



Peace

Week Two: Peace

In the Garden of Eden, we see the heartbreaking separation of God and man, but in a field of shepherds, heaven reintroduces itself in a big way. On the outskirts of the town of Bethlehem, shepherds are keeping watch of their flocks by night when the heavens burst forth in the sky overhead. An angel speaks, and a heavenly host erupts in praise for the Advent of Christ. Can you imagine? You're quietly tending to a work you've done night after night for years when heaven interrupts on a grand scale. Scripture says that the shepherds were filled with great fear. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"* -Luke 2:14

Peace is the great reintroduction, the great interruption! Heaven invades Earth with a declaration of peace and goodwill while Jesus is yet a baby in a manger. The word of promise is made flesh, and his coming has already initiated the reconciliation of heaven and Earth. It is the reconciliation for which God has longed for generations. Since the time Adam and Eve sinned in the garden and hid at the sound of His coming, God has waited for millennia to declare "peace!" He declares it in the coming of His Son.

Like the angelic arrival among the shepherds that night, God's peace often arrives like an interruption. It is an interruption to any fallen thought patterns, habits, or expectations. Peace is an interruption to our propensity to fear. Christ's Advent is a declaration of peace to our fears and a promise that God wills to work all things together for our good. After generations of separation, this is heaven's first message to mankind, and it is God's daily invitation to us to receive His peace, His will, and His pleasure in us.

Arriving at the place of his birth, the shepherds worship the Christ child
and share the account of their heavenly interruption with Mary.

Scripture says,

*And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.
But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.*
May we, too, treasure up the promises of God, pondering them in our
hearts this Advent season.

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall
be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

-Isaiah 9:6

*O come, Desire of nations,
bind In one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,
And be Thyself our King of Peace.*

-O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Read Luke 2:8-20

JESUS IS THE PRINCE OF PEACE

He has empowered us to live in peace. Peace is both a gift and a fruit of the Spirit. Jesus has provided peace for us, but it's up to us to cultivate an environment of peace and be persons of peace.

Week 2 | Peace | Integration

Basic:

Each night, speak the Lord's blessing over your household.
Mark 12:30-31 ESV *Love the Lord with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. Love your neighbor as yourself.* Numbers 6:24-26 ESV *The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.*

Spend 5 minutes in silence as many days as you can this week.

Baseline:

Do things that will make your home a peaceful home.
Start one habit of resetting your home at night.

Examples: Lay clothes out at night so you aren't rushing in the morning.
Get rid of the clutter in that corner you've been ignoring for a year.

Spend 15 minutes in silence and prayer each day this week.

Build:

Bring peace wherever you may go.
Reflect on your responses toward others or situations when you have been wronged or inconvenienced. Did that disturb your peace? Do you join every debate and argument on social media? Do you allow other co-workers to speak in a dishonorable way about your supervisor in your presence? Crazy enough, peace can be disruptive to a non-peaceful culture. Offer peace in every situation. *"A gentle answer turns away wrath"*—not just of the person you're responding to, but your wrath, too!

Begin the discipline of daily spending 30 minutes in silence and prayer.





Scripture Reading
Week Two

MICAH 5:2

JOHN 1:1-3

MATTHEW 2:1-2

JOHN 1:4-5

MATTHEW 2:3-6

LUKE 2:4-5

JOHN 7:42

Reflections

PEACE

Where did you start this week? Circle one: Basic | Baseline | Build

What did you take away from your integration this week?

Do you feel more equipped to bring peace to your world?

What is the next step for you to live in peace in the coming year?