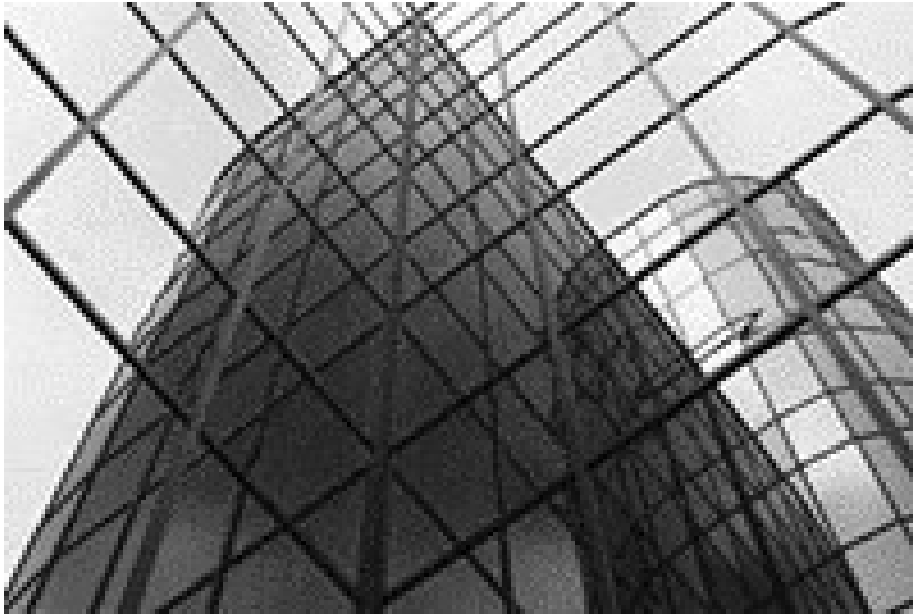


Beyond Denominations – The Networked Church

Bible Studies

To accompany the e-book which can be downloaded in three minutes from:

<http://www.ultra.net.au/~johnedmiston>



by John Edmiston

All references are from the New American Standard Bible (Lockman Foundation) unless otherwise noted.

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How To Use The Studies

1. The studies are meant to be used in churches, cell groups and home groups.
2. There is a warm-up activity at the start of each study and this is important. Please do not skip it. Many people learn best through activity.
3. The studies are each separate units but they do build on each other and it is best to make a commitment to complete all of them.
4. They are designed to be photocopied and used freely for ministry purposes as above. See copyright notice on the front page
5. Each study can be put on both sides of an A4 page and passed around.
6. They are aimed at adults and older teenagers (15 plus) with reasonable reading levels as a lot of bible reading is involved.
7. Unlike the book there is no management theory and few if any secular examples. They are solidly biblical and interdenominational.
8. The studies do not take any particular denominational line and should be able to be used in all Christian churches.
9. Each study should conclude with a time of prayer.
10. Having a meal before the bible study often helps to build relationships and unity and is in line with the “feed them and teach them” style of Jesus.

What's Wrong With Disunity?

Caveat: I am not talking about unity with unbelievers which is neither desirable or really possible (2 Corinthians 6:14-18) or unity with immoral Christians (1 Corinthians 5:10,11) or unity with false teachers who deny the fundamentals of the faith (2 John 1:7-11). I certainly **do not** advocate having "inter-faith unity" with Buddhists and Hindu's and Muslims though we should treat them with respect and humanity. Holiness is essential for the church and us as believers (Hebrews 12:14). When I speak of unity or disunity I speak of it between bible-believing Christians of non-heretical beliefs who, for instance, would agree with the Apostle's and Nicene Creeds.

1. **Warm-Up:** Denominationalism's very structure creates a multiplicity of competing churches in any given city, suburb, region or shire
 - Look up the churches page in the phone book. See how many churches there are..
 - Do you think it affects our impact on the community?
 - Have you ever thought "there must be a better way of being Christian than denominationalism?"

