



MEETING GUIDE

Session 2: God's Way is Peace-loving
September 30 – October 6, 2018

Hangout (30 Minutes)

- Ice Breakers:
 - What is one of your favorite movies, or TV shows, or books, or plays?
 - Describe your family when you were growing up.
 - Individually pick one to answer:*
What is a behavior that presses your button (you become easily angered)?
How did the members of your family handle anger when you were growing up?
- If you have time, use the book "The Complete Book of Questions" to continue getting to know each other. Have a group member or two pick a number between 1 and 300, look up the question for that number and encourage everyone to answer. The higher the number the deeper the question. Remember, everyone has the right to pass on any question if they aren't ready to answer.
- Briefly remind people of the Life Group Agreement and plans for your next meeting.

Watch the Video (24 Minutes)

Watch the video if necessary. If everyone viewed the sermon before the meeting, add this time to your discussion.

Discuss (30 Minutes)

It's okay if you don't get to every question.

- Have someone read what Jesus taught in his Sermon on the Mount.

⁹"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." ... ²¹"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' ²²But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell. ²³"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:9, 21-24

- Think of someone you know that you would describe as "a peacemaker". What behaviors make that person a peacemaker?
 - In your opinion, how significant is it to be "called children of God"? Why do you think peacemakers are given such a high evaluation by Jesus?
 - How would you describe Jesus teaching in verses 21-22? *Pick an adjective and give your reason:* Strident, Jarring, Harsh, Shocking, Exaggerated, Convicting, Confusing, Understandable, *Other*.
 - Why do you think Jesus was so (*fill the adjective you chose*) in this teaching?
 - In verse 23, do you think Jesus is teaching that reconciling our conflicts is more important than our worship of God? Why would Jesus teach this?
- Have someone read what James, the brother of Jesus, wrote.

¹⁹ My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,

²⁰ because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. James 1:19-20

- How have you experienced anger *not producing the righteousness that God desires*?
- In relationships, how do you think one becomes adept at *slow to become angry*?
- Pastor Steve taught *Master My Stories* from the book Crucial Conversations as one way to live out what James teaches and become a peacemaker. What was your reaction to this teaching?

3. What is one next step you would like to take from this week's message and discussion?

Summary

God's Way in our relationships is peace-loving. How we handle our anger in our relationships is crucial for experiencing what we want most in relationships. With dramatic words Jesus taught the importance of being a peacemaker and the consequences of unchecked anger. To get what you want most in relationships understand what presses your buttons, don't feed your anger, and seek first to understand a person's pain before responding to their words and actions. We can faithfully deal with our anger when someone presses our buttons. *Master My Stories* from the book Crucial Conversations is one way to live out what James teaches and become a peacemaker.

Next week we will learn that **God's Way in our relationships is considerate.**

Pray (5 Minutes)

Leader: Jesus describes God's Way in relationships as being "peacemakers". Let us pray for God, the Holy Spirit, to move us to be peacemakers in our relationships. Think about one of your relationships that really needs greater peace right now. During the prayer, when there is time for silent prayer, ask God to show you how to bring peace to that relationship. We pray out loud together ...

Group: Gracious Lord, thank you that you created me to be in relationships with others. Help me to understand what I want most in my relationships. Help me to understand why someone presses my buttons. Help me to avoid feeding my anger. Show me how to bring greater peace my relationship with ... *(Silently name the person and listen for God's answer to what you can do to bring greater peace to that relationship.)*

Leader: We continue to pray ...

Group: I want to be called your child, O God. Show how to be a peacemaker in all of my relationships. Amen.