

## **Battle Ready: Recognizing and Overcoming the Strategies of the Enemy**

*Peacekeeper or Peacemaker – Overcoming a Divisive Strategy*

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# **Peacekeeper or Peacemaker – Overcoming a Divisive Strategy**

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**Fox News:** *President Trump Slams Cuba at Cabinet Meeting: “Run by a bunch of communists.”*

**Fox News:** *Purple Heart veteran finally hits back after Democratic candidate mocked him.*

**Fox News:** *Iran’s supreme leader would sign Trump deal – only under “unprecedented” terms.*

**Fox News:** *Kate Middleton’s “final straw” that ultimately split brothers Prince William, Prince Harry.*

**CNN:** *Trump: US won’t rush Iran deal because, “I don’t care about the mid-terms.”*

**CNN:** *Speed bumps ahead for GOP after Ken Paxton’s Texas victory.*

**New York Times:** *Cornyn’s Defeat Fuels Tensions With President Trump in Senate G.O.P.*

**New York Times:** *Some People Fired for Criticizing Charlie Kirk are Getting Big Payouts.*

### **Matthew 7:1–5 NLT**

Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged. “And why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to your friend, ‘Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can’t see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First, get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye.

### **Luke 6:27–36 NLT**

But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who

hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, offer the other cheek also. If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt also. Give to anyone who asks; and when things are taken away from you, don't try to get them back. Do to others as you would like them to do to you. If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them! And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit? Even sinners do that much! And if you lend money only to those who can repay you, why should you get credit? Even sinners will lend to other sinners for a full return. Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.

### **Ephesians 6:12 NLT**

For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

**Remember, our responsibility is to (1) love our enemy, (2) do good to those who hate us, (3) bless those who curse us, and (4) pray for those who hurt us.**

### **Matthew 5:9 NLT**

God blesses those who work for peace [peacemakers], for they will be called the children of God.

**Peacemakers are not trying to force unity. They're reaching toward people so they can be saved, healed, and set free in Christ.**

# Small Group Guide – Peacekeeper or Peacemaker

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## Opening Question

Think of a conflict or tension you have avoided addressing — in a relationship, a workplace, or a community. What kept you from speaking up, and what did the silence cost?

## Don't Take the Bait

Division is not a byproduct of disagreement. It is a strategy — one of the enemy's most effective, and one that our media landscape has turned into a business model. Make note: *shared enemies unite groups faster than shared interests*. Rather than rallying people around ideas, our culture has learned to rally them against people. Every news cycle is structured around the same cast of characters — a villain, a hero, and someone who needs saving — and we are trained from childhood to know our role the moment those characters appear. Hate the villain. Cheer the hero. Feel compassion for the victim. The machine runs on those responses.

The problem is not that we have opinions or that we disagree. Disagreement is appropriate. Judging the fruit of ideas, refuting bad arguments, standing for truth and righteousness — all of that is not only acceptable but necessary. The line is crossed when we move from disagreeing with a viewpoint to making the person who holds it an enemy. The moment we do that, we have handed the enemy a significant victory: we have decided that another image-bearer of God is beyond redemption, worthy of punishment, and outside the reach of our love. We have also, quietly, exempted ourselves from the **command** (not suggestion) Jesus gave to love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, bless those who curse us, and pray for those who hurt us.

There is a name for the pattern the enemy is running: the Division Game. Its goal is to sort people into roles and then activate the instincts those roles trigger. The antidote is not to stop caring about truth. It is to remember Ephesians 6: our real enemy is not flesh and blood. The person on the other side of a political argument, a family conflict, or a church disagreement is not the enemy. The spiritual forces working to keep them in darkness — and to keep us in bitterness — are. Refusing to take the bait is an act of spiritual warfare.

Which brings us to the distinction at the heart of this passage: peacekeeper versus peacemaker. They sound alike. They are not. A peacekeeper avoids truth to prevent discomfort. They stay quiet when God calls them to speak, confuse peace with pretending, protect their reputation over their faithfulness, and manage outcomes rather than hearts. The goal of a peacekeeper is that nobody gets upset. The goal of a peacemaker is that God gets honored.

A peacemaker pursues truth rather than silence, moves toward people rather than away from them, and confronts or corrects out of love — to protect and restore, not to win. Peacemakers know the difference between peace and compromise. They rebuke with gentleness, choose the right words and the right moment, and can sit with tension without panicking because they trust God to work in it. They know they will not win over everyone — but there is no one they will not try to win over. The standard they live by is this: “You may hate me, but I love you.” That is not a posture that comes naturally. It is the posture of someone who has genuinely encountered the love of God and let it reorient everything else.

### **For Discussion**

1. Jesus says in Luke 6 that loving only those who love you is no different from what non-believers do. That’s a high bar. Is there a person or group you have mentally moved into the “enemy” category — someone you have stopped seeing as an image-bearer worthy of love? What would it take to move them back?
2. Look again at the characteristics of a peacekeeper in the final paragraph. Which of those tendencies do you recognize most in yourself? What fear or belief tends to drive it?
3. Peacekeepers manage outcomes; peacemakers want hearts changed. Think of a relationship or situation where you have been managing rather than engaging. What would it look like to shift from peacekeeper to peacemaker in that specific place?
4. Peacemakers live by the standard: “You may hate me, but I love you.” Is there someone in your life right now with whom you need to live out that standard? What is the first step?

### **Prayer**

Heavenly Father, You are the God of reconciliation — the one who, while we were still enemies, sent Your Son to make a way back. Forgive us for the ways we have taken the bait of division, made enemies of people made in Your image, and called our silence peace when it was really avoidance. Jesus, You loved the people who hated You, prayed for those who crucified You, and built no walls that grace couldn’t cross. Give us that same love — the kind that only comes from having been loved the way You love us. Holy Spirit, make us peacemakers. Give us the courage to speak truth, the wisdom to choose the right moment, the gentleness to correct without crushing, and the faith to trust You with the outcome. In Jesus’ name, Amen.