2. What experiences do you have in common with believers in other denominations? Music, books, bible versions, commentaries, radio stations, Christian events, feelings, ideas, attitudes to life?

3. How do you have more in common with them than with "the world"?

4. What is wrong with disunity between true Christians?
 - Galatians 5:19-24 _____
 - Romans 16:17, Titus 3:10 _____
 - 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 12:25-27 _____

5. When is "disunity" unfortunately the right course of action?
 - 2 John 1:7-11 _____
 - 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 _____
 - 1 Corinthians 5:10,11; 11:18,19 _____

6. Go to Hebrews 12:14 again and work out how we are to:
 - Pursue peace with all men **and** pursue sanctificationWhich has the top priority if there is a conflict?

7. Is unity something we should energetically pursue or work at or should we just 'let it happen' naturally?

- John 17:23 _____
- Romans 12:16-18 _____
- Hebrews 12:14 _____

8. What denominations do you know that believe all of the following:

- Jesus is Lord
- Jesus came in the flesh as a real historical person
- Jesus rose from the dead.
- Jesus died for our sins.
- We need to have faith in Jesus.
- Faith in Jesus is the only way to Heaven.
- Jesus is God and is co-equal with the Father who is God.
- The Holy Spirit is a Person, not a force, and is God.
- The Bible is the inspired by God and authoritative for Christians.
- Christians should abstain from worshipping idols and from sexual immorality.

Without the above beliefs it is very hard even impossible to have meaningful dialogue and unity. Most Christian denominations – Catholic, Pentecostal, Anglican, Baptist, Methodist etc believe all the above points though some individuals within them may not do so. Cults such as Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe them and teach error.

How can we improve our relationships with believers in other denominations that believe the same fundamentals of the faith that we do?

What is the difference between essential and non-essential doctrines?

Homework for next week:

- Talk to a Christian from a denomination that you think is very different from your own and ask them about their faith and what it is like for them to believe in God.

Prayer – *Lord help us to appreciate and love our brothers and sisters in Christ. May we fulfill Your will and answer Your prayer by living holy lives in unity with one another. Amen*

A Brother Offended

**(Proverbs 18:19 NKJV) A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city,
And contentions are like the bars of a castle.**

Introduction (a brief simple history of denominationalism): Most of the divisions in churches today either directly spring from or can be traced back to a very contentious period in European history between 1517 and about 1650. During this time people literally went to war over theology and killed, tortured and persecuted people over the following doctrines: justification by faith (Lutherans) believers baptism (Anabaptists and Baptists), the leading of the Holy Spirit (Quakers & Anabaptists), church structure (Presbyterians), holiness (Puritans), speaking in tongues (some Anabaptists), communion (Catholics and just about everyone) and a host of others such as the canon of Scripture , Calvinism vs Arminianism, what priests should wear, times of church services, methods of ordination etc.. People died by the thousand for these beliefs – on all sides. The Catholics persecuted the Protestant reformers who persecuted the Baptists, Anabaptists and the Quakers etc.

It was like Lilliput in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* where there was a perpetual war between those who thought a boiled egg should be opened at the big end and those who thought it should be opened at the little end. Since then denominations have come and gone and some have come again in a different form – such as Pentecostalism which descends from the Anabaptists, Quakers, Methodists and The Holiness Movements. However its nearly always a case of “there is nothing new under the sun”. Unfortunately all this fighting created deep divisions and hurt and people point to the past and say things like “the first Baptists died for that doctrine..” (with variations depending on your denomination). Going back to Lilliput – the fact that a million Lilliputians died defending opening a boiled egg at the small end does not make opening boiled eggs an important or vital issue. It just means that it is a contentious issue. People die in fights over sports teams but that doesn't make the score of a match a deep and meaningful issue. Contentiousness is not related to importance. It should be but it isn't. Contentiousness is more related to culture and emotional content than centrality to life and salvation. It is God who says what is important not our emotions.

