

“Shalom”

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By Reg Killingley

BIG SANDY, Texas—Our world is riven with conflict, permeated with strife. Peace seems unattainable. Yet there is an option. A choice that starts with us, with you and me.

The intergenerational cycle of hate and anger and toxicity can be broken, even though it isn’t easy. It requires us to be willing to change. If all parties are willing to change, to apply the principles that produce real peace, it’s absolutely possible, even though it’s a narrow and difficult path to follow, which is why “few there be that find it.”

What are some of the principles underlying peace?

■ “Love keeps no record of wrongs.”

“Love is patient, love is kind, it is not envious. Love does not brag, it is not puffed up. It is not rude, it is not self-serving, it is not easily angered or resentful. It is not glad about injustice, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (I Corinthians 13:4-7).

■ “Love [even] your enemies.”

“Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:27-28, 36).

■ How can we say we love God whom we have not seen when we hate our brother whom we can see?

“If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?” (1 John 4:20-21).

In Hebrew, shalom means “peace.” But it has a much wider sense than just the absence of conflict. It means whole, entire, healthy complete. And we can be at peace with others only when we are at peace with ourselves.

Yet we are all incomplete. We are not whole. We have gaps. We have failings. We have flaws. So, is shalom just an impossible dream? An unachievable illusion?

Absolutely not. Because in Christ we are healed and made whole, entire, complete. He is our peace—the Prince of Peace! He is our *shalom*.

In Him we find true forgiveness and in Him we find the ability to forgive others, even as He has forgiven us. Because He loves us and was willing to suffer and lay down His life for our sake.

“I have come so that [you] may have life, and may have it abundantly” (John 10:10)

“You must put away all bitterness, anger, wrath, quarreling . . . indeed all malice. Instead, be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you” (Ephesians 4:31-32).