



Peace Makers

By Shari Miller

Leader Guide and Bible Passages

(Please do NOT use the "if time permits" sections when your study session time is limited. These sections could possibly be done by the participant in private.)

Share with a partner or the small group a time when you were at odds with someone, but the situation was resolved successfully. Describe how that happened? **Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. Make it clear that everything confided within the group stays within the group. The leader should give an example of her own to begin discussion.**

St. Paul's Letter to the Romans is one of the most beautiful in laying out the foundation of the Christian faith. It clearly explains Law and Gospel, salvation and peace with God in Jesus, and our response by the power of the Spirit in faithful words and actions. We will look at two passages from Romans as we look at how God gives us His peace and how we can practically and actively share that peace with those around us.

Opening Prayer: Dear Almighty God of Peace, You are holy and Lord of all. Our sin separates us from You and makes us Your enemies. We rejoice that our Savior Jesus fulfilled Your plan of salvation for us, giving us peace with You. Through His perfect life, suffering, death, and resurrection, we are forgiven, reconciled with You, and have the hope of eternal life. You sent us Your Holy Spirit who gives us faith in Jesus as our Savior, keeps us in faith, and enables us to live in love and peaceably with all. As we study Your Word, send Your Spirit to give us wisdom and discernment. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

God Gives Peace: Spiritual Peace

Read **Romans 5:1–8**.

¹Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. ⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. ¹¹More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

What a power-packed section of Scripture! Paul spends the previous chapters explaining the justification by faith that Christians have because of the perfect life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus gives His own robes of righteousness to each baptized child of God. He then continues with the lesson in chapter 5, thus the word *therefore* is used: The Holy Spirit engenders faith in the saving work of the Savior through Word and Sacraments; we are declared righteous in God's sight; and, we have peace with God. Why **must** justification by faith precede *peace with God*? See **verses 1 and 10**. **In our sinful (unrighteous) state, God cannot even look at us; we are enemies of God; Paul reminds us that only being justified by faith and righteous in God's eyes through Jesus and His robes of righteousness can lead to our peace and reconciliation with God.**

What is the hope referred to **verse 5**? (See Paul's definition of this hope in **Romans 8:23–24**.) **The hope of heaven**

⁵... because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.

Faith Talk: How can your friends and neighbors know about the hope that is in you and what that means in your life? **Answers may vary, but encourage everyone to share.**

Faith Talk: Read **verses 6–11**. What did Jesus do to secure your peace with God? Be specific with a partner or in your small group. **Answers may vary, but encourage everyone to share. Answer should include while we were sinners, Christ died for us.**

Faith Talk: Since you have been reconciled with God and are at peace with Him, why do some of your days seem to be less than peaceful? **Answers may vary, but encourage everyone to share.** What are we reminded of in **Proverbs 30:5**? **God's Word is true – God gives us His peace in Christ; it is not dependent on us or our feelings.**
Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

How does the Holy Spirit engender faith in us? Read Paul's answers in the following Bible passages and identify how the Spirit uses these means of grace in our lives.

Galatians 3:25–27 **Baptism – our sins are washed away; the Holy Spirit enters our hearts; we wear Christ's robes of righteousness**

²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:18 **Word of God – it is the power of God to save**

¹⁸ For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

1 Corinthians 11:23–25 **Lord's Supper – our sins are forgiven – we are at peace with God.**

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

If time permits: Before partaking of The Lord's Supper, members of a congregation share God's peace with one another and with their pastor (Pax Domini or peace of the Lord). Why does this reminder of God's peace come at this time in our worship services? **Answers may vary, but encourage everyone to share.** What other times in worship is the expression "peace of God" used? Why? **Answers may vary, but encourage everyone to share.** In some of the Kyrie's, we ask for peace; Agnus Dei; after we partake of Holy Communion hear the words, "Depart in peace"; Nunc Dimittis; prayers; benediction

Faith Talk: With a partner or the small group, share your description or picture of God's peace. **Answers may vary, but encourage everyone to share.**

God Gives Peace: Practical Peace

Is peace passive or active? **Answers may vary, but could include the fact that peace can be both passive and active – it is given to us by God (passive), but we share that peace with others (active).**

Read **Romans 14:19**. Is this a passive or active sentence? What does the word *pursue* imply? **Answers may vary, but could include the idea that peace has to be practiced in our interactions with others.**

¹⁹ So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

Read **Romans 12:9–21**.

⁹ Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰ Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. ¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰ To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

In **verses 9–17**, make a list of characteristics that practically show the practice of Spirit-given Christian love in and among believers? Be specific. **Love, hold fast to what is good, love as brothers and sisters in**

Christ, outdo one another in showing honor, don't be slothful, but be fervent and serve the Lord; rejoice in hope; patient in tribulation; constant in prayer; contribute to one another's needs; show hospitality; bless those who persecute; rejoice; weep; live in harmony; practice humility; be honorable; no vengeance

In **verses 18–21**, Paul exhorts that we are to extend this love into the world – *live peaceably with all*. (See also **Hebrews 12:14**.)

¹⁴ **Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.**

How does active Christian love that uses the characteristics listed above translate into peaceful living in the world? **Answers may vary, but could include the fact that these characteristics can all be wrapped up in an effort to live in peace with all.**

Faith Talk: “Tough love” is a term sometimes used when someone disciplines another with the intent of lovingly helping them in the long run. Can there be such a thing as “tough peace”? Explain. Share with a partner or in your small group. **Answers may vary, but encourage everyone to share.**

In **verse 11**, the word *fervent* comes from the Latin “fervere” which means “to boil.” The word fervent in this context literally means to “boil over with the Spirit.” The Spirit fills our lives and flows out to others. Paired with the words *zeal* and *fervent* in this passage, what intensity might be applied to the word *serve* in the same passage? **Our service to the Lord should have the same zeal and fervor.**

Why does our service to the Lord become fervent? **It is a response of faith to God's love for us in Jesus.** The phrase from a childhood song comes to mind: “Jesus’ love is bubbling over.” How does our service in Christian love bubble over to someone else? **By our acts of service and by our witness to the Good News of salvation in Jesus.**

If time permits: What are specific ways that you and your group can fervently serve the Lord? Make a list together as a group. **Answers may vary, but encourage everyone to share.**

Read together the words of **Romans 15:13**: *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.* In this passage, Paul adds the word *joy* in connection with *peace* — it is a side effect of the peace of God. How does the peace of God affect our witness to what the Lord has done for us in Christ Jesus? (See also **1 Peter 3:15**.) **Answers may vary, but encourage everyone to share. Answers could include that we joyfully witness and that we witness by the power of the Spirit with joy, always prepared to give witness with gentleness and respect.**

... but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

Faith Walk:

1. Thank the Lord for His gift of salvation in Jesus and by the power of the Spirit, share the Good News with a special person in your life.
2. Praise God for giving you His peace in Christ Jesus.
3. Practice the characteristics of Christian love listed in Romans 12.
4. Look for new ways to live peaceably with those around you.

Closing Prayer (sing or speak together): “When Peace, like a River” (*LSB* #763) [**Lyrics available at <https://hymnary.org/hymn/LSB2006/763>**] or “Savior, Again To Thy Dear Name We Raise” (*LSB* #917; *LW* #221; *TLH* #47).