

FORMED BY PEACEMAKING



the way of peace in a world at war



Passion Creek
CHURCH

**Formed by Hospitality:
the way of peace in a world at war**

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WHAT IS PEACEMAKING?

In the opening pages of the Bible, we see a picture of life as it was meant to be.

Before there was sin, death, brokenness, and pain, humanity was in perfect harmony with God, creation, and with themselves. The word the Bible uses to describe this state of being is the Hebrew word, shalom. Peace. Or, more literally, wholeness. Before sin and death entered the world, Adam and Eve shared wholeness with God, and with each other. But when sin is introduced into the world, peace is the first thing to go. Our peace with God is broken, and the wholeness we once shared naturally with others is lost.

Most of our lives are spent trying to restore this peace.

All of us experience brokenness in our relationships with our families, friends, and loved ones, and all of us try to restore the peace we've lost in different ways. Some of those ways are good and healthy, like when we own up to our mistakes, reconcile with those we've hurt, and forgive those who have hurt us. Other ways of trying to make peace are less healthy, like cutting off people we don't like, unintentionally passing down generational sins, and reinforcing negative relational patterns we've inherited from our parents. But no matter how good or bad our attempts at making peace are, trying to restore peace on our own is futile. Peace is something that must be given, not achieved.

When Jesus lived as a man on earth, a primary part of his mission was to make peace for us. By living, dying, and rising again, Jesus makes peace between us and God, restoring our relationship that was

broken by sin. And by living a life marked by compassion, self-sacrifice, and service, Jesus models what it looks like to make peace with others. When we choose to follow Jesus, we choose to accept this peace that Jesus offers and seek to become the kind of people who love others the way that Jesus does.

The practice of peacemaking is doing the hard work of forgiving our past, forging new patterns, and framing our pain in order to fulfill our purpose of loving God and others.

We examine our past to learn where we've come from and to remember how God has moved in our lives. We examine our patterns to see where God is inviting us to experience transformation. We examine our pain to seek God's providence in our suffering. And we examine our purpose to see where God is taking us.

MAKING PEACE WITH YOUR PAST

All of us are shaped by our past.

Where we come from, who we come from, and the way we were raised all shape who we are today in profound ways. Most of us have a basic awareness of our family of origin, but few of us have done the hard work of learning about our past to better understand who we are today. As a result, all of us unknowingly transmit the same narratives, patterns, pains, and expectations as our family before us.

To make peace with our past is to return to an ancient tradition from the scriptures. Throughout the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, God tells his people to remember where they've come from, what God has saved them from, and the promises He has made (Deut. 6:12, Isa. 46:9, Ps. 143:5).

Making peace with our past means we must forgive our past.

We must take intentional time to see where we come from . We learn about our family of origin to better understand where our behaviors and patterns come from, both good and bad. But most importantly, we look back in order to recognize God's providence and care for us in our lives. By recognizing both positives and negatives in our past, we're able to see how God has used our family of origin to shape who we are.

Putting It Into Practice

Part 1: Genogram

A genogram is a family tree that helps us see the relational attributes, behaviors, and narratives that have been passed down from generation to generation. It's like a map that shows us patterns ingrained within our family, narratives, and life lessons we've passed on and generational sins we've inherited.

Use these steps to begin working through your past.

1. Fill out your genogram. Use the sample genogram on page 12 as a template to map out your family tree, beginning with your grandparents. Include aunts, uncles, cousins, yourself, and your children if you have any.

2. Relational patterns. Once you've filled in all the individuals from your family, go back over each relationship and take note of divorces, affairs, patterns, and strong loving relationships.

Try to focus on both positive and negative qualities of each person and relationship, but pay special attention to any patterns or generational sins you notice.

Here are some examples of things to fill out:¹

Personality Traits

- Addiction
- Self-absorbed
- Dominant
- Passive
- Healthy
- Patient
- Loving

Major Events

- Divorce
- Affair
- Abuse
- Trauma
- Death
- Abandonment

Relational Traits

- Abusive
- Absent
- Strong
- Enmeshed
- Co-dependent
- Divorce
- Infidelity

Narratives

- It's not okay to make mistakes.
- My value comes from my work ethic.
- Blood is thicker than water.
- I'm responsible for my parent's happiness.
- Money and success are the measure of a person's worth.

