



Individual Responsibility for Peace

Living in the Image of God Module 04 Session 07

Banking Blessings Ministry
San Antonio, Texas
USA



Living in the Image of God

- God creates every person to represent him in interactions with others
- Be for others what God would be for them if he lived with us in human form
- He provides resources for people to perform the responsibilities
- He blesses those that do

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Living in the Image of God

- Program seeks to understand
- Meaning of *Living in the Image of God*
- Resources God has provided to guide us
- Human responsibilities
- Benefits of *Living in the Image of God*

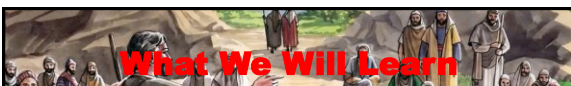
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What We Will Learn

- Christ declares individual responsibility for peace in the Sermon on the Mount
- Paul explains individual responsibility for peace in letter to Romans
- Seek a path to peace in every situation
- Focus on aspects that depend on you
- Irrespective of what others do or fail to do
- Strategy for finding path to peace based on examples from the bible

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What We Will Learn

- Choose battles to avoid: battles that appear justified but don't have to be fought
- Jesus paid the temple tax
- Paul recommended circumcision for Timothy
- Path to peace through dispute resolution
- Daniel negotiated compromise diet to substitute unacceptable diet decreed by the king
- City clerk in Ephesus diffused riot instigated by craftsmen opposed to Paul's message

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From Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

- Binary categorization by God
- Based on individual responsibility for peace
- Children of God—those that fulfill their individual responsibility for peace
- Others—not children of God—those that decline their individual responsibility for peace

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Explanation by Paul

- Every person is individually accountable for peace with others
- Individual responsibility for peace is independent of other's action or inaction
- Seek a path to peace in every situation
- Focus on aspects that depend on you
- Irrespective of what others do or fail to do
- Romans 12:18

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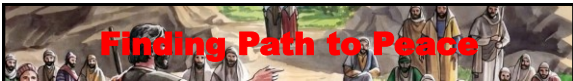


Explanation by Paul

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

- "If it is possible" ⇒ explore every possibility to find a path to peace
- "As far as it depends on you" ⇒ focus on the aspects that depend on you
- Perform your responsibility irrespective of what the other party does or fails to do

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Finding Path to Peace

- Choose battles to avoid: battles that appear justified but don't have to be fought
 - Example from Jesus
 - Example from Paul
- Mediation: finding path to peace through conflict resolution
 - Example from Daniel
 - Example from Ephesus

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Choose Battles to Avoid

- Christ paid the temple tax while he noted unfair implementation of the law
- Paid tax to avoid potential problems that could interfere with his overall mission

Matthew 17:27 "But so that we may not cause offense, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours."

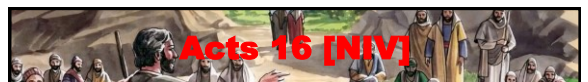
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Choose Battles to Avoid

- Paul recommended Timothy be circumcised despite an existing church ruling that the circumcision was not necessary
- Jerusalem ruling that Gentile believers did not need to be circumcised
- Conveyed to the church at Antioch through a letter and delegation led by Paul (Acts 15:22–35)
- Paul circumcised Timothy to take him for the second missionary journey: to avoid potential problem with Jews
- Acts 16:1–3

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Acts 16 [NIV]

1 Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek.

2 The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him.

3 Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

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Choose Battles to Avoid

- Paul knew Timothy did not need to be circumcised
- Expected Jews would raise issues regarding circumcision of Timothy
- Decided to avoid any battles regarding circumcision of Timothy in order to focus on his mission
- Choose battles to avoid even if such battles would have been justified

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Conflict Resolution Example from Daniel

- While in captivity in Babylon
- Daniel and associates placed on training for king's service and allotted daily ration of food and wine from the king's supply
- Consumption of such food or drink would compromise his relationship with God
- Rejecting royal diet could convey disobedience to the king

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Conflict Resolution by Daniel cont'd

- Daniel opened channel for negotiation
- Recognized chief of eunuchs was the responsible authority
- Spoke to him to seek negotiated settlement
- Chief did not grant settlement to Daniel
- But helped Daniel understand king's objective for the special diet was that the trainees should be well-nourished
- Daniel 1:8–10

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Daniel 1 [NIV]

8 But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.

9 Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel,

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Daniel 1 [NIV]

10 but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you."

- Daniel determined based on this consultation that the king's objective was that the trainees should be visibly healthy and well-nourished

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Conflict Resolution by Daniel cont'd

- Daniel determined that a substitute diet of vegetables and water would accomplish the king's objective
- Also determined that the diet substitution could be authorized by the guard responsible for the trainees' feeding
- The chief of eunuchs did not need to be involved in this aspect of the negotiation

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- Daniel proposed a ten-day trial on the substitute diet
- His proposal was based on faith and nutritional understanding of the vegetables
- Trial was successful
- Daniel and associates completed their training and entered the king's service
- Daniel 1:11–16

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11 Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah,

12 “Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink.

