

Pursuing Peace

By Robert D Jones

Chapter 1

“Finding Hope in the God of Peace”

Study Guide by Nanette Loveless

Q. What is the difference between a disagreement and a conflict?

A.

Q. What are some situations that result in disagreements and conflict?

A.

Q. Why should we look to Scripture for peacemaking?

A. Robert Jones offers 2 reasons on page 18

1. “Peace and Conflict are Scripture _____.”

2. “Scripture is all about our _____ – with God and with others.

The Starting Place: Our Peacemaking God (p. 19)

The Author tells us on page 19 that “...the proper starting place to think biblically about pursuing peace is _____.”

He continues to explain: “our God is the God of _____, his Son is the _____ of Peace, and his _____ brings peace.”

Jones explains that the Bible links peace and God in at least four ways. What are those four ways? (hint: See the bold subheadings on pages 20-26)? Describe each of the four peace provisions/promises that Jones discusses in this chapter:

1. _____ *Peace with God*

What is it?

What Statement or Scripture stands out to you in regards to *Saving Peace with God*?

2. _____ *Peace with Others*

What is it?

What Statement or Scripture stands out to you in regards to *Relational Peace with Others*?

3. _____ *Peace Enjoyed with the God of Peace*

What is it?

What Statement or Scripture stands out to you in regards to *Inner Peace Enjoyed with the God of Peace*?

4. _____ *Peace Established by the God of Peace*

What is it?

What Statement or Scripture stands out to you in regards to *Future Global Peace Established by the God of Peace*?

Q. The author makes the statement on page 26, “There is not a person on the planet – including your spouse, child, parents, or business partner—with whom you cannot pursue peace.” What do you think about that statement?

A.

Q. What hope do you find in the section, “God: Our Hope for Peacemaking”?

A.

Answer the questions at the end of the chapter on pages 27 and 28.

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Chapter 2

“A God’s-Eye View of Conflict”

“The Bible teaches that we should see conflict neither as an inconvenience nor as an occasion to force our will on others, but rather as an opportunity to demonstrate the love and power of God in our lives.”

~ Ken Sande

“...How you view something will allow you to diagnose it properly and treat it wisely...Diagnosis dictates treatment. Perception prescribes response. What do you see when you look at conflict?...” (p. 30)

What comes to your mind when you hear the word, “conflict?”

Notice the bullet list in the middle of page 30. Do you identify with any of these attitudes toward conflict? If so which one(s)?

How does God view Conflict?

In order to understand God’s perspective of conflict, Robert Jones suggests that we must realize 3 truths. What are they? (see the subheadings numbered 1-3 on pages 30, 35 and 37)

1. Realize that conflicts are _____; therefore _____ them

What statement stands out to you from this section & why?

2. Realize that conflicts are _____; therefore _____ them!

See the paragraph at the top of page 36. Robert Jones explains that “God calls us to resolve our conflicts *actively, diligently* and *immediately*.” What does he mean by each of these three terms?

Actively =

Diligently =

Immediately =

What statement stands out to you from this section entitled “Realize that Conflicts are Sinful; Therefore resolve them”? (p. 35-37)

3. Realize that conflicts are _____; therefore _____ them

What statement stands out to you from this section & why?

What opportunities do conflicts provide?

1) To know _____

a. As _____

b. As _____

c. As _____

2) To become more like _____ by

a. Deepening my _____ with Him; deepening _____ on Him

b. Experiencing the _____ of Jesus (Phil 3:10)

c. Exposing my remaining _____ (Deut 8:2); Revealing the “real me,” giving

me new desire and opportunity to grow in Christ-likeness

- d. Demonstrating to _____ my love and trust in Christ and His work in me
- e. Engaging more actively in the _____ (Rom 12:15)
- f. Equipping me with greater wisdom to _____ (2 Cor 1:3-4)
- g. Elevating my desire for Christ's _____ (1 Pet 1:13)

How *should* we view something like conflict or other forms of suffering that has the potential to accomplish all that is listed in “a” through “g” above?

The descriptions in “a” through “g” in the list above are descriptions of spiritual growth, referred to in the Bible as “sanctification.” To what degree do you crave changed circumstances more than you crave to grow in your sanctification?

If you, like the rest of us, determine that you do, in fact, crave circumstantial improvement more than the sanctifying opportunities that conflict affords, what is the cure? (see top of p. 41)

- 3) To _____ – both those with whom we have conflict and those who are watching.

