

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

Peace

John 1:29-34

Definition: PEACE (שלום, *shalom*; εἰρήνη, *eirēnē*).

A pervasive concept in the Bible that most commonly relates to a relationship of love and loyalty with God and one another (Lexham Bible Dictionary).

In the Old Testament, peace (*shalom*) carries the fundamental meaning of welfare or wholeness, as well as the absence of hostility.

In the New Testament, peace (*eirēnē*) also carries some of the meaning of well-being expressed by shalom. The word used as a greeting or good-bye therefore means “be well.” Additionally, and most centrally in the New Testament, Christ brought peace between humans and God, and between Jews and Gentiles, uniting them in his Church (Eph 2:14–17); thus, the Christian message is the gospel of peace (Eph 6:15)

(Summary based on Lexham Bible Dictionary and Lexham Theological Workbook).

Passages for further study: Ephesians 2:11-22, Rom 5:1:1-5; 15:5-7

Questions

1. What in John's sermon stood out about the *importance* of peace between you and God and the *basis* of peace between you and God (John 1:29, 1 Peter 2:24, Phil 2:8-11, Rev 5:12-14, also consider Romans 5:1)?

John relayed the story Tim Keller used to share about Jesus' work through the gospel settling into our hearts in a way that it is real to us, being like coins settling into an old vending machine – the lag time it can take to fully grasp what is real.

2. Are you struggling with hiding in shame for past choices/words/actions? From long ago or earlier this week?

OR

3. John mentioned how can be prone to medicate, turn to alcohol, or seek escape through entertainment in order to get peace, instead of relying on God. What does it look like to use and not abuse God's gifts/provision (exercise, sleep, medication, diet, entertainment)?
4. How is it going with believing that nothing stands between you and close fellowship with God? What are practical helps for relying on God for a deep, abiding peace *internally* day-in and day out?

Ephesians 2:11-22 teaches that reconciliation in our relationship with God should lead to reconciliation with other believers. It should also lead us to move towards non-believers with the hope of the gospel.

5. **What in John's sermon stood out about the impact of the peace we have with God through Christ has on your relationships with other people?**
6. How is it going with asking for and extending forgiveness with other Christians in your home? In your church?
7. What are some situations where you are most likely to be a conflict-developer instead of a peacemaker? (after a hard day at work, in the midst of conflict with your spouse, after your sports' team loses, etc.)

Additional background explanation:

From the Lexham Bible Dictionary:

In the Old Testament

In the [Old Testament](#), "peace" carries the fundamental meaning of welfare, prosperity, or wholeness as well as the absence of hostility (compare Westermann, "Peace [*Shalom*]," 20, 44–53). The term is frequently used as the antithesis of harm (רָעָה, *ra'ah*; compare [1 Sam 20:7](#); [Jer 29:11](#); [38:4](#)) and as a synonym for what is good (טוֹב, *tov*; [Deut 23:6](#); [Ezra 9:12](#); [Jer 33:9](#)).

Peace in Greetings and Farewells

The biblical characters use the term "peace" in friendly greetings and farewell statements to communicate an absence of hostility. For example, when his brothers are unsure whether he will exact retribution on them for having extra money in their sacks, [Joseph](#) assures them of his friendly disposition toward them by stating, "Peace to you; do not fear" ([Gen 43:23](#); compare [Judg 6:23](#); [19:20](#); [1 Sam 25:6](#)). Also, typical friendly farewells are given in terms of peace: "Go in peace" ([Gen 44:17](#); [Exod 4:18](#); [1 Sam 25:35](#); [29:7](#); [2 Sam 15:27](#)).

From the Lexham Theological Workbook:

εἰρήνη (*eirēnē*) n. fem. peace. The state of well-being and concord (concord = harmony between people or groups).

In the Septuagint, *eirēnē* is the usual translation of שָׁלוֹם (*šālôm*, "soundness, peace"). In the NT, *eirēnē* also carries some of the meaning of well-being expressed by *šālôm*. Thus, the phrase "go in peace" can function as a farewell phrase that simply means "be well." It can also be used of harmonious relationships between governments (Luke 14:32) or between individuals (Heb 12:14). Paul regularly opens his letters with a formula offering grace and peace (*eirēnē*) to the recipients (e.g., 1 Cor 1:2). Christ brought peace between humans and God, and between Jews and Gentiles, uniting them in his Church (Eph 2:14–17); thus, the Christian message is the gospel of peace (Eph 6:15).