The upshot of all this is that there are millions of offended brothers and sisters out there who think that they have genuine theological and historical reasons for being offended. Few of them realise that it wasn't so much that the issues were important but that the times were contentious and the people immature. There is no way at all that God wanted Christians to kill and torture each other over doctrine. Rebuke is the biblical remedy – not execution. (Matthew 18:15-17). The fact that people died was the result of a vicious tribalism that killed those that differed. It was not spiritual and it doesn't make either the perpetrators or the victims correct – only the word of God can do that. The job now is to bring unity and healing to a fractured situation where there are “iron bars ” (see the Proverbs quote) between the denominations.

1. **Warm up:** Have you ever held a grudge? What good did it do you? How can denominations justify holding grudges against other Christian denominations?
2. I know of a church that had a major disagreement over whether or not to buy an electric jug for the church kitchen. There are two explanations a) It was an immature church or b) It was actually an important issue. I'm going with a) in this case! Think of other disputes you know of and categorise them into a and b where a = They were due to immaturity and b = They were actually important.

3. The Jews and The Samaritans had very major theological differences rooted in their respective histories. The Jews regarded the Samaritans as apostate and they probably were. By the time Christ taught these differences were around 600 years old. Jews and Samaritans hated each other and would have nothing to do with each other. Read the following verses and see how Jesus regarded those differences and what that says to us about our approach to other denominations particularly those we see as apostate or in very serious error. See how Jesus rejects a spirit of hatred and separation while maintaining purity and correct theology.
 - I. (John 4:4-43) Note Jesus attitude to a) her as a person and b) to her theology, customs and beliefs.
 - II. (Luke 9:51-56 NRSV) Note how Jesus handles rejection by people who differ theologically with him. Can you see Jesus wanting to burn someone at the stake? Do you think that people who want to “call down fire” on their opponents have God’s Spirit? Do you think they are aware of their true motives? For the conclusion to this story see Acts 8:14 where the apostle John is among those that go down and give the Samaritans the Holy Spirit – the real “fire from heaven”.!
 - III. (Luke 10:30-37 NRSV) The Good Samaritan – can people with rotten theology still do good and commendable things? Can people with orthodox theology be cold and callous? Are theology and kindness independent of each other? How does Jesus regard the Samaritan here?
 - IV. (Luke 17:11-16 NRSV) The ten lepers who lived on the border with Samaria. Some were presumably Jews but the one that thanked Jesus was a Samaritan. Can miracles happen to people with rotten theology? Can people with bad theology still have Jesus turn up and heal them? Can people with poor theology still make the right and appropriate response to God – like thanking Him?
 - V. (Acts 1:8 NRSV) Samaria is specifically included in the mission task of the Church. See its fulfillment in Acts 8:5 and following.

How do these verses show us how to maintain theological purity and a spirit of love when dealing with those we have very real theological differences with?
4. Most denominations do not differ from us to anywhere like the extent that the Jews and the Samaritans differed yet we are frequently still full of distrust towards them. How can we build bridges to them in a spirit of love? How can we:
 - A. Forgive them as Christ forgave us. (Matthew 6:14,15)
 - B. Accept them as Christ accepted us. (Romans 15:7)
 - C. Forbear their mistakes as God forbears ours. (Ephesians 4:2,3)
 - D. Bring them the revival fire of God just as the apostle John did (Luke 9:54 and Acts 8:14)

How To Trust Other People Without Being Burned

(Philippians 1:9-11 NASB) And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, {10} so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; {11} having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

The key to loving people is discernment which is why Paul prayed that the love of the Philippians would “abound more and more with discernment”. Love without discernment is a disaster and discernment without love becomes a hyper-critical spirit. You need both love and discernment. Discernment is not “so you can pick holes in everyone” but “so that you can approve the things that are excellent”. In other words Christian discernment is like panning for gold – the prospector hunts, and sifts, and looks keenly into the gravel, throws out the “fools gold” that looks like gold but isn’t and eventually rejoices when a small nugget of real gold turns up. He searches for the things that are excellent. Excellence is the focus – not heresy. The result of Christian discernment was not “so you can find some people to burn at the stake” but “in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ having been filled with the righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ”. In other words Paul wants us to find so much “spiritual gold” that we overflow with spiritual riches – not piles of gravel.

