to perpetuate such things.

It is through our surrender to the Lordship of Christ, our abiding in Him, that we find the strength, the wisdom, and the grace to

navigate the complexities of human relationships. In Him, we discover the transformative power of forgiveness—the capacity to release resentment and give grace to those who have wronged us, and to seek forgiveness from those we have wronged.

As we study the mysteries, complexities, and effort it takes to live in peace with others, let us fix our eyes on Jesus—the author and perfecter of our faith. In the study that follows, we will rely on the daily study of Scripture to teach and guide us, the transformative power of prayer, and the redemptive hope of Christ Jesus, as we seek to cultivate peace in our relationships, to the glory of God.

Let's begin.

DAY 1 | WEEK 3
Peach with Others
By: Pastor Gaylyn Kelly

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you,
live at peace with everyone.”

(Romans 12:18 NIV)

PEACE WITH OTHERS

DAY 1 | WEEK 3

It's challenging to reconcile and have peace with others as we are all flawed people. While we cannot control others in the reconciliation process, nor the ultimate outcome; Scripture tells us to attempt to live at peace with everyone.

Verse 12:18 of Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans he says, "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you live at peace with everyone." Scripture makes it clear; it is on us! Not in our own power, but with the help of the transformative power of the Holy Spirit. When we turn to the Holy Spirit for guidance, we are asking God to intervene into the process while recognizing our responsibility to do everything in our power to make peace with others.

"If possible" encapsulates the Christian ethic of pursuing peace and reconciliation, even amidst challenges and conflicts and the inability to control others. Today we will study the meaning,

application, and reasoning behind Romans 12:18.

Romans 12:18

Romans 12:18 is nestled within the broader context of Paul's letter to the Romans. In this section of the letter, Paul provides practical instructions for Christian living, outlining the characteristics and behaviors that should reflect the lives of believers.

Paul writes, "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." This verse presents a twofold instruction. First, it acknowledges the importance of pursuing peace with everyone, indicating that peace should be our default posture in relationships. Second, it recognizes that achieving peace may not always be entirely within our control, hence the qualifier "if it is possible."

So, the believer's responsibility is to actively seek peace with others doing everything we can, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, while

acknowledging that there are factors beyond our control.

What We Believe

The principle of peace with others is deeply rooted in Christian doctrine. Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, emphasized reconciliation and forgiveness throughout his teachings and life. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus instructs his followers to turn the other cheek and to love our enemies. (Matthew 5:38-48) Also, Jesus himself emphasized the importance of reconciliation and forgiveness in relationships, instructing his followers to love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them (Matthew 5:44).

Furthermore, the Apostle Paul consistently emphasizes the theme of reconciliation throughout his epistles. In 2 Corinthians 5:18, Paul writes, “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.” As recipients of God’s reconciliation, believers are called to be agents of reconciliation in the world. In 2 Corinthians 5:18, Paul writes about the ministry of reconciliation entrusted to believers. This ministry involves actively participating in God’s

work of restoring relationships and bringing about peace between individuals and communities. We will study this passage on Day 3 of this study.

Applying God’s Word Pursuing Peace

Romans 12:18 challenges us to prioritize peace in our relationships. This means actively seeking reconciliation, forgiveness, and understanding, even when faced with conflict or disagreement. We must be willing to initiate conversations, extend grace, and pursue resolution.

Recognizing Limitations

The phrase “as far as it depends on you” reminds us that while we are responsible for our actions and attitudes, achieving peace may require the cooperation of others. We cannot control how others respond to our efforts, but we can control our own responses and attitudes.

Living with Grace and Love

Pursuing peace involves embodying the principles of grace and love in our interactions with others. This requires humility, patience, and a willingness to listen and understand different perspectives. It means choosing reconciliation over retaliation and forgiveness over resentment.