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13 Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see.”

14 So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

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15 At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food.

16 So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

- Daniel understood the issues and options
- Also knew the appropriate authority for negotiations

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- Riot in Ephesus during Paul's Second Missionary Journey
- Disorderly public gathering instigated by craftsmen opposed to Paul's message
- Thrived on business of making and selling shrines for idol worship
- Feared their business was shrinking because of growing acceptance of Paul's message

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- Public gathering instigated by the craftsmen threatened to develop into a riot
- Diffused by a city clerk
- Addressed the crowd and explained issues
 - Showed care
 - Respect
 - Understanding of the facts and issues
- Crowd dispersed peacefully
- Acts 19:23–41 [Not read in session]

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What We Learned

- Every person is individually responsible to make peace with others
- Independent of what others do or fail to do
- Based on Christ teaching in Sermon on the Mount and Paul's explanation in letter to Romans
- God calls every person to seek a path to peace in every situation
- Focus on aspects that depend on you
- Irrespective of what others do or fail to do

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What We Learned

- Jesus paid temple tax while acknowledging unfair implementation of the tax law
- Paul recommended Timothy be circumcised despite church ruling that circumcision of Gentile believers was not necessary
- While in captivity in Babylon, Daniel negotiated substitute diet of vegetables and water instead of potentially defiling food and drink from the king's supply

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What We Learned cont'd

- Daniel and his compatriots completed the training for king's service without violating their relationship with God
- City clerk in Ephesus diffused a developing riot instigated by craftsmen that feared their business shrinking because of growing acceptance Paul's message

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Individual Responsibility for Peace

Living in the Image of God M04S07

We discuss Christ teaching and explanation by Paul to understand that every person is individually responsible to seek a path to peace in every situation. Focus on the aspects that depend on you, irrespective of what others do or fail to do. To illustrate finding path to peace, Jesus paid the temple tax despite acknowledging unfair implementation of the tax law. Also, Paul recommended circumcision of Timothy despite a church ruling that circumcision of Gentile believers was not necessary. Other examples include Daniel negotiating a compromise diet of vegetables and water to avoid violating his relationship with God while obedient to King Nebuchadnezzar; and a city clerk in Ephesus that diffused a developing riot instigated by craftsmen concerned about their business shrinking because of growing acceptance of Paul's message.

This bible study discusses the individual responsibility for peace based on Christ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount and an explanation by Paul in his letter to Romans. Christ message declares God's promise of blessing and binary classification of people based on performing the individual responsibility for peace: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" [Matthew 5:9]. Further, Apostle Paul explains the individual responsibility for peace by advising every person to seek a path to peace in every situation, focus on aspects that depend on you, irrespective of what others do or fail to do.

Both Christ and Paul also provide examples for finding a path to peace by avoiding battles that do not have to be fought even if they appear justified. Jesus illustrated this strategy for peace by paying the temple tax after acknowledging potential grounds for objection based on unfair implementation of the tax law. He paid the tax "...so that we may not cause offense..." [Matthew 17:27] to avoid potential issues that could distract people from his mission. In his illustration of the peace strategy, Paul recommended circumcision of Timothy (Acts 16:3) despite a church ruling that circumcision of Gentile believers was not necessary. He recommended the circumcision to forestall potential arguments that could distract people from his message.

Additionally, we discuss two examples of finding a path to peace through conflict resolution. One example comes from Daniel, regarding his negotiating a compromise diet to substitute unacceptable diet decreed by King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 1:8–16). The other example comes from Ephesus, where a city clerk diffused a riot instigated by craftsmen that were opposed to Paul's message. The craftsmen saw their business of making shrines for idol worship was shrinking because of the growing acceptance of Paul's message (Acts 19:23–41).

Message of Peace from Sermon on the Mount

In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ declares God's promise of blessing for those that fulfill their individual responsibility for peace: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" [Matthew 5:9]. Also, the message describes a binary categorization of people based on the individual responsibility for peace. The first category consists of people that fulfill their individual responsibility for peace. Christ refers to them as the *peacemakers* and recognizes them as the *children of God*. By implication, the others—those that decline their individual responsibility for peace—are not children of God.

Explanation by Paul

Apostle Paul explains the individual responsibility for peace through his letter to Romans. He conveys a message that every person is individually accountable for peace with others. Also, based on his message, the individual responsibility for peace is independent of what others do or fail to do. His letter conveys the message as follows: “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” [Romans 12:18].

The message means that God calls every person to seek a path to peace in every situation, focus on the aspects that depend on you, irrespective of what others do or fail to do. To understand the message: the phrase “if it is possible” means that a person should explore every possibility to find a path to peace. Also, the phrase “as far as it depends on you” means you should focus on the aspects that depend on you. That is, find a path to peace and perform your individual responsibility, irrespective of what the other party does or fails to do.

