Hope in the Face of Conflict
Making Peace with Others the Way God Makes Peace with Us

Group Discussion

Chapter 2
The Three Major Characteristics of the Judeo-Christian Model of Peacemaking

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Note to the Group Facilitator
There may be more questions than there is time to address in your overall timeframe. Select as many questions as will best fit your schedule.

Note to Participants
Numbers in parenthesis refer to the book page numbers in “Hope in the Face of Conflict.”

Opening Bell
If you had to venture a guess as to what might be three important features of a peacemaking process, what would they be? Why these three?

Brief Review
What is the foundation of the Judeo-Christian model of peacemaking (chapter 1)?

Scriptural Basis: The First Characteristic of the Model: Love is the First Foundation
1. Read John 3:16-17 aloud and the footnote associated with it on p. 19. What is God’s attitude toward mankind?
2. How does the basis of the Judeo-Christian model of peacemaking differ from the goal of peacemaking efforts in the charter to the United Nations? (18)

Discussion
3. Why is justice alone insufficient to create peace?
Discussion cont.

4. God’s love for sinners is relentless because love is at his very core. (19) Can the same thing be said about human beings? Is love central to our very existence? (If you have the time, read Appendix 1 of the book, “When Love Fails,” to delve into this topic).

5. What does the concept “the will to embrace” mean? (20) What relevance does it have with respect to peacemaking? (20-21)

6. If you have ever found yourself entangled in conflict, before you began working your way out of it, were you willing to express any kind of loving concern for your adversary? Why or why not? How would such a foundational attitude at the beginning of a conflict effect its outcome?

Scriptural Basis: The Second Characteristic of the Model: Reconciliation is the Goal

7. Read 2 Cor. 5:19 aloud. With respect to rebellious mankind, God’s love is directed toward the goal of reconciliation. Discuss how all three concepts (love, reconciliation, and mediation) are represented in this one verse?

Discussion

8. In conflict, do you find it easier to cut off relations than try to work the problem out? What is involved for true reconciliation to occur? Have you ever felt like you were forced to reconcile when there were still matters left unresolved? Can you give an example? (This subject will be examined in much greater detail later in the study). Can you give an example when you have been involved in a conflict and true reconciliation was the result. Why do you think it turned out so well?

Scriptural Basis: The Third Characteristic of the Model: Mediation is the Means

9. Read 1 Timothy 2:5 aloud. What does it mean to be a mediator? (24)

10. The concept of there being a mediator between God and people is not unique to the New Testament. It can also be found in the Old Testament. At the birth of the nation of Israel, who served as a mediator between God and the people? Read aloud Exodus 19:6 and Exodus 20:19. (25-26)
Scriptural Basis cont.

11. What mediatorial offices did God establish in the Old Testament? How did God reveal his will to the Israelites? How were people’s sins addressed? How was God’s law to be carried out?

12. From a Biblical perspective, what should a peacemaking mediator do?

Discussion

13. Throughout the Old and New Testaments what means did God establish to make peace with mankind? In light of Mat 5:9 (see discussion in previous chapter) what implications should this pattern have for us?

14. Has anyone in the group ever been involved in a mediation process? (If so, what was the experience like? How effective was the mediator?) Has anyone in the group ever experienced mediation in a church? If the answer is no, why do you think this is?

Application

15. Chapter 2 concludes, “According to the Scriptures, God’s decision to make peace with mankind is rooted in his love. The goal of the peacemaking process God established is to reconcile us to himself. The means by which he has chosen to accomplish this is through mediation.” Is there any reason why we shouldn’t adopt the same three characteristics when we need to make peace with another? What changes would this require you to make in your thinking about conflict and peacemaking?