The application of Romans 12:18 is straightforward, yet challenging. Remember that Romans 12:18 serves as a timeless reminder of the Christian's call to pursue peace with others. As followers of Christ, we are called to be peacemakers, actively seeking reconciliation and forgiveness in our relationships reflecting the transformative power of the Gospel. May we heed Paul's exhortation to embody the transformative power of God's love and grace, knowing that in pursuing peace, we reflect the character of our Heavenly Father and bear witness to His reconciling work in the world.

Questions for personal reflection:

1) Take time to pray and consider your own experiences, what are some practical challenges you face in pursuing peace with others, and how did or do you navigate these challenges? What is one thing you can change that could help in your own relationships to cultivate peace in them?

2) How does the concept of "as far as it depends on you" influence your approach to conflict resolution and reconciliation in your relationships?

3) Is there one area of reconciliation that seems to be the largest obstacle for you to work through, so that a different outcome of peace can occur?

4) What are you willing to do to have peace with others? What depends on you for your relationships to be filled with peace?

DAY 2 | WEEK 3
Pave the Way for Reconciliation
By: Pastor Gaylyn Kelly

“So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.”

(Matthew 5:23-24, NIV)

PAVE THE WAY FOR RECONCILIATION

DAY 2 | WEEK 3

Matthew 5:23-24 is part of the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus delivers teachings on various aspects of Kingdom living. In this passage, Jesus addresses the importance of reconciliation and forgiveness that makes it possible to have peace with others. Let's study and dive deeper into the meaning and application of these verses, exploring doctrinal reasoning and practical implications.

Jesus is addressing the importance of reconciliation before offering our worship to God. He presents a scenario where an individual is in the act of offering a gift at the altar—a sacred and significant act of worship for a follower of Jesus. However, Jesus interrupts this with a crucial instruction: if the worshipper recalls that their brother or sister has something against them, they are to leave their gift at the altar and first seek reconciliation with them.

This teaching highlights the priority of relationships and the interconnectedness of our vertical relationship with God and our horizontal relationships with others. Jesus emphasizes that genuine worship cannot occur in the presence of unresolved conflicts or broken relationships. Reestablishing peace with others takes precedence so that our worship will not be hindered.

What We Believe

In the center of our Christian doctrine is the principle of reconciliation and forgiveness and the restoration of broken relationships through the redemptive work of Christ. The Apostle Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 (NIV), "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ." As recipients of God's reconciliation, we are called to the ministry of reconciliation in our relationships with others.

Jesus himself taught that giving and receiving forgiveness is central to our relationship with God. In Matthew 6:14-15, Jesus says, “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” This underscores the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation in the Christian faith and its eternal implications.

Applying God’s Word

As followers of Christ, we are called to prioritize reconciliation and forgiveness in our relationships. This means actively seeking reconciliation with those we have wronged or those who have wronged us, regardless of who initiated the conflict. In practical terms, this may involve humble confession, sincere apology, asking to be forgiven and extending forgiveness. It requires us to set aside our pride and ego, and to humbly extend grace and mercy to others just as we have received from God.

The application of Matthew 5:23-24 in our lives is deeply rooted and far-reaching. It calls us to examine the state of our relationships and prioritize having

peace with others. Here are some key points for application:

Prioritize Reconciliation

Jesus’ words remind us to prioritize reconciliation over personal pride. We must be willing to humble ourselves, seek forgiveness, and extend grace to those with whom we are in conflict.

Act Promptly

Jesus instructs us to address conflicts promptly. Delaying reconciliation only prolongs the pain and hinders our relationship with God. Procrastination in resolving conflicts can lead to bitterness and resentment, damaging both our spiritual well-being and our relationships.

Seek Restoration

Reconciliation involves more than a superficial apology; it requires genuine efforts to restore trust and rebuild relationships. Saying that we are sorry is important but that is mostly about us. Asking to be forgiven is about the other person. As difficult and uncomfortable as it can be to ask someone if they will forgive us, it is imperative for us to humble ourselves and express, “I am sorry, will you please forgive me?” Restoring peace with others hinges on our humility. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you and follow Him as He does.