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar [worship] and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift... First go and be reconciled to our brother; then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:23-24

Answer the questions at the end of the chapter on page 42.

Homework:

- Continue the Proverbs study in communication
- Read chapter 3 of *Pursuing Peace*
- Complete the form “five significant statements” for ch 3
- Memorize Psalm 19:14

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Chapter 3

“Keeping God Central: Pleasing Him amid Conflict”

To summarize chapter 1:

- God has made peace with us through Jesus Christ
- God fills us with His peace
- God has destined us for a glorious place of peace
- God calls and enables us to pursue peace with others

To summarize chapter 2:

- In order to pursue peace with others, we need God’s perspective:
 - Expect conflicts as inevitable in this fallen world
 - Seek to resolve conflicts because they are sinful
 - Seize conflicts as God-given opportunities to know Him better and to grow in our faith and to become more effective in serving Him

Beginning in chapter 3, we will begin to learn **How** to pursue peace with others, following a 3-pronged process:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Draw and review the diagram on page 44 (The paragraph above the diagram explains the diagram):

When we are in a conflict, rather than responding in kind to our offender, we are to respond in kind to God by

- _____

- _____ of sinful behavior we would like to exhibit or that we have a habit of exhibiting
- Demonstrating _____ toward our offender

What does it mean to please God?

What can you change about yourself that would bring increasing pleasure to God?

Write Psalm 19:14 on a note card and begin to memorize it.

What meditations (thoughts or attitudes) do you need to change?

Read page 45 from “In 2 Corinthians 5:1-8 the apostle ponders...” through “Well done” at the bottom of the page.

What should all of life be about?

Read the rest of page 45 and all of page 46 down to the subheading, “Biblical Principles About Pleasing God.” What should motivate us to make it our aim to please God?

Five Biblical Principles or Truths about Pleasing God (p. 46-49)

1. We must make pleasing God our single, all consuming _____.
2. We must seek to please God, not _____ or others.
3. We must seek to please God according to _____.
4. We must seek to please God by depending on _____.
5. Jesus alone has fulfilled this pleasing-_____ goal perfectly.

Implications of Pleasing God for Resolving Conflicts (p. 49-54)

How do the 5 principles about pleasing God (discussed on pages 46-49) impact our relationships?

1. Failure to please God—our failure or the other person’s, or both—is the ultimate _____ of all relational conflict.
2. This goal of pleasing God keeps our focus on _____, not on the _____ issues or on the _____.
3. In Christ, this goal is _____ doable, no matter how the other person behaves.
4. This goal will help us pace our efforts (our energy, timing, risk, etc.).
5. God _____ bless our efforts by bringing reconciliation.
6. If both parties seek to _____, full reconciliation is guaranteed.
7. Even if the other person does not please God, we can experience God’s _____ and _____.
8. We must continue our commitments to please God even if the other person _____, and even if the relationship gets _____.

9. When the goal of pleasing God governs us, the other person's sins and failures become opportunities, not obstacles, to please God _____ and _____, and to grow as a _____.

Q. What happens when we begin to conclude that this person may never change?

A. Either we

- give up on _____ or
- stoically and begrudgingly do the _____ thing, all the while cursing God under our breath for allowing this conflict to continue or
- embrace the unpleasant situation as an opportunity given to us by our sovereign, wise, and good Father to make us _____, and we pursue Jesus the Peacemaker and the greater joys he provides.

In conclusion, where do we start in pursuing peace?

Write a life objective to be your guide for daily choices:

Write a prayer that reflects your desire to please God and tell God how desperately you are dependent upon Him to carry out your desire to please Him:

Answer the questions on page 56 at the end of chapter 3.

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Chapter 4
“Getting to the Heart of Our Conflicts”

A Biblical Look At Our Conflict-Causing Hearts

When the Scriptures use the word “heart” what does that mean?

Why did God allow the Israelites to wander in the desert for 40 years?

What was Israel’s heart problem?

What does God think and do because of this heart condition? What does God want?

Can we cleanse our own hearts? Explain:

James (and You and Me)

Why doesn't it work to just tell two people who are in conflict to "just kiss and make up"?

What is the problem with the list of desires at the top of page 62?

The Throne-Staircase Diagram

Draw the Throne-Staircase Diagram on page 65 and explain it:

The throne represents:

The cross represents:

The letters represent:

How is the diagram on page 66 different than the diagram on page 65?

What is the solution, or the plan for handling desires that grow into demands?

