

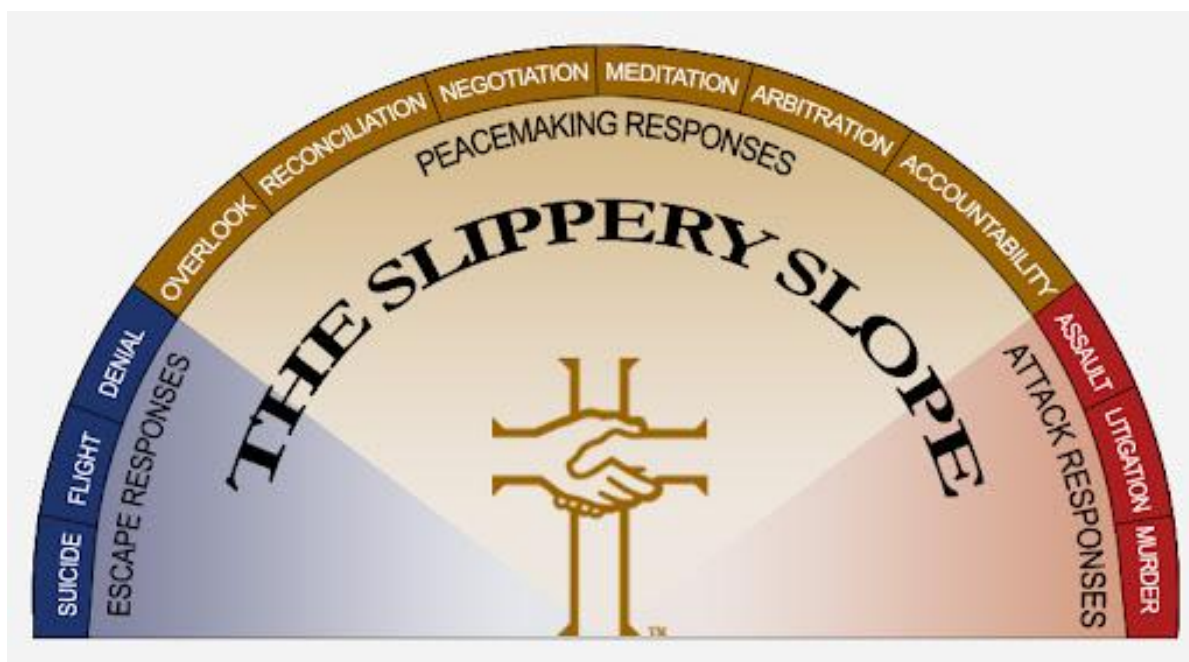
Study for Sermon on January 2, 2022



So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31

Getting Started

Biblical peacemaking is motivated and guided by a deep desire to bring honor to God by revealing the reconciling love and power of Jesus Christ. We are to draw on his grace, follow his example and put his teachings into practice. As we do so, we can find freedom from the self-centered decisions that cause conflict and display the power of the gospel in our lives.



Group Discussion

CONFLICT PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES

Few people enjoy conflict. Fewer still view conflict as an opportunity. Yet, if we believe God is sovereign and desires our best, we have to also believe that conflict is not an accident. God promises to use every circumstance in our lives to shape and mold us into the image of Christ. *“Every time you encounter a conflict, you will inevitably show what you really think of God,”* Ken Sande. This study will help you to not only survive disagreements but to actually steward them for God’s glory.

DISCUSS

- Look at the Slippery Slope Diagram. In general, do people in your church and Community Group seek to *Avoid*, *Win*, or *Solve* conflicts? Where do you place yourself on the Slope? What does this suggest about how you view conflict?
- Spend a few minutes reviewing the main points raised in the sermon. Which ideas or principles do you find most helpful? How do they enlarge and deepen your understanding of how God uses conflict in your life?
- Where would you most like to grow and change in your relationship with God and other people? What new attitudes, skills or habits can you adopt that will help you achieve that goal?

LIVE AT PEACE

The search for peace is constant and elusive. Christians understand that real peace is found in Jesus – it is our relationship with him that provides us with the personal peace we long for and the ability to live at peace with others. Such peace is fragile and is easily broken when we adopt the worldly attitude that life is all about satisfying our desires, looking out for “Number One.” We must be reminded to focus, first, on peace with God, which enables us to live at peace with others and personally experience the internal “peace that passes understanding.”

DISCUSS

- How do you define “peace?” What are some of the words that come to mind when you hear the word, “peace?” What does the bible say about peace?
- How do you define the distinction between “unity” and “uniformity?” Do Christians in your community tend to focus more on unity or on uniformity? What impact does this have on your church? On your larger community?
- What about you? Are you pursuing the peace that challenges you and honors God? If not, what are some changes that you would like to make?

TRUST IN THE LORD AND DO GOOD

We all say that we “trust God.” Yet, when we find ourselves in serious conflict, many of us end up trusting ourselves instead. Fear and pride can drive us to think and behave in ways that are fundamentally opposed to God. If God is sovereign, however, we can trust that he is looking out for us every moment, even when circumstances are difficult and life is challenging. As Ken writes, *“The trials that he gives us require that we practice the character qualities that will make us like our Lord.”* The Bible is full of examples of people who trusted God, from Joseph and Esther to Paul and, ultimately, Jesus himself. Trust is a decision. This section reminds us that God uses that trust to show us how to walk confidently with him.

DISCUSS

- What does it mean to you to “trust God?” What does the bible say about trusting God? Have you ever trusted him completely with a difficult situation in your life? How did trusting God change your attitude and behavior?
- Many people believe that faith and trust in God should result in freedom from suffering. Is this a biblical view? How would you respond if someone said to you, “If God loves me, he wouldn’t let this happen.”

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- Is there someone you know or have heard about whose trust in God is admirable? Describe their character and their behavior. What did their behavior reveal about their attitude toward God? What can you learn from them?
 - Think of a current conflict in your life, or reflect back on one in which you were recently involved. In what ways are you trusting God as your guide and source of strength? What more can you do to make your trust in him more evident and complete?

Next Steps

- Take some time praying for one another.
- List some relationships that are in conflict and pray to the Lord on your next steps.
- Stay connected to your church community.
- Read and study God's Word and listen to what it has to say about Peacemaking.



This Study Guide was adapted from

<https://rw360.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Peacemaker-Study-Guide.docx>