As followers of Christ, our worship and devotion to God are intimately connected with the way we treat others. May we heed Jesus' words and actively pursue peace and reconciliation in our relationships, reflecting the love and forgiveness we have received from our Heavenly Father.

Questions for further reflection:

1. How do you prioritize reconciliation in your relationships, especially when faced with conflicts or disagreements? What challenges do you encounter in seeking reconciliation?

2. Reflecting on Matthew 5:23-24, how does the pursuit of reconciliation deepen our understanding of worship and communion with God? How can unresolved conflicts hinder our spiritual growth?

3. In what practical ways can we embody the ministry of reconciliation in our families, churches, and communities? How does reconciliation contribute to the manifestation of God's kingdom on earth?

4. When was the last time you told someone that you were sorry? When was the last time you asked someone to forgive you? Ask the Lord to guide you to the person you need to reestablish peace with and begin today, in humility, asking for their forgiveness.

DAY 3 | WEEK 3
Peace with Others Through Christ
By: Pastor Gaylyn Kelly

“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”

(2 Corinthians 5:18, NIV)

PEACE WITH OTHERS THROUGH CHRIST

Day 3 | Week 3

In 2 Corinthians 5:18, the Apostle Paul addresses an essential aspect of Christian beliefs: reconciliation. The verse, “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.” Illuminates the truth of God’s work of reconciliation through Jesus Christ and its implications for believers in fostering peace with others.

The Corinthian Church struggled with internal divisions, moral issues, and conflicts regarding Paul’s authority as an Apostle. In this letter, Paul seeks to address these issues while also reaffirming the central message of The Gospel and the ministry of reconciliation that leads to peace with one another. Paul writes, “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.” This verse is the foundational truth of reconciliation—God’s initiative to restore humanity’s broken relationship with Him through

Jesus Christ. From that place, being restored ourselves by God through Jesus, we can then turn and restore other relationships.

What We Believe

The doctrine of reconciliation lies at the heart of Christian theology. It underscores God’s desire to bridge the gap between humanity and Himself, which was severed by sin (Isaiah 59:2). Through the sacrificial death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, God accomplished reconciliation, offering forgiveness, and restoring fellowship with Him (Colossians 1:20).

Furthermore, reconciliation is not merely a transactional act but a relational reality. It involves the restoration of communion between God and humanity, as well as among individuals. This reconciliation is made possible by God’s grace and is at the core of spreading of the Gospel which is the mission of the Church. Paul emphasizes that reconciliation is not human achievement but

a divine initiative—“All this is from God.” It originates from God’s love and grace, manifested in Christ’s redemptive work on the cross. Through Jesus Christ, God reconciled us to Himself, removing the barrier of sin and offering the gift of salvation to all who believe (Romans 5:10).

Moreover, Paul highlights that God has entrusted believers with the ministry of reconciliation. As recipients of God’s reconciling love, believers are called to extend this message of reconciliation to others. The ministry of reconciliation involves proclaiming the gospel, inviting others to experience God’s forgiveness, and fostering peace and harmony in relationships.

Applying God’s Word

Paul’s message in 2 Corinthians 5:18 holds significant implications for our relationships with others. As recipients of God’s reconciling grace, we are called to:

Embrace Reconciliation

We must recognize and embrace the reality of God’s reconciliation in our lives. This involves acknowledging our need for reconciliation with God, receiving His forgiveness through faith in Christ, and living in the freedom of restored relationship with Him.

Participate in the Ministry of Reconciliation

The ministry of reconciliation is not exclusive to your pastors but is entrusted to every believer. We are called to be ambassadors of Christ, representing His love, and extending His offer of reconciliation to others. (2 Corinthians 5:20)

Practice Peaceful Living

Reconciliation with God leads to transformation in our relationships with others. As recipients of God’s reconciling grace, we are called to pursue peace and reconciliation in our interactions with others. This involves humility, forgiveness, and a commitment to healing broken relationships. This is hard and attentive work, but like anything else, the more we practice and rely on the Holy Spirit to lead us through conviction, the more we will improve and get better at it. It becomes who we are, not just what we work at.