3. Reflect. Spend some time reflecting on your genogram. Work through these reflection questions slowly and prayerfully:

- 1. What are some recurring themes I recognize in my family from my genogram?**
- 2. What are some narratives about myself or others I believe from my family of origin? How do these narratives impact how I treat those around me?**
- 3. In what positive and negative ways has my family of origin shaped who I am?**
- 4. What are other major life events from my past that have shaped who I am?**
- 5. What hurts from my past am I still holding onto?**
- 6. Who in my past do I need to extend mercy and forgiveness to?**

Part 2: Forgiveness

All of us carry wounding from others in our past. Whether from family members or close friends, these wounds and wrongdoings can shape us for the worse, especially if we don't learn to let them go. The second part of this practice is to extend forgiveness to the people in our past who have hurt us.

The following steps are loosely based on the popular REACH method of practicing forgiveness:²

1. Identify the hurt. Take a few moments and invite the Holy Spirit to bring to mind a past hurt you're still holding on to. Try to name the wrongdoing and the person who hurt you as specifically as you can.

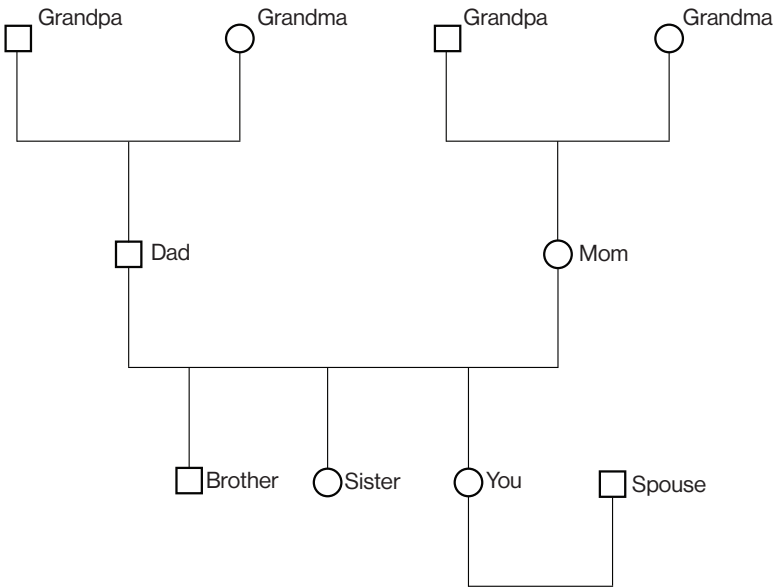
2. Meditate on Luke 7:36-50. In this passage, Jesus paints a picture of the power of God's grace, even for the worst of sinners. As you "hagah" (Hebrew for "chew on") this passage, ask for God's help in allowing you to see the person who hurt you with empathy. Then ask God to show you the things you've been forgiven for in the past.

3. Commit to forgiving. This is the hard part. Commit to releasing this person from expectations and judgement, and extend the gift of unmerited grace toward them. Contrary to what many believe, forgiveness is not a feeling. If we wait until we feel like it to extend forgiveness to others, we'll never do it. We must choose to give others the gift of forgiveness as an unmerited gift, and in return, we receive the gift of freedom.

4. Continue forgiving. It's rare that a one-time moment will absolve you from the hurt you've experienced. The work of forgiveness must be repeated when you're reminded of the hurt. Forgiving others doesn't fix or ignore the pain. It's simply a way for you to reshape your experience of the pain and come to terms with the reality of pain in your past.

Genogram Template

□ Male ○ Female



MAKING PEACE WITH YOUR PATTERNS

Once we've made peace with our past, we must learn to forge new patterns. To do this requires us to take ownership for the ways we contribute to the pain of the people around us. All of us have ways of coping with pain in our own lives, and some of these coping mechanisms can be good. If we're lucky, we learn from our parents what it means to own up to our mistakes, forgive others, and resolve conflict well.

But all of us also carry negative coping mechanisms into our relationships as well.

Some call these negative coping mechanisms attachment styles. We learn how to get what we want from people and how to avoid pain that comes with relationships. Our attachment styles aren't inherently sinful, but they do pave the way for us to sin. And like all negative coping mechanisms, these attachment styles are often fueled by lies we believe about ourselves, others, and God.

By making peace with our patterns, we're intentionally confronting our flesh.

We're calling out the selfish parts of who we are and refusing to let it rule over our relationships. Like the Psalmist in Psalm 139, we're inviting God to search us and know us to get rid of the offensive and sinful parts of us (Psalm 139:23-24).

