

## Fruit Of The Spirit — Peace

### Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV)

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, **peace**, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

**?** Why is it important to know what peace is?

*Possible answers: Peace is important to know God better, to spot counterfeit peace, and to understand that God offers us peace even amidst suffering. Also, to be able to recognize the work of the Spirit in our life and draw encouragement from that.*

**Read aloud to the group:** The Bible mentions peace hundreds of times, but peace doesn't come with a quick and easy definition. Most of us could probably come up with a definition of peace that sounds good, but do we really understand the depth and breadth of this five-letter word? As we read passages through the Bible, observe the context of peace in each passage, the type of speech, how it works in the passage, and a definition of peace in each passage.

### I. Peace in the Old Testament

*Leader's Note: Break your small group up into a few groups for 7-10 minutes and divide the following Old Testament subheadings between them. Instruct each group to examine the following passages and see what they can learn about peace in the context of each passage or group of passages and write a list of those observations. Then we'll get together and share a summary of each passage and the observations of peace in each.*

Questions to help examination:

- What does peace look like in this context?
- Does it illuminate anything about God?
- Does it reveal anything about his people or us?
- What is the function of peace?
- Who are the players involved in the peace?
- Is there a cost to peace? If yes, what is it?
- What do we learn about peace with others?
- What do we learn about peace with God?

Remember the goal is not to necessarily answer each question, but to really understand peace from each passage. These questions are guides.

## Books of the Law & Books of History

- Leviticus 19:1-7  
*Possible Answers: Connected to a sacrifice, in the context of God's holiness. It is meant as a way to cease hostilities with a holy God. If misappropriated or incorrectly observed, what is meant as a vehicle for acceptance can result in separation.*
- Numbers 25:10-13 (or starting at verse 1 for context)  
*Possible Answers: Peace can be given as a reward. Peace as a covenant. Enduring. Given to a man zealous for God. Peace juxtaposed with violence. This peace was a result of an action that was not a peace offering. Are there similarities?*
- 2 Kings 9:17-22 (through vs. 37 for more context)  
*Possible Answers: Jehu, on a mission from God, went to exact God's judgment on the wicked Israelite leader. There can't be peace with sin.*

## Books of Wisdom

- Psalm 4  
*Possible Answers: Peace comes from right standing with God. Related to an assurance of safety from God. Result of trust in God. Physical ramifications of a spiritual state - an absence of anxiety. Spiritual right standing gives more joy than material success. Peace as a state of one's soul.*
- Psalm 119:161-168  
*Possible Answers: Peace comes with loving God and loving obedience to Him. Peace is a part of the great security that comes with this loving obedience. Peace shows up with praise, righteousness, obedience, and steadfastness. Peace comes with the knowledge of God.*
- Proverbs 12:17-20  
*Possible Answers: Peace is contrasted with evil and thereby associated with having good/righteous purposes. Peace is not only a state of being as we have seen previously, but active and outward. It's something you can plan. It is something thought out and has intention.*

## Major Prophets

- Isaiah 9:6-7  
*Possible Answers: It's a title of the Messiah. His peace is enduring. His peace comes with His kingdom and will grow forever.*
- Isaiah 36:13-22  
*Possible Answers: Others offer "peace" aside from God. The siren song of evil can promise peace, happiness, and prosperity apart from God. Hezekiah's response in chapter 37 shows the insidious emptiness of that promised "peace" and God's deliverance for his people.*
- Isaiah 54: 10-13  
*Possible Answers: God's promised peace is immense, unshakable, enduring. Peace is a covenant that will not be removed. His peace is intertwined with His redemption, His love, His protection, His compassion, and His promises.*
- Jeremiah 8:6-12  
*Possible Answers: There is danger in believing in a counterfeit peace. This passage highlights the foolishness of believing to be at peace with God while still "like a horse plunging headlong into battle" (vs 6).*

? Can one in a peace treaty still take actions of war? Does this have implications for you and God?

*Possible Answers: We can't continue to live at war with God if we're at peace with him.*

## II. Peace in the New Testament

*Leader's Note: Bring everyone back together and prior to walking through the New Testament passages together, give each group a 2-5 minutes to summarize and discuss their passages within the large group.*

*Leader's Note: Now have everybody turn to each passage one by one and go through them each as a large group asking the same general questions as before. The goal is not to have answers for each potential question, but to really examine the passage and understand peace in it. Encourage group members to interpret scripture with scripture and draw connections between the passages.*

### New Testament

- Romans 5:1-5

*Possible Answers: Peace because of justification. They're linked, but not the same. Peace with God through Jesus Christ (he is our peace offering). Peace with God even though we have suffering. Peace comes with a litany of other benefits: access into grace, hope, and rejoicing.*

- John 14:25-31

*Possible Answers: He leaves one peace and gives one peace - one peace of reconciliation, and one experiential peace to walk in.*

? How does Jesus give peace (John 14:27) while still caring for our tangible needs? "Go in peace" doesn't mean anything unless it comes with something tangible. How does Jesus back up his "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you"?

*Possible Answers: He laid down his life to ensure peace for his followers. He backs up his peace with relationship. Jesus allows us to be in relationship with Him when leaving and giving us peace. We can strive to do the same for others. Relationships with others will also require us to tend to their needs.*

? "Do not let your hearts be troubled" (John 14:1). How does His peace look different than the world's peace?

- James 2:14-17

*Possible Answers: Offering peace, when needs are not met first, is worthless.*

? What does it look like to give peace to others?

- Ephesians 2:11-22

*Possible Observations: Brought near by the blood of Christ. He is our peace. Christ bridged the dividing wall of hostility.*

*Leader's Note: Observe first and then ask the following questions.*

? What is the wall between God and us?

? How did He bridge it? Why did He bridge it?

? Whom did He preach peace to? Who are the far off? Who are the near?

? Isn't this healing the divisions between mankind: Jesus as the bridge between ethnicities, political parties, interests, ideology, and personality? In Him we are all one new man. Do you agree or disagree? Is there anything that this is missing?

- Matthew 10:34-39

*Possible Answers: Jesus did not come to bring peace "to the earth." The emphasis here may be "to the earth" as he does say in John 14 that he has left peace and gives peace to his disciples (in that context), but "not as the world gives."*

- Galatians 5:16-25

? What additional connotations does the word peace in this list bring to you now after studying all the previous passages?

? How does this peace contrast gratifying the desires of the flesh? Is it possible to experience this peace without the Spirit?

### Application Question

? How could walking with the Spirit lead to increased peace in your life?