Remember, 2 Corinthians 5:18 reveals the transformative power of God's reconciliation through Jesus Christ. As recipients of His reconciling grace, believers are called to embrace, proclaim, and live out the message of reconciliation. May we be faithful stewards of the ministry of reconciliation, extending God's love and fostering peace with others, to the glory of His name.

Questions for further reflection:

1. Reflecting on your own journey of reconciliation with God, how has experiencing His forgiveness impacted your relationships with others?

2. What are some practical ways in which you can participate in the ministry of reconciliation in your personal life, church community, and beyond? Share two examples of when you worked at restoring peace with other people through reconciliation.

3. What comes into your mind when you think about the barriers to reconciliation you have experienced in yourself? What are you willing to repent and turn from so that you can receive God's forgiveness and be an instrument of reconciliation and peace?

DAY 4 | WEEK 3
We Are Called to Peace
By: Pastor Gaylyn Kelly

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.”

(Colossians 3:15, NIV)

WE ARE CALLED TO PEACE

Day 4 | Week 3

Colossians 3:15 holds a principal place in Paul's letter to the Colossian church, giving a peek into the Christian life and community. In this teaching, we will explore the meaning, context, and application of Colossians 3:15, emphasizing its relevance to promoting peace with others in the body of Christ.

Paul writes, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful." This verse addresses the Colossian believers, encouraging them to allow the peace of Christ to govern their hearts and relationships within the church community.

Paul's choice of words reflects the cultural context of the Colossian church, which was likely experiencing internal divisions and external pressures from false teachings. By emphasizing the peace of Christ, Paul underscores the importance of unity, harmony, and mutual peace among

believers. And don't you just love that he throws in, "... And be thankful." That is asking more of us, isn't it?

What We Believe

Jesus emphasized the importance of reconciliation and forgiveness in relationships, instructing His followers to love one another as He loved them (John 13:34-35).

Furthermore, Paul's writings consistently highlight the theme of unity and peace within the body of Christ. In Ephesians 4:3, Paul exhorts believers to "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." This unity is not merely a human endeavor but is grounded in the peace that Christ brings through His redemptive work on the cross.

Applying God's Word

Embracing the Peace of Christ

Colossians 3:15 calls believers to allow the peace of Christ to rule in their hearts. This involves surrendering to God's peace, trusting in His sovereignty, and finding rest in His presence, even amidst trials and conflicts.

Cultivating Unity and Harmony

As members of one body, believers are called to pursue peace with one another. This requires humility, patience, and a willingness to forgive and reconcile. It means valuing unity over division, seeking reconciliation over retaliation.

Practicing Gratitude

Paul emphasizes the importance of thankfulness in promoting peace within the church community. Gratitude shifts our attitude and focus from self-centered and pride, along with grievances and conflicts to the goodness of God, what He has done for us, and the blessings of fellowship with one another.

Finally, Colossians 3:15 serves as a powerful reminder of the Christian's call to pursue peace within the body of Christ. As followers of Jesus, we are called to embrace the peace that Christ offers, cultivate

unity and harmony within our church communities, and practice gratitude as a catalyst for reconciliation and fellowship. May we allow the peace of Christ to rule in our hearts and relationships, bearing witness to His transformative love and grace in a broken and divided world.

Questions for further reflection:

1. Reflecting on your own experiences, what are some barriers to experiencing the peace of Christ in your heart and relationships, and how can you overcome them?

2. How can you actively work at cultivating peace? Name three practical steps you can take to bring peace in any relationship you have.

3. In what ways does gratitude enhance your ability to cultivate peace and reconciliation with others?

DAY 5 | WEEK 3

Holiness

By: Pastor Gaylyn Kelly

“Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy;
without holiness no one will see the Lord.”