So the more confident I am in my discerning of others the more confident I will be in building my relationships and loving others. If I can reliably sift out the bad guys from the good guys then I can confidently love the good guys. That should be the aim. If my discernment is so poor that I don’t know if I will eventually be shafted by the person I love then I will live in uncertainty, fear and distrust all my days. So part of the key to loving people is having sufficiently good judgement to be able to pick the right ones to get close to. ***In pursuing peace with people from other denominations having good judgement is mission critical.*** We don’t want to end up limping away muttering “those XYZ brand Christians are ...”. The three C’s of discernment are Character, Competence and Connections (thanks to John Maxwell for the last one).

Character: Reliable or unreliable, honest or dishonest, steady or impulsive etc. What are their ethics like in this particular area? Do they tell the truth? Do they use statistics correctly?

Competence: Can they actually do what I am asking of them and do it well or are they just “nice muddlers” that will let me down? Are they on time and on the ball? Skill level?

Connections: Do they have the ability to build the relationships we need built? Do they know the people they imply they know? Do they have strong networks they can call on?

Caveats: I am not asking you to trust blindly. Trust others the way God trusts you – a bit at a time, gradually increased over the years in response to proven faithfulness. Look at the parables involving stewards where the faithful stewards are found trust worthy and rewarded and the slack ones get very sternly rebuked. Look at the different levels of trust that Jesus showed the three, the twelve, the seventy and the multitudes. God is not foolish and He would never ask you to be undiscerning and gullible. He wants you to be wise but not harsh or critical. He wants you to love people and to trust people not to live in anger, suspicion and fear. He wants you to have your senses trained to discern good and evil and thus be mature. (Hebrews 5:14)

1. **Warm-Up:** Form a tight circle of 6-8 with a volunteer (not a nervous type) in the middle. Have the person in the middle fold their arms across their chest. Push the person in the middle backwards so that people have to catch him or her. Make sure that this person is not much larger than one of the catchers. Push the person in the middle from person to person so they are passed around the circle and have to trust those that catch them. Do this with 2-3 people and have the report back to the group how it felt to have to trust others. Discuss. NB: Be careful of gender and personal space issues. Don’t force anyone.
2. Do all the trustworthy people in the world belong to one church or one denomination? Do all the untrustworthy people wear a certain denominational label?

3. Sometimes we are burned by religious control freaks that claim to be Christians.
 - Read Matthew 23 – what are the symptoms of a religious control freak?
 - What were some of the differences between the Spirit-led faith of Jesus and the legalistic religion of the scribes and Pharisees?
 - Are some of these wrong practices still around in similar forms today?
 - How can you discern true living faith when you see it?
 - What sort of person can you trust in matters of faith?
 - Are externals such as titles and robes a reliable guide?

4. Sometimes we are burned by greedy Christians who are out for money.
 - Read 1 Timothy 6:4-10 – what does it say about this?
 - Read 2 Corinthians 11:13-20 - can bad people put on a good front?
 - Useful questions: Who is profiting here? If they received no money would they continue in ministry? How much emphasis is being put on the offering?

5. Jesus says “by their fruits you shall know them”. (Matthew 7:15-23)
 - How does this principle work?
 - Think of some really good and lovely people you have known – what fruit grew in their lives?
 - Because fruit takes time to grow you should build alliances slowly so you can watch for the nature of the fruit. God does not require you to rush into relationships or working with other groups or churches. As long as you fully intend to love others in the end He will allow you the time to arrive at a good judgement.

