

## IN THE BEGINNING: GOD

### Community Group Lesson 1: "Shalom"

Watch the 14-minute video, "In the Beginning/Shalom."

1. Let's open our time together with the simple question we ended the video with: where in your life do you feel that there is an absence of "Shalom?" Where do you feel you are not experiencing peace, or is there tension or disruption?
2. Now, let's talk about the other side of the coin. Where in your life have you experienced/are you experiencing "Shalom?" Is there a situation or a time in your life that you can confidently point to and say, "*it is good?*" Where do you feel at peace with yourself, others, or a certain situation?

Have three different people read aloud the three following passages: John 14: 27, Colossians 3:15, and Philippians 4:6-8.

3. According to these passages, are there ways in which our attitudes, actions, perspectives, or responses can contribute to your sense of peace with certain situations?

Now In the circumstances you shared in questions 1-2, are there ways in which you have/had a direct impact on your experience of "shalom" in those situations? How or how not?

4. Here's what we're getting at with all of this. When we think of "shalom," we think of that which is functioning as it should be; as God intended in Genesis 1-2. Unfortunately, we also know that as a result of Genesis 3 the world we live in is very much out of sync with God's original design for it. As a result, followers of Jesus often have to make a conscious decision to be "peacemakers."

While we tend think of being "peacemakers" in terms of what we can do for others (i.e. bringing peace to those in some sort of conflict), more often than not I tend to think it has to do with the attitude, perspective, and understanding we bring to every situation in our lives. Have someone read aloud Matthew 5:9. Is it not powerful that being a "peacemaker" is equated with being a "child of God?" Considering our study so far, what do these words mean to you?

5. In the video, we talked about the word "repent" meaning "to return." Is that a new perspective for you or have you heard it before? What does it mean to you that Jesus is calls you to "return?"
6. As you close, spend some time taking prayer requests in your group, specifically thinking about those situations we've brought to our community that require a healthy amount of "peacemaking" before we can look at them and say "it is good."