Putting It Into Practice

Part 1: Identify your attachment style

Attachment styles are negative ways of relating to others that we live out by default. Read through the following list of attachment styles.³ Pay attention to things that resonate with you, and try to identify which style you lean toward the most:

Avoider – learned early on to minimize their feelings, be independent, and meet their own needs

- I tend to be private and self-sufficient.
- I am usually “fine” and tend to resist connection and affection, and I am not very affectionate toward others.
- I have few emotions.
- Sometimes I comply simply to avoid arguments.
- I generally don’t ask for any sort of emotional investment or commitment from people.
- I minimize and resist expressions of anger in others and myself, yet I do get angry when people try to get too close.
- I’m usually happiest when others are happy and don’t want a lot from me.
- I’m a task-oriented, high achiever.
- I prefer to do something for someone or give gifts rather than connect emotionally.
- I’ve felt resentment toward my spouse for wanting something more from me.
- I’m tired of hearing how distant I am.
- I don’t really think about my own feelings and needs very often.

Pleaser – learned to be cautious and tried hard to be the good kids in order to avoid criticism and keep things peaceful

- People knew me as “the good kid.”
- I struggle with fear of rejection or criticism.
- Sometimes I seek deeper connection by working to meet others’ needs.
- I have needs, but they’re not as big as most peoples.
- At times, I’ve had difficulty tolerating physical or emotional distance from my spouse.
- I prefer to deal with conflict by making up for it quickly and moving on.
- I can be very jealous, though I rarely show it.
- I have difficulty saying no, and sometimes it makes me less than truthful.
- I generally don’t feel angry, or if I do, I try to think about something else to get rid of it.
- Sometimes I resent giving more than I get and feel like a doormat.
- I don’t often ask for help and feel uncomfortable when others try to give me assistance.

Vacillator – connection was sometimes available but unpredictable, and often left waiting, so by the time attention was offered, they were too angry to receive it

- I’ve always been especially sensitive.
- I desire passionate connection with my spouse but never seem to get it.
- I’ve had a history of idealizing others early on in relationships.
- I easily feel disappointed, rejected, or unwanted.
- I sometimes become angry when my expectations are not met.
- I can feel betrayed, abandoned when others are not emotionally available.
- I experience internal conflict and a high level of emotional stress in relationships.
- Others have said they feel like they are walking on eggshells around me.
- I have difficulty accepting the weaknesses of others.
- I usually feel angry instead of sad over disappointment with others.

Controllers – learned to cover their fears by fighting back

- Growing up, I experienced a great deal of intense anger and stress from a parent or parents.
- I'm used to chaos at home.
- I've learned to protect myself through aggression.
- I tend not to think about the past and stay busy with the present.
- My spouse couldn't survive without me.
- Our relationship problems are usually my spouse's fault.
- I rarely feel any emotion except anger and sometimes guilt if my anger has gone too far.
- Things would go more smoothly if my spouse listened to me and did the things I ask.
- My spouse purposely makes me jealous.
- I get angry when others don't listen.
- I have few feelings about my childhood except I'm glad it's over because I wouldn't go back.

Victims - learned to cover their fears by detaching and complying

- Growing up, I experienced a great deal of intense anger and stress from a parent or parents.
- I'm used to chaos at home.
- I've learned to protect myself through passivity.
- I don't like to consider the alternative if I weren't quiet and submissive.
- I don't often assert myself.
- Relationship problems are usually my own fault.
- I try very hard to keep my mate happy, but it doesn't always work.
- At times I'm honestly scared of my spouse.
- I'm resentful and angry but try not to focus on it.
- I feel trapped and hopeless most of the time.
- No one really knows me or what goes on in my marriage.
- My spouse is much nicer to friends than to me.

Part 2: Confront the lie behind your attachment style with scripture

Once you identify which attachment style you tend to live out the most, meditate on the following passages of scripture. Doing this won't immediately free you from this attachment style, but it will serve you as you seek to break free from the lies you've believed.

Avoider — Psalm 139:1-16. Pay attention to the language that the Psalmist uses to demonstrate the most intimate parts of themselves that God is still aware of. Use this Psalm to pray back to God your deepest emotions, even the ones you're used to suppressing.

Pleaser — Matthew 6:25-34. Focus on both the magnitude and intimacy of God's love and care for you. God desires to meet your needs, and He's happy to do it.

Vacillator — Romans 8:31-39. Reflect on God's stability defined in this passage. God will never leave you, forsake you, abandon you, or let you down. God's faithfulness is greater than the chaos of the world and relationships around you, and nothing can separate you from His love.

