

# WEEKLY STUDY GUIDE

Study guide for the week of August 2nd

This week, we continue our sermon series entitled “Beatitudes: the Pursuit of Happiness.” This week’s study brings us to verse 9 of Matthew chapter 5. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” Matthew 5:9 NRSV  
This is the first, in fact, the only beatitude that actually gives the promise of what we will be called. God and man will recognize us as children of our Father in Heaven. We will resemble his heart when we are peacemakers.

**Why, then, is it important that we all focus our attention on being “peacemakers”?**

Simply stated, a “peacemaker” is “one who makes peace.” Okay! Simple enough! If we make peace, we are peacemakers! But, let’s look a bit into this instruction to be makers of peace! Spiros Zodhiates, Hebrew and Greek scholar and author of *The Complete New Testament Word Study*, defines peacemaker as: “*The one who, having received the peace of God in his own heart, brings peace to others. He is not simply one who makes peace between two parties, but one who spreads the good news of the peace of God which he has experienced.*”

**What sticks out to you in the definition above, and how can you apply it to your daily life?**

So, according to Zodhiates, there are three elements in this concept of being a peacemaker.

## 1) **Receive God’s peace.**

Humanity desperately needs peace in order to function properly in life. A life weighed down by confusion, turmoil, conflict, and fear (the primary opposites of peace) is a life that is functioning far below its potential. There are many things in our world today that attempt to steal our peace and create confusion, turmoil, conflict, and fear.

**Can you identify any areas in your life where you may be yielding to the temptation to entertain thoughts of confusion, turmoil, conflict, or fear, based on personal or world conditions?**

The stated mission of God in seeing Jesus was to grant the earth a measure of heavenly peace. “*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!*” Luke 2:14 NRSV. Remember, one of the definitions of “blessed” in the beatitudes is “possessing the FAVOR of God.” So, we might say that “peace comes as a FAVOR from God, to the Earth.” Certainly, God wants us to RECEIVE his peace!

*“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.” John 14:27 NRSV.*

The world offers peace based on outward circumstances. Jesus offers peace based on his love and compassion for us. The world’s version of peace comes and goes. God’s version is a permanent possession that is not reliant upon anything outside of his presence!

**Have you struggled with receiving God’s peace in Christ? Could you be more at peace in your relationship with God?** If so, read and embrace Romans 5:1 as a way of embracing God’s peace.

2) The second element is to **make peace between parties.**

Being a peacemaker means that we should be quick to reestablish peaceful relations with people in our own lives with whom we have had conflict. As with all of the beatitudes, this requires a level of humility—the desire to put others above ourselves. Prayerfully approach those with whom you have a damaged relationship and attempt to “make” peace. *“If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.” Romans 12:18 NRSV. “Let us then PURSUE what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.” Romans 14:19 NRSV.*

**Is there someone with whom you need to restore peace? Are you willing to step up and, with all that God has put in you, make an honest attempt to restore a peaceful relationship?**

3) Third, as peacemakers we will **share with others the peace with God that you have personally experienced.**

*“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, ...<sup>15</sup> As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. Ephesians 6:10-11, 15 NRSV.*

We have been given the mission of proclaiming the gospel of peace. Here’s the thing. We can only truly proclaim what we have first received.

**What makes us ready to proclaim the gospel of peace as stated in the verse above?**

**\*We need to receive God’s peace for our own lives.**

**\*We need to restore damaged relationships wherever we can.**

**\*And we need to be ready to carry the message of God’s peace to those around us, especially those in confusion, turmoil, conflict, and/or fear.**

When we become peacemakers, we are identified as “children of God.” *Matthew 5:9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”* We are never more like our Father in heaven, the one who sent Jesus to bring “peace on earth,” than when we are joining him in his mission of peace!

**What will you do this week to become a “peacemaker”?**