1. _____ the Ascending Desire
2. _____ of Letting the Desire Rule
3. _____ on God and His Grace, Provisions and Promises
4. _____ Sinful Responses with Christlike Graces

What desires have “sprouted legs” and climbed the stairs in an effort to overthrow and remove Jesus in your life?

In what ways has this desire ruled you? Of what do you need to repent?

To what can you refocus your thinking in order to de-throne desires that have begun to rule?

What sinful responses to you need to replace?

What do you plan to do in order to bring about change in how your desires rule you?

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Chapter 5

“Owning Our Sins before God Our Savior”

In chapter 4, we learned that our desires often climb the staircase to the throne of our hearts so that, rather than submitting to Christ as ruler of our hearts, we often allow our desires to grow and to “ascend the staircase, rising to the top of the throne to compete with Jesus for lordship”(p. 66) of our hearts. When this happens, we find ourselves discontent. On page 65, Jones spells out a 4-step progression of an idol:

I desire I demand. I judge I punish

Jones says, “...a large part of the art of living for Jesus is learning to live contentedly with ongoing unmet desires. When my desires remain submitted to Christ, my soul finds rest. Inner peace reigns” (p. 65).

1) Does submitting our desires to Christ mean that we are to “deaden, neuter, or deny” our desires? Explain. (see page 68)

2) What unmet desires have you identified that have resulted in discontentment in your life? If you haven’t filled in the blanks to the questions at the top of page 67, do that now. Your answers will help you identify desires that have become demands & idols in your heart.

3) After reading Chapter 4 and having several days to think on the truths contained in the chapter, what changes have you made in how you think, act or speak in regards to allowing your desires to rule?

4) Have you noticed any difference in your level of contentment? If not, you probably need to go back to chapter 4 and examine your desires and how you are allowing them to rule your heart.

5) Question #3 on page 73 asks, “In what ways does our culture encourage the desires-that-become-demands problem?” How did you answer that question? If you haven’t answered it yet, answer it now:

6) Toward the bottom of page 72, four items are listed as a plan for Jessica's change and growth. Circle the number(s) that corresponds with the item(s) you think would be profitable for you to work on changing.

1. Learning contentment (finding your identity as God's daughter more than how you define yourself – Jessica had found her identity as Nick's wife) How do you define yourself and how does that interfere with your true identity as God's daughter?

1. Increasing self-control (Jessica took sudden and frantic action rather than controlling her tongue). In what ways do you need to increase your self-control?

1. Improving in the area of godly speaking (sharing and inquiring gently without nagging, condemning or provoking). In what areas do you want to your speech to be more godly?

1. Controlling thoughts (Jessica uncontrollably daydreamed about what it would be like to be married to a godly man). In what area do you need to be more in control of your thoughts?

7) In chapter 5, we are confronted with Matthew 7:3-5. Jones draws four observations about this passage. The first observation is that Jesus commands us to remove planks from our own eyes. What is a "plank"?

8) When we are in a conflict, at what point in the conflict should we assess our planks? (see bottom of p. 78)

9) What questions should we ask ourselves in order to assess our planks? (see top of p. 79)

- What _____ or actions did I say or do _____ our conflict that helped provoke or set the stage for it?

- What were my sins of _____ and _____ during the heat of our conflict?
- What “plank” sins did I evidence after the conflict that have helped _____ _____
_____ and unresolved?

10) On page 79, Jones says, “I might not have started the clash, but my sinful responses might have prolonged or escalated it.” What are some of your own sinful responses that have prolonged or escalated some of your conflicts?

11) What is the second observation that Jones makes about the passage in Matthew 7:3-5?
(see the subheading in italics on page 79)

12) What planks do you need to remove **before** you confront your spouse with his sins?

13) Toward the bottom of page 79, Jones asks the question, “Whose sins bother you more—your sins or the other persons?” Take some time to contemplate this question then answer it, giving an example.

14) What is the third observation that Jones makes about the passage in Matthew 7:3-5? (see the subheading in italics on page 81)

15) What is your first reaction to the third observation?

16) After reading the section about Jesus assigning a greater weight to your sins than to the other person’s sins, what insights did you gain?

17) What is the fourth observation that Jones makes about the passage in Matthew 7:3-5?
(see the subheading in italics on page 82)

18) How does dealing with my own planks first put me in a better position to minister to another person? (see the bullet list at the bottom of page 82)

-
-
-

19) What is the most important reason for dealing with our own planks? (see the top of p. 83)

20) What does Jones say is our first step in confessing our behavioral sins? (See p. 83)

21) What truth from this section, stands out to you the most and why?