(Hebrews 12:14, NIV)

HOLINESS

Day 5 | Week 3

In the book of Hebrews, the author writes to encourage and admonish Jewish Christians facing persecution and the temptation to revert to Judaism. The author emphasizes the superiority of Christ and the New Covenant over the Old Covenant, urging believers to persevere in faith and to hold fast to their confession of Jesus as the Son of God.

“Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.” The writer exhorts believers with a command to pursue peace with all people and through personal holiness, without which no one will see the Lord. This verse captures a crucial aspect of Christian living: the pursuit of both peace and holiness.

Holiness refers to the state of being set apart for God, characterized by righteousness, purity, and choosing His will over our own. It is the ongoing process of sanctification by which

believers are transformed into the image of Christ. A daily dying to self and a daily choosing Him, His way, and will.

Hebrews 12:14

The verse begins with the phrase “Make every effort to live in peace with everyone”. (We have seen and heard this before, haven’t we?) This is not passive, but a directive emphasizing the active and intentional effort required on the part of believers to seek peace in their relationships and interactions with others. Peace does not merely mean the absence of conflict but the presence of harmony, reconciliation, and goodwill. To have God’s peace with others takes a reliance on the Lord, humility, forgiveness, and a commitment to reconciliation, even during conflict or disagreement.

Without the call to pursue holiness we cannot do this in our own strength. Operating in the supernatural holiness only

given through the Holy Spirit underscores the believers' need to a life reliant on Him such that our lives are marked by purity, integrity, and devotion to God. Without these qualities, the author warns, no one will see the Lord, highlighting the inseparable connection between our pursuit of peace and holiness and our relationship with God.

What We Believe

Through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, believers are reconciled to God, and believers are called to be ambassadors of reconciliation in the world. The pursuit of peace and holiness reflects the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers, enabling them to reflect the character of Christ and bear witness to His redemptive love and to embody this reconciliation in their relationships with others. A tall calling, but with the Holy Spirit's power, we are able.

Furthermore, holiness is a fundamental aspect of Christian identity. The Apostle Peter echoes this sentiment in 1 Peter 1:15-16 (NIV): "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'" As imitators of Christ, believers are called

to reflect His holiness in their thoughts, words, and actions. We are a stark contrast in this world at times and hope to point others to Jesus by how we live when we choose restoration instead of division. We are not at peace with others if we choose to stay divided, but "as far as it depends on us" we choose to reconcile, with the potential of having peace with others. God is glorified and we pray that others are drawn to Him because of our reflection of Him.

Applying God's Word

The application of Hebrews 12:14 in our lives is complex and far-reaching. It challenges us to live as ambassadors of peace and agents of reconciliation in a broken and divided world.

Pursue Peace

Believers actively seek peace with all people, regardless of differences or conflicts. This requires humility, patience, and a willingness to forgive and reconcile. We speak truth in love and extend grace even to those who may oppose or mistreat us.

Embrace Holiness

Holiness is not merely a set of rules or external behaviors but a transformation of the heart and mind. It involves surrendering

to the work of the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to sanctify and purify us from within. Practically, this involves time with Him, growing in Christ-like character, discernment, and compassion in our daily lives.

Live as Witnesses

As followers of Jesus, our pursuit of peace and holiness serves as a testimony to the transformative power of the Gospel. **ONLY** by Him and through Him will our lives reflect the love, grace, and truth of Jesus Christ, drawing others into relationship with Him.

In closing, pray that we cling to Jesus as we engage with the timeless truth of Hebrews 12:14. Be empowered by the Holy Spirit, to pursue peace with all people and to embrace holiness, knowing that in doing so, we bear witness to the transformative power of the gospel and reflect the person of Jesus Christ to a world in desperate need of reconciliation and restoration.

Questions for further reflection:

1. How do you actively pursue peace in your relationships and interactions with others, especially in challenging situations?
2. What does holiness mean to you?
3. With Hebrews 12:14, our focus verse, why and how do you believe the pursuit of holiness could contribute to our ability to have and maintain peace with others?



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