

# 3 Basic Steps to Reaping the Blessings of James 3:18

“Those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of goodness” (James 3:18, TLB).

Our natural tendency is to hate our enemies or at least to avoid them at all cost. But if you run from conflict, you’re going to be miserable most of your life. Jesus calls us to a higher standard. He calls us to be peacemakers—not peacekeepers. There’s a huge difference. Peacekeepers avoid conflict and pretend it doesn’t exist. But peacemakers resolve conflict and reconcile relationships.

The Bible promises this: “Those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of goodness” (James 3:18 TLB).

When you plant a seed, you always get back more than you started with. If you plant an apple seed, you get a whole tree full of apples in return. It’s the law of sowing and reaping. If you plant a seed of conflict, you’ll wind up with a lot more trouble than you bargained for. But the Bible says if you plant seeds of peace, you will reap a harvest of peace, kindness and goodness in return.

So how do you do that? One of the most important life skills that you will ever learn is conflict resolution. Over the next two devotionals, I’ll share with you seven keys to becoming a peacemaker in the midst of conflict. Here are the first three.

Make the first move. Don’t wait for the person to come to you. You take the initiative. Buy that person a cup of coffee or go to lunch together. Jesus took the initiative to show mercy to us. The Bible says, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us ... For while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the

death of His Son” (Rom. 5:8b, 10a, MEV). Jesus didn’t wait for us to apologize. He didn’t even wait for us to feel bad about our behavior. Jesus made the first move. And he wants us to do the same thing.

Ask God for wisdom. God is always glad to help you when you’re doing what he says. The Bible says, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives it to all men liberally and without criticism, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5a). Ask God to help you decide the right time and the right place to plan a peace conference. Ask him to give you the right words to say and the right way to say them. The Bible says, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver” (Prov. 25:11).

Start with your own confession. Don’t start with a bunch of accusations. Don’t start with the ways you’ve been hurt. Start with what’s your fault. The conflict may be percent the other person’s fault. But you can find something to confess. Instead of accusing the other person – and instead of excusing yourself—start with your own mistakes, even if it was your poor response. But you begin with what was your fault.

We’ll look at four more keys to peacemaking in tomorrow’s devotional.

### **Talk It Over**

- If you make the first move and reach out to someone who has hurt you, what assurances do you have that the person will change his or her behavior and/or apologize to you? Does it matter, from an eternal perspective?
- How should this make a difference in your life: Jesus didn’t wait for us to apologize. Jesus made the first move. {eoa}

**Rick Warren** is the founding pastor of Saddleback Church. His book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, was named one of the 100 Christian books that changed the 20th century. He is also

*founder of , a global internet community for pastors.*

*This article originally appeared at .*