22) After identifying your own sins, what is Step 2? (See page 85)

23) What truth from this section, stands out to you the most and why?

24) As the result of the teachings in chapters 4 and 5, spend the next few days, identifying planks and desires that have dethroned Jesus as King over your heart and then make a plan for repenting of your sin. First, review the questions and your answers above. Second, write a prayer for God's help to identify your sins and pray it every day, at least once. Third, ask God to give you the desire & the power to change. Fourth, choose 1 or 2 actions that you will implement this week. Record them here:

Increased peace and decreased conflict are good motivators to change, but let God's love for you and Christ's sacrifice for you be your biggest motivators to change.

Begin to implement your plan.

Write Psalm 51:3-4 on a notecard and memorize it. Pray it to God every day, at least once. Review all of your other memory verses.

Do not read Chapter 6 yet. Go back and re-read highlights from chapters 1-5. Answer any questions at the ends of the chapters that have not been completed. Continue to examine your own idols and planks this week.

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Chapter 6

“Apologizing that Makes a Difference”

In Chapter 5, we began to see *how* to confess our behavioral sins. Step 1, as it is presented on page 83 is “Identify Your Offenses,” using a plank list. Step 2 is “Confess Your Sins to God, Receive His Forgiveness, and Seek His Help.” Now in Chapter 6 we are taught the third step of confessing our sin to the person we’ve offended and to seek their forgiveness. The goal of taking these 3 steps is spelled out on page 83: “to clear your conscience, make things right with the other person, and provide an improved relational atmosphere within which to address further problems.”

Chapter 6 starts out with a humorous example of a greeting card which reads, “I’m so sorry, but” printed across the top of the card. Then a checklist of excuses is provided, with instructions that read, “Check all that apply.”

- you provoked me
- I was drunk
- it was actually your fault
- I was having a bad day
- the timing was off
- I love you
- you’re wrong
- you’re annoying
- it was the PMS talking
- you need help
- I just can’t help myself
- I had a bad childhood
- The stars were crossed
- Mercury was in retrograde
- I’m an addict

The inside of the card reads, “I hope you’ll accept such a sincere apology.” This may be funny if no one has actually been hurt, but, unfortunately, this is often how we apologize to people we have actually hurt.

Have you used any excuses from the list above? If so, check the boxes beside them.

Do you think this kind of apology generally helps or hurts the situation? Explain.

In what instances have you excused yourself in your thoughts or attitudes, even though you didn’t verbally give excuses for your behavior?

What are some other excuses that you’ve personally used when apologizing?

If you can't figure out what you have done wrong that has resulted in a strained relationship, should you confess to something you didn't do to appease the other person? Explain.

If you can't figure out your planks, the author proposes 2 steps to take. List them here:

First, seek _____ - _____ .. _____

Second, if you still remain unsure of your planks, _____

At the bottom of page 92, a suggested approach is provided for the reader. Write it here:

In your own words, write what you might say in a similar situation that you currently face:

If the other person raises concerns what should be your response?

Fill in the blanks from the statement in the middle of page 93:

“Just because someone feels offended _____,
anymore than the Pharisees’ being offended by Jesus meant that Jesus had sinned against them.”

What If Someone Has Something Against Me?

What are two insights that the author draws from this passage as it applies to a situation where someone has something against you?

1.

2.

Step 3: Confess Your Sins to the Other Person, and Seek His Forgiveness

Once you’ve completed Steps 1 and 2 (you’ve identified any sins and have sought vertical forgiveness through Christ), it is time to proceed to Step 3. The author lists Ken Sande’s “Seven A’s of Confession.” List each of the 7 A’s below and write out something from each section that stood out to you:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

What are some hazards to avoid when you confess a sin and seek forgiveness? (see bottom half of page 103)

On pages 104 and 105, Jones lists 12 things to consider doing if the other person will not forgive you. Re-read the list. Which items in the list have you put into practice in your own life?

Which items in the list do you need to employ in your own relationships?

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Chapter 7
“Cultivating Grace Attitudes”

Our Identity in Christ

1) In Colossians 3:1-4, Paul reminds believers of their new spiritual position in Christ. What is that position? (see middle of page 108)

2) What do these truths in Colossians 3:1-4 do to motivate you to holiness?

3) In Colossians 3:12, the apostle Paul notes three identity descriptors that are foundational for peacemaking. List them:

First, God _____

How can knowing that you've been accepted by the God of the universe help when you are treated unjustly?

