

He saw it was

GOOD

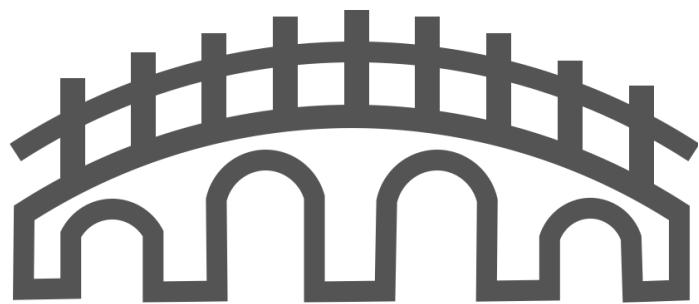
AN MAF BIBLE STUDY

PARTICIPANT'S WORKBOOK



SESSION 5

Building Bridges



Introduction

In the first video, MAF staff presenters Sheonagh and Matt will introduce the topic of Peace and how MAF helps facilitate reconciliation in Kenya. Make any notes in the provided box below.

Scripture

'This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to Himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to Him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And He gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So, we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making His appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.'

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 (NLT)

We will be returning to this verse later in the study.

The SDGs and Peace

In this next video, our presenters will walk you through the Sustainable Development goal of helping 'Peace' – our fourth 'P'.

As you watch the video, make any notes you wish to in the space below. Jot down any facts and statistics that you will find helpful to ponder and pray over in the future.

Devotion

Written by Chris Macrae



'Peace' is a term that can conjure up many meanings, depending on the context in which the term is used, or the experience of the person using the term. In its simplest form, 'peace' can mean 'the absence of war'. In other words, the two concepts of 'peace' and 'war' are so far apart from each other that they are merely viewed as opposites.

However, in most situations it isn't as easy as that to define what peace means or what it represents for different people groups or cultures.

Indeed, the United Nations emphasised the need to adopt a wide definition of 'peace' when it introduced a resolution on the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace in 1999.

In 2014, Ban Ki-Moon, the United Nations' eighth Secretary General, said, 'We know that peace cannot be decreed solely through treaties — it must be nurtured through the dignity, rights and capacities of every man and woman.' He went on to say that peace means access to education, health and essential services — especially for girls and women.

This desire for peace to prevail throughout the world is being played out against a backdrop of war, conflict, violent extremism, hatred and terrorism.

It's disturbing when you scroll through the latest news on your tablet or phone, or switch on the TV only to hear about the latest conflict or act of violence. It threatens people's desire to see peace prevail or — to put it another way from a Christian perspective — to see good overcome evil.

In 2014, Ban Ki-Moon also said, 'But I am convinced that our strongest arsenal in the face of these threats is not weapons or missiles or guns... It is our shared values... our common vision for peace, development and human rights... our universal aspiration for a meaningful culture of peace.'

As Christians, we can understand what a 'culture of peace' could look like from our understanding of the Bible. In Genesis, we see God create a perfect world, only for that perfection and peace to be marred and broken by sin.

We can also see from the example of Jesus what a culture of peace could mean as His words and actions show what the Kingdom of God looks like.

We learn too about the importance of reconciliation between brother and sister and between human beings and God when we read the New Testament epistles. It is this ministry of reconciliation, outlined in **2 Corinthians 5:17-25**, that gives us the true pathway to the peace God intends for us as believers.

The message contained in this biblical culture of peace is one of a restored relationship with God through Jesus. As followers of Him, it is our God-given role to reconcile others to our Lord and Saviour.

We do this through the proclamation of the Gospel — assuring others of the forgiveness of sin that's available through Christ. It is only through a restored relationship with God that true peace can be experienced.

Jesus' words in the Great Commission (**Matthew 28:18-20**), to 'go and make disciples of all nations', shows how we can achieve this aim.

The Bible shows that peace is more than simply the absence of war. Indeed, the Hebrew term '*shalom*', which is mainly translated as meaning 'peace', can also mean 'harmony', 'wholeness', 'completeness', 'prosperity' and 'welfare'.

In **Romans 14:17**, Paul says, 'For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' (NLT).

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, 'God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God' (**Matthew 5:9**, NLT). These peacemakers are those who promote God's peace or '*shalom*'. What Jesus is saying is that those who put their faith and trust in Him, and pursue peace, will be rewarded eternally by being called children of God. People who are peacemakers reflect God the Father's character of peace and joy.

Review

Thinking about peace in the context of '*shalom*', what is a 'peacemaker'?

What does it mean to be reconciled to God? Why do we need this reconciliation to occur?

In order to find peace or to make peace with someone else, what steps need to occur for an earthly relationship to be restored? In what ways does this restoration compare to being reconciled to God?

MAF Story

Your group leader will show you the next video, introduced by your presenters Matt and Sheonagh, which will tell the story of the Widows of Peace in Marsabit, Kenya.