Controller — Matthew 14:22-33. Pay attention to Jesus' control in this story. Put yourself in Peter's shoes. Imagine Jesus reaching out to you and saving you from the storm you can't control.

Victim — Exodus 34:6-7. Consider the ways God protects and upholds you. As you read this passage, notice how God speaks about Himself. See the ways that He defines His character as one of grace and compassion.

Part 3: Reconciliation

Because our attachment styles are ways that we cope, those coping mechanisms can often hurt those around us. The last part of this practice is to reconcile with someone you've hurt with your attachment style. Set aside a few moments to work through the following steps of reconciliation. Consider practicing this with a spouse or someone you trust, but who you're also relationally close with.

1. Identify the wrongdoing. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you think through who you may have hurt in recent memory. Let the Spirit bring people to mind, and don't be too quick to shrug off any names or faces that come up. Consider people you currently feel tension with, animosity toward, or who you're not as close to as you used to be.

2. Right the wrong. Ask God what it would look like to have your relationship with this person wholly restored, and what next steps you might need to take in order to have reconciliation.

3. Invite this person into relationship. If the hurt isn't too deep, consider ways to reconcile your relationship with this person. Apologize, if you haven't already, and be willing to fully own up to any pain you've caused. This part of the practice is a tangible way to implement Jesus' command to quickly "go and be reconciled with your brother or sister" from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:24).

MAKING PEACE WITH YOUR PAIN

One of the hardest parts of our lives to make peace with is the pain and suffering that follows us. All of us experience hardship, and for some, it's the defining attribute of our lives. Whether from death, loss, infertility, chronic illness, sudden diagnoses, mental health issues, or simply from apathy and the monotony of life, all of us have painful experiences and even physical sensations. We carry the effects of pain in our bodies, and traumatic events or seasons of suffering can even cause other issues in our lives like a lack of good sleep, growing paranoia, and stress.⁴

Making peace with our pain doesn't mean we ignore its reality.

It actually means the opposite. Psalm 22 is a Psalm of lament. Written by King David, this Psalm shows David exploring the depths of his pain and crying out to God. The language he uses is varied; he feels mocked, despised, scorned, poured out like water, and he even calls himself a worm (v. 6, 7, 14).

And yet, by the end of the Psalm, David is praising God. He writes about God's nearness, past acts of salvation, and sovereignty (v. 19, 24, 28).

Making peace with our pain is a way for us to vocalize our pain to God. We name the emotions connected to our pain, and we voice these emotions back to God. But we also declare God's faithfulness back to ourselves. Like David, we use our pain as a reminder that God is still faithful and in control. And even in our lowest, God is still near.

Putting It Into Practice

Part 1: Name your pain

Most of us have experiences we know cause us pain. However, many of us don't know how to process this pain. To make peace with our pain means we must frame our pain by naming our pain.

By naming and identifying the feelings associated with our pain, we can learn to regulate our pain. Like David writing the Psalms of Lament, we can also use the specific language associated with our pain to pray our pain to God.

However, if we choose to ignore the feelings associated with our pain, we're more likely to lash out poorly to those around us.

1. Identify the pain. What pain are you currently experiencing? It could be relational pain, a season of suffering that God is allowing you to endure, or even a physical pain.

2. What emotions are associated with this pain? Use the following list to identify key emotions that arise when you think about your pain:⁵

Sad

- Alienated
- Ashamed
- Dejected
- Depressed
- Disillusioned
- Empty
- Inadequate

Angry

- Abused
- Agitated
- Controlled
- Fuming
- Hostile
- Outraged
- Vengeful

Scared

- Afraid
- Apprehensive
- Guarded
- Intimidated
- Perplexed
- Shaken
- Threatened

Confused

- Awkward
- Bothered
- Directionless
- Doubtful
- Flustered
- Trapped
- Unsettled

Part 2: Replace bitterness with honor

Those of us with pain caused by another person can harbor bitterness, envy, anger, or even hatred toward those people if we don't deal with our pain. In order to mitigate these feelings and find freedom, we must replace that bitterness with honor.

Here are some ways to do that:

- **Practice praying for your “enemies” by asking for God’s favor over their life.**
- **Write a note or text of encouragement to them.**
- **Spend time with them in proximity by inviting them over or out for a meal.**
- **Thank God for specific things about them.**

MAKING PEACE WITH YOUR PURPOSE

The final part of peacemaking involves making peace with who we really are and who God made us to be.