Second, God _____

How should knowing that you belong to God influence your response to mistreatment?

Third, God _____

How can knowing that God loves you help when you are mistreated?

Grace Attitudes

4) In Colossians 3:12-14, after Paul describes our identity in Christ, he proceeds to lay out eight “articles of clothing” for the believer to “put on.” The clothing metaphor is representative of attitudes or Christ-like qualities which the believer should display. What are these eight attitudes or qualities?

1. Clothe yourselves with _____
2. Clothe yourselves with _____
3. Clothe yourselves with _____
4. Clothe yourselves with _____
5. Clothe yourselves with _____
6. Clothe yourselves with _____
7. Clothe yourselves with _____
8. Clothe yourselves with _____

5) Of these 8 Christ-like qualities which Christians are commanded to exhibit, which two are the easiest for you to obey?

6) Of these 8 Christ-like qualities, which two are the hardest for you to obey?

Character Qualities or Relational Graces?

7) In addition to the list in Colossians 3:12-14 as outlined above, Jones notes other “lists” of “graces” that we are commanded to extend toward others. Where can these others “lists” be found?

8) These “graces” are rarely easy to display, especially when being mistreated. If you determine to grow in the areas which you listed in Question #6 above, what are nine practical steps that Jones provides?

- 1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

9) Which two practical steps will you commit to implementing in your own situation?

Conclusion

10) How is it possible that you can change in the areas which you listed as the hardest to accomplish in Question #6 above?

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Chapter 8
“To Forgive or Not to Forgive”

1) This chapter is about forgiveness. Before reading this chapter, define the word “forgiveness” in your own words:

What makes forgiveness for others the most difficult for you?

2) Near the beginning of each chapter, the author, Robert Jones, provides a box containing “The Path for Pursuing Peace,” outlining what has been covered so far in the book and how the current chapter fits into the outline of the book. To refresh your memory, list the first 3 steps to take in pursuing peace:

Step 1.

Step 2.

Step 3.

3) Where does forgiveness fit into the outline of the 3 steps above?

4) What does this tell us in regards to our responsibility when we are hurt by another person? Are we helpless victims?

5) The author discusses the Bible’s two major categories of forgiveness: vertical and horizontal.

a. What is vertical forgiveness?

b. What is horizontal forgiveness?

6) How does Jones define God’s forgiveness? (see the top of page 124)

7) On page 126, Jones writes: “God does not ignore the sins of Christians. He punished our sins. But he does not punish *us* for our sins. He punished our substitute, the Lord Jesus, ‘the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world’ (John 1:29). ‘He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree’ (1 Pet 2:24). ‘For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God’ (1 Pet. 3:18).”

What thoughts and feelings do you have concerning this quote and these gospel truths from Scripture?

8) Jones presents seven Scripture passages about God’s forgiveness and calls them “Pictures of God’s Forgiveness.” What is the “word picture” or “metaphor” created in each of these seven passages?

1. Psalm 103:11-12: “For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

1. Psalm 130:3-4: “If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.”

1. Isaiah 1:18: “ ‘Come now, let us reason together.’ Says the Lord. ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.’ ”

1. Isaiah 38:17: “In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back.”

1. Isaiah 43:24-25: "But you have burdened me with your sins and wearied me with your offenses. [yet] I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more."

1. Isaiah 44:22: "I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you."

1. Micah 7:18-20: "Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. You will be true to Jacob, and show mercy to Abraham, as you pledged on oath to our fathers in days long ago."

9) Of the "word pictures" presented in the preceding Scriptures, which one(s) give you the most vivid understanding of God's forgiveness for you? Explain.

10) Do you have any personal sins weighing heavily on you from your past that you still feel guilty about and which you still hold onto? If so, pray a prayer asking God to forgive you. If you have asked God to forgive you, then He has forgiven you, according to those promises in the Scriptures above.

If you've already asked for God's forgiveness in the past, but still hold onto the guilt, pray that God will help you to freely receive His forgiveness and that He will help you to replace your doubt with faith. Write your prayer and pray it daily until you believe that you are fully forgiven. Also, daily meditate on the seven Scriptures and the word pictures from #8 above.

11) Fill in the blanks from the author's statement at the bottom of page 130: "One major implication flowing from God's forgiveness of us is our _____ to _____."

12) What should be the Christian's motive to forgive others?

13) Explain and draw the two levels of forgiveness:

14) By presenting three components, Jones explains "attitudinal forgiveness" or what it means to forgive someone in our hearts (level 1). What are these three components?