Examples of Finding Path to Peace

The bible provides several examples of finding path to peace. In this study, we discuss four examples that fall into two general categories. The first category consists of choosing to avoid battles that do not have to be fought, even if the battles appear justified. We discuss one example from Jesus and one from Apostle Paul. The second category consists of mediation. That is, finding a path to peace through conflict resolution. We discuss one example from Daniel and one from an event that occurred in Ephesus during Paul’s second missionary journey.

Peacemaking by Choosing Battles to Avoid

Christ interactions regarding the temple tax provide an example of choosing battles to avoid. He chose to pay the temple tax, though he noted that the tax law was being implemented unfairly. He chose to pay the tax to avoid potential problems that could distract people from his overall mission. Here is his instruction to Peter regarding the temple tax [Matthew 17:27]: “But so that we may not cause offense, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours.”

A second example comes from Apostle Paul as he prepared for the Second Missionary Journey. Paul recommended Timothy be circumcised, despite an existing church ruling that the circumcision was not necessary. The church in Jerusalem had conducted a special discussion of the matter and ruled that it was not necessary to impose a requirement of circumcision on Gentile believers. Paul was aware of the ruling, having led the delegation that conveyed the message to the church in Antioch (Acts 15:22–35).

Though he knew about the ruling, he circumcised Timothy to avoid potential problems from Jews in the area during the second missionary journey: “Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek” [Acts 16:3]. He knew that Timothy did not need to be circumcised. However, he expected that the Jews in the area would raise issues regarding circumcision of Timothy. He decided to avoid any potential arguments that could arise if Timothy was not circumcised. He chose to avoid such battles in order to focus on his mission. “Choose battles to

avoid” means avoiding battles that do not have to be fought, even if such battles would have been justified.

Peacemaking Example from Daniel

The example from Daniel arises from events that occurred during his early years of captivity in Babylon. He faced an internal conflict with fulfilling his commitment to worship and serve God while being obedient to King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel and his associates were placed on training for the king’s service and were allotted a daily ration of food and wine from the king’s supply. He, however, believed that consumption of such food or drink would compromise his relationship with God. He also recognized that he owed a duty of obedience to the king and his officials.

To open a negotiation, Daniel recognized that the chief of the eunuchs was the channel for the king’s authority over the trainees. Therefore, he spoke to the chief to seek a negotiated settlement: “But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way” [Daniel 1:8]. However, the chief did not grant a settlement to Daniel. But the discussion led Daniel to understand the king’s objective regarding the trainees’ feeding [Daniel 1:10]: “but the official told Daniel, ‘I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you.’”

Based on his discussion with the chief of the eunuchs, Daniel understood that the king’s objective was that the trainees should be visibly healthy and well-nourished. Further, he determined that a substitute diet of vegetables and water would accomplish the king’s objective. Also, he determined that the diet substitution could be authorized by the guard responsible for the trainees’ feeding. Therefore, the chief of the eunuchs did not need to be involved in the negotiation regarding the change of diet. Daniel only needed to negotiate with the guard.

He proposed to the guard a ten-day trial on the substitute diet of vegetables and water. His proposal was based on faith and nutritional understanding of the vegetables [Daniel 1:12-13]: “Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see.” The guard accepted and the trial was successful: “At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food” [Daniel 1:15].

Daniel and his associates completed their training and entered the king’s service. He was successful in resolving the conflict peacefully, because he understood the issues and options. Also, he knew the appropriate authority for each stage of the negotiation.

Peacemaking Example from Ephesus

The second example of finding path to peace through conflict resolution comes from an event that occurred in Ephesus during Paul’s Second Missionary Journey. A disorderly public gathering was instigated by craftsmen that were opposed to Paul’s message. The craftsmen had thrived on a business of making and selling shrines for idol worship. However, they were concerned that their business was shrinking because of growing acceptance of Paul’s message.

A public gathering instigated by the craftsmen threatened to develop into a riot. However, the riot was diffused by a city clerk. He addressed the crowd and explained the issues to them with

care, respect, and fact-based sincerity. He convinced them that the gathering was unnecessary and could violate city ordinance. The crowd dispersed peacefully (Acts 19:23–41).

Summary of What We Learned

The study discusses Christ teaching and explanation by Paul to understand that every person is individually responsible to seek a path to peace in every situation. Focus on the aspects that depend on you, irrespective of what others do or fail to do. To illustrate finding path to peace, Jesus paid the temple tax despite acknowledging unfair implementation of the tax law. Also, Paul recommended circumcision of Timothy despite a church ruling that circumcision of Gentile believers was not necessary.

Other examples include Daniel negotiating a compromise diet of vegetables and water to avoid violating his relationship with God while obedient to King Nebuchadnezzar; and a city clerk in Ephesus that diffused a developing riot instigated by craftsmen concerned about their business shrinking because of growing acceptance of Paul's message.

Key Words: Circumcision, Daniel, Ephesus, Individual Responsibility, Paul, Peace, Temple Tax, Timothy