

### World Peace?

By one count, at the end of 2009 there were seven ongoing wars (resulting in 1000 or more violent deaths per year) along with at least 20 smaller conflicts. A few of these date all the way back to 1948 and continue to this day. We can't help but look at these circumstances and wonder whether world peace is ever going to happen. And being human – fallen ones at that – even those of us not involved in warfare have some form of conflict in our lives.

The Bible gives us the good news that peace is not only possible, it's inevitable. However, God will deliver his peace in his time and we should always remember: "With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness." (2 Peter 3:8-9.)

This week we will learn that God wants us to start experiencing his peace now and live out that peace in our relationships with others as we anticipate the eternal perfect peace to come. Let's study together what our God of Peace has in store for us.

#### Monday – In the Eyes of Everybody

*"In a quarrel, leave room for reconciliation."* Russian proverb

1. Please read Romans 12:17-21. Which word or phrase seems most striking to you? Why?
2. How do the words "as far as it depends on you" (v.18) help you to understand your role in pursuing peace with others?
3. What tips do you find in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 that help you to take steps to be at peace with others?

**Making it Personal:** Is there anyone you are presently having difficulty with? Ask God to show you what you can do to attempt to be at peace with them. Ask for the opportunity and strength to do it.

#### Tuesday – Putting Peace into Practice

*"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Romans 12:18"*

1. Please read Romans 12:9-18. How do these introductory verses explain what peace with others looks like?
2. Why is verse 12 pivotal to verses 9-21?
3. Verse 16 warns against conceit. According to Galatians 5:26, 1 Timothy 6:3-5 and 2 Timothy 3:1-5, how does conceit threaten peaceful relationships?

**Making it Personal:** Ask God to help you see yourself as he does, by the measure of faith he has given you.

#### Wednesday – God-given Peace

*"You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you." Isaiah 26:3*

1. Please read John 14:25-27. Where does true peace come from? What is the role of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit in giving us this peace?

**Text Insight:** This short passage shows all three persons of the Trinity involved in bringing us peace.

2. What aspects of God's nature are revealed in 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24? What assurance does verse 24 give for our being able to experience God's peace?
3. Read Isaiah 9:6-7. What does this reveal about Christ's Kingdom and peace?

**Making it Personal:** Which aspects of God's peace in Isaiah 9:6-7 do you most look forward to? Ask him to bring you this peace, and the patience to wait for his perfect timing as he delivers it to you.

#### Thursday – Making Your Peace with God

*"Every yes is a no." John Ortberg*

*"Peace, peace, they say, when there is no peace." Jeremiah 8:11*

1. Please read Luke 12:54-59. Jesus was talking to those who had not yet reconciled with God. How does this help you understand your own relationship with him?

**Text Insight:** In this passage Jesus was talking about standing before God as our righteous judge. In standing before him, we owe him an insurmountable debt that can only be paid by reconciling work of Jesus.

2. Now look at Luke 12:49-53. Why is the Prince of Peace talking about divisions within families? Have you ever found that standing with Jesus has meant standing apart from someone else? It has been said that "every yes is a no." Sometimes, saying "yes" to Jesus means saying "no" to someone else. Can you think of a situation where this is true in your life right now?

**Digging Deeper:** Read Matthew 25:31-46 and describe how one group made peace and the other avoided it.

#### Friday – Peaceful, Easy Feeling

*"And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:7*

1. Please read Isaiah 32:14-18. What will we experience before God's peace reigns eternally (v.14)? Who will deliver that peace (v.15)? What will it be like (v.15-18)?
2. Now read Isaiah 33:20. What is the significance of a tent whose stakes cannot be pulled up?
3. In Isaiah 33:22, what reassurance is there of God's ability to bring this security?

**Digging Deeper (optional):** Read Isaiah 33:1-24; the "destroyer" in verse 1 is probably Babylon, an empire that defeated every kingdom it faced.

**For the Weekend:** Re-read Romans 12:9-21. Which aspects of peace can you see you need in your life? Spend some time in prayer this weekend asking God to develop in you the true peace that only he can give.