1. *Attitudinal forgiveness involves*

1. *Attitudinal forgiveness involves*

1. *Attitudinal forgiveness involves*

15) Briefly summarize a situation in which you are having trouble forgiving your offender:

16) Of the three components listed above (Question #14), which one seems the hardest to apply to the situation which you described in Question #15 and which one seems the easiest to apply? Explain.

17) What Scriptural truth taught in this chapter is the most helpful for you as you face your own process of biblical forgiveness? Write it on a card and meditate on it daily.

18) What do you intend to change about your relationships as a result of the Scriptural truths in this chapter?

19) Write a prayer asking God to empower you and to help you to forgive as He has forgiven you. Pray this prayer daily.

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Chapter 9
“Battling Bitterness by Grace”

In Chapter 8, we learned about two levels of forgiveness. *Level 1* involves a forgiving attitude toward our offender. This is not optional for the Christian. Because God has forgiven us by placing our sins and offenses on Christ, a Christian has the obligation to forgive as Christ forgives us. This level of forgiveness is between the believer and God but is displayed as grace and mercy toward the offender. Level 2 follows level one and involves a forgiveness transaction relationally between two people. Since we have no control over the other person’s response, Level 2 is not always possible, but should be sought whenever possible, since unity is what God desires.

In this chapter, we will look further at how the failure to forgive at Level 1 will lead to bitterness or resentment and what to do “to escape the sorrow, slavery, and soul impoverishment that resentment brings.” In chapter 10, we will look closely at Level 2 forgiveness.

1) How does the author define *bitterness*?

2) What is the difference between being angry at someone for what they did and being bitter?

3) Toward whom do you harbor unforgiveness, bitterness and/or resentment?

4) What has the person(s) you listed in Question #3 above done that has hurt you so deeply that you struggle to forgive?

5) How can knowing Jesus help you with your bitterness? (see page 139)

“How can I get rid of my bitterness?”

Jones lists six gospel truths that can prevent resentment from building. They are presented in the chapter as six bold-face subheadings. List these six gospel truths below and following each gospel truth, share at least one “highlight” from that section of the chapter. A “highlight” might be a Scripture passage that spoke to you, a reminder or an instruction of how you should be thinking, speaking or acting, a quote that convicted you or encouraged you in some way, or it may be something you read that you want to share with another person to help them.

1. _____

1. _____

1. _____

1. _____

1. _____

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Chapter 10

“Redeeming the Art of Rebuke and Granting Forgiveness”

Chapter 10 discusses the two options we have when we are hurt by another person: either overlook the offense or rebuke the offender.

1) What does Revelation 3:19 reveal to us about how God views rebuke?

2) What are your thoughts and feelings in response to the following words found at the bottom of page 151:

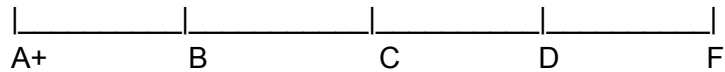
“Our Lord expresses true love for his people through caring confrontation. We have a lot to learn as his disciples. While words like rebuke, reprove, confront, and admonish are unpopular in our society and even (sadly) among most Christians, God commands us to minister to each other in these ways to reflect our true love for each other.”

In Chapter 10, Jones presents eight questions to guide us in determining whether we should confront an offense or overlook it. The chapter is divided into a discussion about each of these eight questions, listed as italicized headings throughout the chapter. The remainder of this study guide is arranged by these eight questions or topics of consideration.

Question 1: Is rebuking even an option for a gracious, loving follower of Jesus?

3) Overlooking an offense does not mean denial. What is the difference between overlooking and denial?

4) How would you rate yourself on being a good steward of your relationships by overlooking offenses biblically?



5) Read or re-read the list of Scripture passages at the bottom of page 152 and the top of page 153 that relate to overlooking or covering over someone's sins. Which passage stands out to you the most as one you need to apply to a personal offense?

Briefly explain the offense and how you intend to apply the passage to the situation:

Write the passage you selected on a notecard and begin to memorize it. Meditate (think over) ways you might apply this Scripture passage to your personal life.

6) Read or re-read the list of Scripture passages at the bottom of page 153 and the top of page 154 that relate to confronting or rebuking.