At some point in our lives, our perspective shifts. We realize that we aren't the hero of our story in the way we thought we'd be. We make mistakes, poor choices, and we fail. We learn what our real gifts and talents are. And we realize what gifts and talents we'll never have. The dreams we had as children come face to face with reality, and few of us end up with lives as perfect and ideal as we once thought we would.

And yet, God never abandons us. In fact, the most influential people in the biblical story all experience dramatic low points. Abraham lies about his wife to protect himself. Noah gets drunk in his tent and curses part of his family for generations. There's David and Bathsheba, Sampson and Delilah, Paul imprisoned, and even Moses, who never actually makes it into the Promised Land.

Even Jesus has His dark night in the garden.

But in spite of our regrets, failures, and disappointments, God promises to restore and redeem all of our lives for our good and for His glory (Romans 8:28). Making peace with our purpose means making peace with disappointment, failure, and regret. But it also means making peace with who we actually are today. We look back at our lives, and ahead to our future, in order to fulfill the purpose God has for us.

Putting It Into Practice

Part 1: Map out your story

In order to see how God has used our lives to shape who we are today, we are going to create a Spiritual Map of our lives. Begin by creating a timeline of your life. You can do this in a journal, on a small or large piece of paper with sticky notes, or on a whiteboard. Work through this timeline of your life by taking special note of the following:

1. Successes — What success have you experienced in your life? What highs have you been through, and what good decisions have impacted you for the better?

2. Failures — What failures have you experienced? What negative things have happened in your life that have affected you, like a divorce, a pandemic, or someone else's sins?

3. Disappointments — What disappointments and regrets do you have in your life? Even if you're perfectly content and happy where you are, all of us make decisions that we later regret. In what ways are you and your life different than how you thought they'd be?

4. Mentors — Who has been the most influential in your life? Who has been a positive role model that you'd like to emulate?

5. God Moments — When has God been most active in your life? When did you start following Jesus? When have you felt you were closest and farthest from God?

- 1. What failures, pain points, and overall lows in your life have you seen God reuse and work for your own good and His glory?**
- 2. What themes or patterns do you notice throughout your life?**
- 3. How has God used both the good and bad in your life to shape who you are today?**

Part 2: Gratitude

Once you have your spiritual life mapped out, spend some time looking over it and practicing gratitude. Thank God for the good and the bad. Thank Him for never leaving you in the low points and for blessing you with high points. Thank Him for creating who you are today, and ask Him to give you contentment and joy with how your life has turned out. Consider doing this in a journal or notebook that you can come back to and revisit.

A DAILY PRACTICE OF PEACEMAKING

Now that you've done the hard work of forgiving your past, forging new patterns, and framing your pain to fulfill your purpose of loving God and others, you can practice integrating these things in small ways in your daily life.

Although the practices in this booklet can be difficult to do on a daily basis, there is a way followers of Jesus have integrated peacemaking in their daily lives for centuries.

It's a method of prayer called The Examen.

This type of prayer is a simple way of reflecting on your day and noticing where God was present, where you sinned, and where you experienced God's grace.

The Examen allows us to recount our past by examining our days, our patterns and pain by examining our sins, and our purpose by rejoicing in God's presence in our daily lives.

Here's a simple way to pray The Examen:

1. Reflect. Spend a minute or two going over the events of your day. You can even use your calendar or schedule to help you remember important meetings, interactions, and tasks from the day's schedule. Where did you feel God's presence the most?

2. Repent. What sins did I commit today? Spend some time asking God to illuminate the moments you sinned. Did you repent from this sin? If the sin was against another person, is there a way for you to make amends for this sin?

3. Rejoice. Now spend some time rejoicing in the moments you felt God's presence. Also rejoice in the fact that God has forgiven you from your sin, and you you're not enslaved to guilt or shame because of the finished work of Jesus.

REFLECTIONS

RECOMMENDED READING

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality

by Peter Scazzero

The Connected Life

by Todd W. Hall

Untangle Your Emotions

by Jennie Allen

The Peacemaker

by Ken Sande

Boundaries For Your Soul

by Alison Cook & Kimberly Miller

How We Love

by Milan & Kay Yerkovich

The Relational Soul

by Richard Plass & James Cofield

ENDNOTES

- 1 Adapted from Explore Your Genogram: Become Leaders Who Go Back to Go Forward by Pete Scazzero.
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- 3 Adapted from “How We Love: Discover Your Style, Enhance Your Marriage” by Milan & Kay Yerkovich.
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Dwelling on
rejection
is a damaging
infection.