6. (2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV) For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.
 (Isaiah 8:11-13 NIV) The LORD spoke to me with his strong hand upon me, warning me not to follow the way of this people. He said: {12} "Do not call conspiracy everything that these people call conspiracy ; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. {13} The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread,
 - Should Christians be fearful, paranoid or constantly suspicious?
 - What does it mean to have a powerful, loving and sound mind?
 - What should you do with Christian conspiracy theories?
 - Who is the only One we are to fear or dread?
 - What should we do with the “Christian rumour mill” especially when it comes up with lurid theories about churches, ministries or denominations?
 - Satan rules through fear (Hebrews 2:14,15) and is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44) and the accuser of the brethren (Rev 2:10,11) – so what should we suspect when we hear fearful stories that accuse other Christians?
 - How can we fill our minds with pictures of peace and not pictures of panic? (Colossians 3:1-4, Philippians 4:6,7)

7. How can you and I be trustworthy and thus increase the trust level between Christians?

8. Think of the barriers of trust between you and Christians of other denominations and resolve to remove them if:
 - They are based on hearsay, rumour or conspiracy theories.
 - They are based on just one or two people or a single bad experience.
 - They are based on a dream, vision or other unverifiable subjective experience.
 - The fear and suspicion is based merely on the fact that they do things differently from you.

Of One Accord

(Acts 1:14) These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

(Acts 2:1) And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.

(Acts 2:42-47) And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. {43} And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. {44} And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; {45} and they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. {46} And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, {47} praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

(Acts 5:12 And at the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's portico.

(Acts 15:25 NASB) it seemed good to us, having become of one mind, to select men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

We see a sort of progression in these verses from a unity in prayer and outlook (1:14) to a unity in location (2:1) to a unity in fellowship and community (2:42-47) to open public unity in front of the nation.(5:12) Finally this unity is shattered by the long-running dispute over circumcision and the Council of Jerusalem is called and unity is brought out of unity – “having **become** of one mind..”(15:25) Unity is obviously fragile and easily shattered by immature, controlling and “fleshly” ways of being Christian. That is why Paul exhorts us in Ephesians 4:3 to “maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”. Unity, once achieved in the Spirit, needs constant maintenance.

1. **Warm-Up:** Get a local newspaper and go through the articles on at least three or four pages and list in one column “factors which destroy peace and unity” such as violence , greed etc and in another column attempts to build unity and peace and factors favouring unity and peace such as education. Don't be overly negative.
 - Are there some places where peace and unity are being achieved?
 - Is peace a possibility? Do wars cease? Does reconciliation ever happen?
 - Under what conditions is it being achieved?
 - Under what conditions is it being undermined?
 - Are some structures like democracy inherently more peaceful than others such as banana-republic military dictatorships?
 - Can peace be achieved when cultures and structures strongly mitigate against it?
 - Does the culture and structure of denominationalism build peace between Christians or act against us being in one accord?
2. The Acts references above show the early church united in prayer, outlook and opinions, place, fellowship, community and before the nation. How does denominationalism stop us having peace and unity in:
 - Prayer _____
 - Outlook and Opinions _____
 - Place _____
 - Fellowship _____
 - Community _____
 - In Front Of The Nation _____

3. Choose the word from each pair that best describes:
- a) the scribes and Pharisees.
 - b) the early church:
 - Bureaucratic Spontaneous
 - Rule-keepers Spirit-led leaders
 - Repressive Creative
 - Politics Prayer
 - Self-preserving Risk-taking
 - Close to culture Alternative to Jewish culture

What difference do you think the new structure of the early Church made to its ability to live in unity?

The “new wineskins” (Matthew 9:17) were what kind of structures?

Look at the types of structures in the following table and **tick** those structures that characterise the early church or the church in revival . **Rule a line** through those that do not.

