

# Small Group Curriculum

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*Week of 12-9-12*

1. Share this quote from the book *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin* (Plantinga):  
The webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and delight is what the Hebrew prophets call shalom. We call it peace but it means far more than mere peace of mind or a cease-fire between enemies. In the Bible, shalom means universal flourishing, wholeness and delight – a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts fruitfully employed, a state of affairs that inspires joyful wonder as its Creator and Savior opens doors and welcomes the creatures in whom he delights. Shalom, in other words, is the way things ought to be.
2. Read Genesis 3. According to the Bible, what caused the lack of peace in our world? Look at 3:15. How did God supply hope that peace would someday be restored?
3. Read Luke 2:8-14. In light of what we learned about the Hebrew definition of peace, how do you think the shepherds understood the angels' message?
4. In Jesus' days, the Pharisees placed shepherds in the "Sinner Class" because of their reputation as brawlers and thieves. In fact, shepherds weren't allowed to testify in court since their morality was so suspect. Why do you think God chose shepherds to be the only witnesses to his message of peace? How does God's choice of witnesses help define the phrase "and on earth peace with those with whom he is pleased" (v.14)?
5. Read Colossians 1:15-20. How does Jesus go about accomplishing the type of peace described in the quote from Plantinga at the beginning of our study?
6. If peace is established through a person, Jesus (John 16:33), and not through adherence to a body of theological facts, how does one achieve peace?
7. Is it possible to be fully at peace on this side of Heaven? Why or why not?
8. Read Matthew 5:9 and 2 Corinthians 5:8. What does it mean to participate in Jesus' ministry of reconciliation?
9. According to Pastor AI, people attempt to manufacture their own sense of peace through seeking pleasure, working for control, and blame shifting. Where have you seen examples of these things?
10. What are some of the relationships in your life that needs to experience reconciliations?
11. Possible Small Group Application: One of the ways God calls his people to strive for peace is to fight poverty. As a small group, commit to participate in the next ServErie Saturday. For more information visit [www.ServErie.com](http://www.ServErie.com).