Now locate the following passages in your Bible & briefly summarize them below:

Acts 20:31

Romans 15:14

Colossians 1:28

Colossians 3:16

1 Thessalonians 5:14

2 Timothy 2:24-26

2 Timothy 4:2

Titus 2:15

Hebrews 3:13

7) Before reading these passages, were you aware of the number of times God commands us to rebuke, reprove, admonish, correct and exhort one another?

8) What are your thoughts after reading this list of Scripture passages on confronting and rebuking?

9) What do you most naturally do when you are hurt/offended? (circle the letters for all that apply)

1. Think about the offense over and over
2. Talk/text to friends and/or family members about the offense
3. Pray about it
4. Unlovingly confront the offender immediately without practicing Steps 1, 2 and 3 (see the box at the top of page 152)
5. Thoughtfully, prayerfully and humbly work on steps 1, 2 and 3 before confronting in a biblical manner
6. Shrug it aside or "stuff it," hoping it will just go away or that things will improve
7. Try to "fix" everybody
8. Attempt to manipulate circumstances to avoid future conflicts
9. Other _____

10) How would you rate yourself on being a good steward of your relationships by confronting offenses biblically?

|_____||_____||_____||_____||
 A+ B C D F

Question 2: What are the wrong ways to handle the overlook-versus-rebuke dilemma?

11) What is wrong with establishing hard and fast rules to determine when to confront and when to overlook an offense or cataloging sins into categories that should or should not be confronted?

12) What does Jones mean when he uses the term, “devotional theology”?

13) What is wrong with the option to neither confront nor to overlook?

Question 3: How should we discern when a rebuke is needed?

14) Which did Jesus do more often – overlook or confront offenses?

15) What did Jesus do when He overlooked offenses so He would not become bitter?

16) Jones gives seven factors to consider when assessing a situation to determine whether to confront or to overlook. What are these seven?

1. Rebuking might be proper *when the person is* _____

1. Rebuking might be proper *when the person may* _____

2. Rebuking might be proper *when the offense is* _____

1. What did Jesus expose about religious leaders in Matthew 23:23?

1. What does this tell us about the severity of some sins over others?

1. Where can you find sin lists in the Bible?

1. List some sins that especially mark the ungodly:

1. Rebuking might be proper *when your relationship with someone is* _____

1. Rebuking might be proper *when the person is* _____

1. Rebuking might be proper *when others are* _____

2. Rebuking might be proper *when* _____

Question 4: What steps of preparation must we take before we seek to rebuke the person?

17) Beginning on page 159, Jones provides a checklist of self-examination questions to consider prior to confronting someone of a sin. What are these seven essential questions?

1. *Have I thoroughly* _____ *to God and to the other person I have offended, and have I* _____?

2. *Am I* _____?

3. *Do I clearly understand that* _____

1. *Am I convinced that this is the* _____?

2. *Am I cultivating and expressing* _____ *we explored in chapter 7?*

3. *Am I willing to consider* _____, *if necessary?*

4. *Am I seeking to* _____?

5. *Do I need some* _____?

Question 5: What steps should I take to rebuke the person?

18) List the four steps Jones suggests as a practical approach when confronting an offender:

19) Using the examples on pages 160 and 161, write out the words you could/should use when confronting the offense which you described in Question #5 above:

Pursuing Peace
 By Robert D Jones
Chapter 11
“Reconciliation in Action”

So far in the book, we have learned the steps to take to reconcile a relationship which has been taxed or broken by conflict. Chapter 11 helps us as we begin to rebuild the relationship which has been newly reconciled.

1) What is the key word in this chapter? (p. 168) _____

Serving Others Like Jesus Did

2) In Mark 10:35-44 we see a conflict among Jesus disciples. In the middle of page 169, Jones asks the question, “What is our Lord’s answer to conflict among his followers?” And what is the answer?

3) How does Jesus’ description of greatness to his disciples contrast with the world’s idea of greatness?

4) Jones gives three “Ministry Strategies” for promoting growth in a relationship. List them:

Ministry Strategy 1: _____

Ministry Strategy 2: _____

Ministry Strategy 3: _____

5) What does Table 2 on page 170 explain?

6) How can assuming that a person’s motives for their behavior are fear or ignorance rather than malice result in a different outcome?

7) What three biblical truths does Jones highlight concerning godly listening?

1.

1.

1.

8) Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, "But Christians have forgotten that the ministry of listening has been committed to them by Him who is Himself the great listener and whose work they should share." What are your thoughts about this quote?

9) What should mark our God-like listening?