Network of Believers	Family or Tribe organised by ethnicity.
Community	Bureaucracy
Monastery	Farm Or Fishery
Corporation	Political Party
Government	Priestly Hierarchy
Single issue organisation	Military Structure
Elite sports team/Sales team	Other (give details)

- What structures are most appropriate for organising God’s Spirit-filled Church?
 - How do networks help build community?
 - How can building networks and communities help us to be of one accord in one place?
 - How can networks and communities help us to be in the world but not of the world?
 - Why are monasteries “almost right” as structures? Advantages? Disadvantages?
4. Some structures promote competition rather than cooperation. Others promote jealousy and self-protection, others promote peace and reconciliation. I believe Christians on the whole desire to live in unity but often the way we are organised prevents this to a large extent. Do you agree?
5. What are some of the spiritual blessings that flow from unity?
- Genesis 11:6
 - Psalm 133
 - Matthew 18:19,20
 - John 17:23
 - Romans 15:5,6
 - 1 Corinthians 1:10
 - Ephesians 4:3,13
 - Colossians 2:2
- Do you want these blessings badly enough to work for unity in your local area?
6. What obstacles to “being in one accord” can you help remove?
7. How can we develop Christian networks and build a sense of Christian community in our local area? Who can we cooperate with first?

The Gospel Gang

Mobile Missionary Bands In The New Testament

This study involves a LOT of bible reading and you may want to farm out the verses to people in advance.

While networks and communities were the main means of being Christian in the New Testament another structure was used for preaching the gospel. People were “sent out” two by two or in small groups to preach and work miracles (Matthew 10) and plant churches Acts 13;1-4). These highly mobile “road warriors” used the networks and communities to aid them in their journey and would send letters via messengers to the churches telling them that they were coming or asking for simple things like books and parchments or a room when they arrived. (Philemon) Some like Timothy were evangelists, some such as Apollos were bible teachers, some like Paul were apostolic church consultants fixing up the major doctrinal and structural problems and some such as Agabus apparently were prophets exhorting the faithful and warning of coming droughts and disasters. They circulated among the churches bringing news and greetings (Romans 16), ensuring common teaching and practices (Galatians) and bringing an outside perspective to help prevent the close knit communities and networks from becoming too isolated, cut off or introspective.(Thessalonians)

1. **Warm Up:** Re-enact **Acts 20:17-38** you will need a good reader to play Paul who does all the speaking and others to play Luke, the disciples and the Ephesian elders. Read from the beginning of the chapter to set the scene a bit and get an idea of what is going on then do the skit.
2. Read **Matthew 10:1-42** this is perhaps the foundational passage for the operation of these groups. As you do so note:
 - Their lifestyle _____
 - Their authority _____
 - Their call – what they were to do _____
 - What they were explicitly not to do. _____
 - The priority of the task/mission _____
 - The risks they took _____
 - Their “spirit” and feel _____
3. This seems to have been slightly modified with time. Read the following verses and comment on some of the changes. What stayed the same? What changed?
 - Luke 22:35-38
 - 1 Corinthians 9:4-19
 - Acts 28:30,31
 - 2 Timothy 2:1-26
4. Read **Luke 10:1-24** much is similar to the Matthew passage except there are 70 now and there is a greater emphasis on the spiritual realm.
 - What happened to Satan as the gospel was preached by the 70?
 - What spiritual authority did Christ give His workers?
 - Do you think there is a “harvest” waiting to be reaped?

5. Read **Matthew 28:19,20, Mark 16:15-20, John 20:20 ; Acts 1:8** – how does the reception of the Holy Spirit in power at Pentecost make a difference to:
 - The geographical scope of their task.
 - The power which was available for ministry.
6. Are there areas where such people would be useful today?
7. Are some tasks in the Kingdom done better by specialist groups that are dedicated to the task and in mission mode?
8. What similarities and differences are there between the Holy Spirit operating in a community (**Acts 2:42-47**) and the Holy Spirit operating through a mobile missionary band (**Acts 19:1-20**).
9. Were such mobile missionaries credentialled by the community? (**Galatians 1:11-24**)
10. Who does Scripture say does the calling and sending ? Are theological exams involved?
 - Acts 13:1-4
 - Luke 9:1-6, 10:1-2
 - Acts 20:28
 - 2 Timothy 1:5-7

While God does the calling and sending humans are also involved – what is their role in the above verses?