Reflection

Your group leader will show the statistics from the 'The SDGs and Peace' section again — when you hear the statistics and think about people around the world living in conflict, or fleeing conflict or violence, what emotions does it conjure up within you?

Think about the Hebrew word '*shalom*' and its many meanings — 'harmony', 'wholeness', 'completeness', 'prosperity' and 'welfare'. What steps could you take in your own walk with God to help you employ these ideals in your life?

When you are in conflict with someone or have a disagreement with them, what's your natural reaction? Is it to deal with the situation head-on to try and resolve it, or to run away from it? (There are no right or wrong answers here!) Where do you think that tendency comes from?

Repentance

Depending on how your leader is running your course, you can either ponder these questions during the study, or use them in a personal time of reflection on your own after the study is over.

'For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.'

Romans 14:17 (NLT)

- Take time to think about what Paul says about peace and joy in **Romans 14:17**. Consider too what God is revealing to you about the culture of peace that exists when we are reconciled to Him through Jesus' death on the cross.
- Think about someone in your life with whom you are not at peace. Maybe it's someone with whom you have a disagreement or a difference of opinion. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you find ways to reconcile and to be a witness of God's 'shalom'.

Prayer

- Pray for those forced to flee from their homes and communities due to conflict and violence. Pray they will find a safe place to settle and that they will be welcomed when they get there. Pray too that they can return home once peace reigns there.
- Pray for families that have been torn apart by war. May those who are involved in conflict embrace a culture of peace and let go of their disagreements and grudges. Pray for an end to violent extremism and terrorism.
- Pray for the peacemakers, whoever they may be and wherever they seek to reconcile those engaged in conflict. May they know the peace of God's 'shalom' in all they do.
- Uphold those involved in the Sauti Moja project in Kenya. Pray that, through its work, the initiative will continue to bring warring communities together in peace. Pray too for the women who are leading by example in their communities and showing how lives and communities can be transformed through reconciliation.
- Pray for MAF as it provides flights that enable peace and reconciliation to reach some of the world's remotest regions.

Jot down any other areas you would like to pray for — for example, prayers for the state of the world, the work of MAF or the Sustainable Development Agenda.



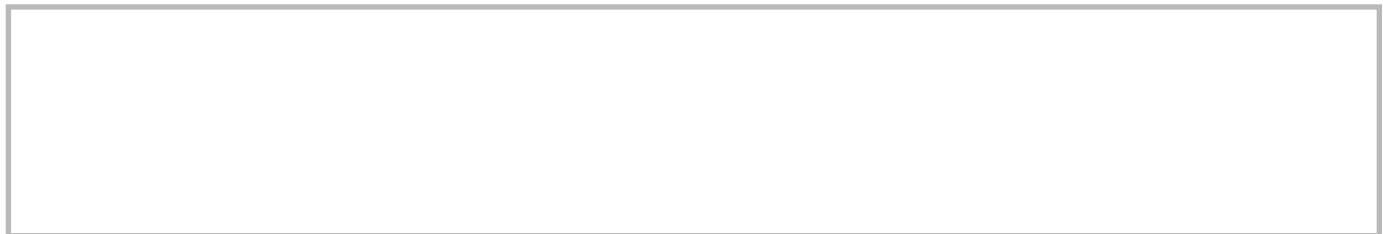
If you would like to find out ways of continuing to pray for the world and organisations working together to achieve global change, please visit <http://forthesakeoftheworld.com>

Response

To close this fifth study, you will hear again from presenters Sheonagh and Matt. They will challenge you to think about what practical actions you could commit to as a take-away from this session.

- What action can you pledge to take to help raise awareness of those living in other parts of the world — some of whom we've highlighted in this study — people who live with conflict or in the wake of violence?
- Now think about your own country or community. What can you do to help people experiencing violence in *their* community, or who need to hear about the peace offered by God through the Gospel?

Write these actions down and keep them with you to remind you of your pledges today. Tell those in your group to help them keep you accountable.



Find out more

We have lots of other examples of how MAF helps to advance the sustainable development agenda through our work and ministry, and also through partnering with other organisations seeking to reach the most isolated communities on earth.

If you would like to continue your journey in this session of the Bible Study and find out more, please visit www.maf-uk.org/findoutmore and we'll introduce you to some more stories from where MAF serves around the world.

MAF Discovery Air Pass

Why not continue on your journey with MAF and get your free MAF boarding pass and join us on a journey of discovery to visit places rarely featured in travel brochures, and to meet people living far from the tourist trail. Sign up for our Discovery Air Pass journey and see the world from a unique perspective.

'Fly' with MAF from country to country and find out what it's like to live, work and serve in some of the most isolated places on earth. Every couple of months, you will receive inspiration by post or email: updates from our pilots, real-life stories, fascinating facts and opportunities to support our work. Check in at www.maf-uk.org/discover-now