10) On pages 174 and 175, Jones presents 4 descriptions of what godly speaking involves. List them:

- First, our words should be _____ (Eph 4:25)
 Second, our words should be _____ (Eph 4:29)
 Third, our words should be _____ (Prov 15:23)
 Fourth, our words should be _____ (Eph 4:31-32)

11) Which of the 4 descriptions of godly speaking in Question #10 above do you most need to work on?

12) Make a plan for change in the area you identified in Question #11 above. To do that, complete the following:

- a) Write the relevant passage (from the list in #10 above) on a card and memorize it.
- b) Identify the times and situations when you are most likely to be tempted to sin in this area.
- c) Identify specific sinful words, tones or attitudes to put off and specific godly words, tones or attitudes that you plan to put on to replace the sinful speech. Answer the question, "How can my speech reflect that of a servant?"
- d) When you are tempted to sin in this area, ask yourself, "What do I want? What would make everything ok?" This will help to identify the heart motive behind the behavior.
- e) Read Proverbs 10 and 12. Note verses that are especially convicting and write them on cards to read daily.
- f) Write a prayer asking God to change your heart so the speech that overflows from your heart will be more godly. Pray the prayer daily.

A Problem Solving Tool

13) In what practical ways can you apply "The Issue-Position-Interests model" to a situation in your personal life?

Pursuing Peace
By Robert D Jones
Chapter 12
“When Nothing Works”

In Chapter 11, the book presented three ministry strategies to strengthen a reconciled relationship. Now, in this final chapter, five ministry strategies are presented to help navigate life when people will not reconcile with us.

1) List the five ministry strategies:

Ministry Strategy 1:

Ministry Strategy 2:

Ministry Strategy 3:

Ministry Strategy 4:

Ministry Strategy 5:

2) Under the “Ministry Strategy 1” subheading on page 183, Jones points to two Bible truths about our relationship to God which are vital for dealing with those who harden themselves against our peacemaking efforts. What are these two truths?

First, we must

Second, we must

3) Copy onto note cards all of the Scripture passages that Jones lists under the “Ministry Strategy 1” section on pages 183 and 184. Keep them nearby and read them often to help you remember your identity in Christ and your aim to please God, not to please yourself or other people.

4) How can you think about loving the person who has hurt you when he/she does not deserve your love? (see top of page 184)

5) Answer the questions below taken from the bullet points on page 184:

- Has pleasing God been my highest desire? Where do I need to adjust my goals in relationship to him?

- Have I examined and repented of any ways I have sinned against this person? Have I humbled myself before him?

- Do I need an attitude adjustment by God's Spirit? Am I harboring any resentment or bitterness in my heart?

- Do I need to allow more time?

6) What suggestions under "Ministry Strategy 2" do you need to consider implementing?

7) Do you need to seek help from any of the resources suggested under “Ministry Strategy 3”? If so, how and when will you proceed with a plan to seek help?

8) Under “Ministry Strategy 4” on page 187, Jones suggests three characteristics that should mark our ministry plan to someone who is distant or hostile toward us. What are these three characteristics?

1 – It must be

2 – It must be a

3 – It must

9) What two “mega-words” frame Jesus’s teaching in Luke 6:27-36 like a “pair of bookends”? (see middle of page 188)

_____ and _____

10) Fill in the blanks in the quote from page 188:

“To love our enemies is a central tenet of Jesus’s teaching, one he modeled in his graciousness toward critics and crucifiers, in his _____, and in his sacrificial death for us _____. Developing this attitude involves _____ and _____ to make our hearts loving and merciful toward the offender.”

11) In Luke 6:27-36, three ministries are highlighted that reflect Christ-like love and mercy:

1) Do good to those who hate you, 2) bless those who curse you and 3) pray for those who mistreat you.

In the chart below, make a practical, long-term ministry plan, that reflects the teaching of Jesus in Luke 6:27-36, for how you will minister to an offender who is unrepentant:

12) What statement or Scripture passage encourages you the most under "Ministry Strategy 5"? Write it below and also on a note card to read and re-read often.

13) Write out a prayer below seeking God's help to carry out Christ-likeness in your most difficult relationship. Pray this prayer daily.

1. _____

6) Which of the six truths is most helpful for you? Explain.

7) Which truth seems the most difficult to apply? Explain.

8) On page 150 under the subheading "Conclusion," Jones gives specific steps to take to help in your battle against bitterness and resentment. Follow the instructions to complete this activity. As you locate each Scripture passage, take your time and ask God to "open your eyes to see His wonderful truths." **This assignment will require at least six days, since you are asked to review one truth per day.**