Do you think that with all good intentions we sometimes try to do God's work for Him in this area? How can we trust Him more?

How can we keep to our role?

How do denominational structures of ordination sometimes go wrong?

11. How can task focused bands of Christians and local Christian communities network together to help in the spread of the gospel? (see **Romans 15 &16, Acts 13**)
12. How did "independent consultants" like Paul play an important role in maintaining unity in the networks and communities of the early church? (e.g **Philippians 4:2**) What extra power do "outsiders" have?

Blessed Are The Peacemakers

(Matthew 5:9) "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

The biblical notion of peace is not just the absence of strife but "Shalom" the active presence of the Lord and His blessings. Revival is the ultimate condition of peace. The heady hey-days of the Jerusalem church and its unity and love. It's the presence of awe, wonder and the miraculous. God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven is what we mean by "peace". Peacemakers build communities that love God, obey God and enjoy His blessing.

1. **Warm-Up:** Write down the lyrics of five songs that describe conditions of peace. They need not be Christian songs. You might use John Lennon's "Imagine" or Bob Dylans "Blowing In The Wind" or something more modern. How is God's "shalom" written on the human heart as that which we most desire - even though we might not understand that God is the source of it or like John Lennon want "no religion too..".?
2. Read **Isaiah 9:6,7** – how is Jesus the "Prince of Peace" – how is His kingdom one of peace and blessing?
3. Read **Psalms 34**
 - How can a righteous person have peace in a wicked world?
 - From verses 12-15 give some of the conditions for peace.
 - What does it mean to "seek peace and pursue it".
4. Read **Psalms 133** – how are Christian unity and peace connected?
5. Read **Psalms 119:165, Proverbs 3:1,2** - how can we have great peace?
6. Read **Isaiah 26:3,4,12 , 57:14-21**
 - What sort of mind do we need to have to find peace? (see Rom 8:6 as well)
 - How is peace established?
 - How is peace prepared for?
 - Does God want to bring us into a state of peace?
 - How are peace and contrite repentance and healing connected?
 - Who has no peace? Why are they "all churned up"?
7. The pursuit of peace is very much part of what are are about as Christians. It is one of the few things we are told numbers of times to pursue (Romans 14:19, Hebrews 12:14, 1 Peter 3:13 etc) and it is also our heart's desire. Read the following verses which are full on concrete suggestions on peace-making and work out how you can apply them in your life:
 - James 3:13-18
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:11-24

8. How does envy and selfish ambition destroy peace? (James 3:13-18 above)
- Have you ever worked in an environment where envy and selfish ambition predominated – what was it like?
 - How much disunity between Christians is due to “envy and selfish ambition” ?
 - How are cooperative network/community structures superior to hierarchical and competitive structures in this regard?
 - How can “the pastors attention/approval” generate envy and selfish ambition in churches? How could this be best avoided?
9. How can we pursue peace with Christians of other denominations so that the body of Christ can experience unity, blessing and revival?
10. Returning to **Isaiah 57:14-21** and thinking of our relationships with other Christians:
- What obstacles to peace between Christians and churches in your local area need to be removed?
 - How can get God to dwell with us and revive us?
 - What does it mean to be lowly and contrite?
 - Is there anything we need to repent of?
 - How can we bring healing to our relationships?
 - Where do you think our “churning around” comes from?
 - What do you think God wants us to do so He can establish peace?
11. Now you have completed these studies and hopefully read the book as well have you personally resolved to end denominational rivalry and become a peace-maker in the body of Christ?

12. List six things you will do / attitudes you will change in the following areas:

Other Churches/Denom	Other Christians	Other Theologies
My Thinking	My Relating	My Praying

