

## Gospel-Driven Peacemaking

When faced with conflict, most Christians find it easier to bring the law to other people than the gospel. By “law” I mean all the “thou shalt” passages; the ones we use to tell other people how they should live or how they’re falling short ... or better yet, to prove how we are right and they are wrong. In this workshop we see how we can instead make the gospel the center of every conflict-resolution process, how it can radically change our own attitudes and strategies for peacemaking, and how we can use the good news of the gospel to pull down walls, rebuild trust, encourage sincere repentance, fuel forgiveness, and promote reconciliations that exalt the love and grace of Jesus Christ.

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### COLOSSIANS 3:12-15



*Reflect much on Jesus and his gospel, and you will reflect much of Jesus and his gospel.*

1. The most powerful resource for healing and building relationships is the gospel of Jesus Christ.  
*“For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility..., thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross” (Eph. 2:14-16).*

2. Many Christians experience shallow relationships because they have only a “two doors gospel.”

3. Through the gospel, God has not only given us eternal life but also made us new creations with new purposes and powers for life.

*“He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.... Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Cor. 5:15-17; see Col. 1:6-13).*

The gospel is the incredible news that Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins and rescue us from eternal separation from God, and he rose from the dead to give us new life. Through faith in Jesus, we’ve been reconciled to God, adopted into his family, empowered to love even our enemies, and given the gift of enjoying him forever.

4. The gospel enriches relationships by revealing two things: what God has done for us through Christ, and who we are in Christ.

*“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Eph. 5:1; see Titus 3:3-8).*

***“God saved me by giving his Son to die for me; as a result I am a loved, forgiven, and reconciled child of God; therefore I do love, forgive, and reconcile to others.”***

5. We can pursue gospel-centered relationships by **praying** that Christ would dwell in us so fully that our minds and hearts would be transformed to be like his, and by **meditating on** and **delighting in** the gospel and its manifold implications.

*“All change comes from deepening your understanding of the salvation of Christ and living out of the changes that understanding creates in your heart. Faith in the gospel restructures our motivations, our self-understanding, our identity, our view of the world.”(Tim Keller, *The Prodigal God*)*

*I pray that ... Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith [so] that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:16-19; see also 1:18-20).*

*I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws (Ezek. 36:25-27).*

*“Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace” (Col. 3:12-15).*

<b>The Life-Changing Power of the Gospel</b>		
	<b>Apart from the gospel ...</b>	<b>Transformed by the gospel ...</b>
When I realize a conflict exists	I wait for others to come to me, especially if I think they are more at fault than I am	I imitate Jesus by taking the initiative to seek reconciliation even if others seem more in the wrong (Rom. 5:8)
My top priority when I'm in conflict	Is to vindicate myself and make myself look good and right	Is to bring glory to God by mirroring his reconciling love and character (1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 3:18; Ex. 34:5-7)
When others behave like an enemy	I treat them like an enemy, thinking and speaking ill of them, and staying as far away from them as possible	I walk in Jesus' steps by loving them, acting like a friend, and sacrificing to be reconciled to them (Col. 1:21-22)
When I've done something wrong	I cling to my self-righteousness by concealing or minimizing my wrongs and shifting the blame to others	I trust that Jesus has washed my sins away so I find mercy and freedom in confession (1 John 1:9; Prov. 28:13)
When others or I keep doing the same sins	I become discouraged and hopeless and give up on relationships or working to change myself	I have hope because Jesus promised to steadily change us, so I view conflict as a path to growth (Phil. 1:6)
When others have done wrong	I point out their sins with as much detail and persistence as is needed to force them to admit they are wrong	I recall how kindly Jesus deals with me and seek to correct and restore others gently (Rom. 2:4; Gal. 6:1)
When others hurt me deeply	I dwell on their wrongs, indulge in self-pity, lash back, or try to have nothing to do with them again	I forgive just as God has forgiven me, refusing to dwell on their sin or let it stand between us (Eph. 4:32)
When conflict persists in my church	I look out for myself by withdrawing from relationships or moving on to another church	I remember that Jesus died to make us a family so I persevere in seeking its peace and unity (Phil. 2:1-11)

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