

Icebreaker

Jesus describes the Holy Spirit as Counselor or Advocate in John 14:15. Who was the best counselor or advocate you ever had and why was that person special?

Read John 14:15-27 and discuss:

1. Jesus says in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." What is different about the peace that Jesus can give than the peace that the world gives?
2. Where in your life do you need Jesus' peace right now? Where do you find peace or hope in this John 14 passage?
3. Share with your group, if you feel comfortable, a place where you feel peaceful. Do you imagine being in this place when you are feeling overwhelmed? If so, how does this help? If not, do you think it could help you to feel peaceful?
4. Randy Frazee says that most people think peace is more "the absence of trouble than the presence of contentment." What do you think of his statement?
5. How does living at peace with others promote the gospel? Has there been a time when you experienced peace when you connected with someone from a different background (racial, cultural or socioeconomic)?
6. What does a person of peace look like? What are the visible attributes of a peaceful person?
7. Share a situation where you were able to be compassionate in the last week. Continue this week to find a way to be a person of compassion and peace.

Prayer

As you close in prayer, remember requests from our church family:

- > Prayers of healing for Wanda Baker, Lisa Jones, and Barbara Sloop.

Reminders for your group:

- > Please consider gathering your group to do some work at Str8up Camp. They need groups of 5 or so to do light construction and maintenance. Greg Strand [greg.strand@gmail.com].

Leader's Notes:

Peace (or Shalom in Hebrew) is a powerful theme in both the Old and New Testaments. Jesus is foreshadowed as the Prince of Peace in Isaiah 9:6 – as we remember at Christmas. Jesus talks often of peace – especially several times in John's gospel. In his epistles, Paul speaks of peace – even God's peace that passes understanding – as an answer to our prayers when we are anxious or worried (Philippians 4). God gives us peace through Christ. In our sin, we were "enemies" of God. Through Christ, we have peace with God. Because we know God's peace, we can share that peace with others – while being instruments of peace. Peace can be cultivated as we draw closer to God and put on virtues like gentleness, self-control, humility and patience. So share God's peace with others even this week.

[Question 1] The peace of Christ is confident assurance in different situations – knowing that we do not need to fear the future. Jesus bases this peace on the idea that he sends the Holy Spirit, who is a counselor or advocate, to teach us, and remind us of all that Jesus has taught. Lean on the Holy Spirit, who is in you as you have asked Jesus into your life, so that you can have courage, comfort, confidence, and peace.

[Question 2] The first part of the question is very personal. Some answers to the second question: We are called to obey Jesus' commands. Obedience to God helps us live right. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to us who gives us counsel, courage, comfort, and helps us to understand what Jesus taught. Jesus says he is "in us." God lives in us – and the Holy Spirit guides us. God gives us peace to not be afraid.

[Question 3] This is a personal question too. Some suggestions for people might be a certain chair in the house early in the morning or at night before bed where you pray, read, and meditate. Other people need to be in nature to find the most peace. Still others gain energy and peace from being with sisters and brothers in Christ.

[Question 4] Frazee goes on to say that biblical peace is not the subtraction of anything but the addition of Jesus (Randy Frazee, *Think Act Believe Like Jesus*). Through Jesus, we can have peace even when the world around us is not peaceful. Even when our finances or family situation is uncertain, Jesus is the Prince of Peace and can give peace so our hearts will not be troubled.

[Question 5] Being a person of peace in a world where there is shouting, division, disagreement can be incredibly refreshing. Being a non-anxious presence in an anxious church, family, or job can help others be calm. Furthermore, promoting peace in bigger ways can be life-giving and a witness to the peace of Christ. Be ready to give an answer to the hope you have in Jesus when you are an instrument of peace. Encourage your group to share stories where they have seen God's peace if tough situations.

[Question 6] A person of peace might not enter into yelling, accusing or name-calling but carefully speak the truth in love. A person of peace may be the first one to say I'm sorry when things go wrong, leading to reconciliation. A person of peace will show the fruit of the Spirit such as faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, love, joy, patience, kindness, and goodness.

[Question 7] Ask your group if they had a chance to be compassionate last week. What did they do? Being a person of compassion (suffering with someone) and a person of peace are very similar. Encourage your group to be compassionate and full of peace with others this week at home, work, and everywhere.