

# A PEACEMAKING MODEL: A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

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This paper assumes that the reader has read "A Peacemaking Model" which can be found at <http://restorativejusticediscipline.com/library/APeacemakingModel.pdf>

## Introduction

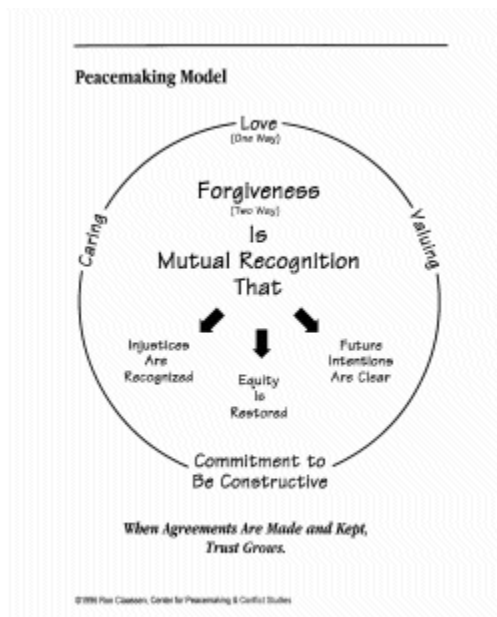
Peace-*shalom*, Love-*agape*, Forgiveness, Confession, Atonement, Repentance and Trust are key words in the Peacemaking Model. They are all words that are used in the faith and secular worlds and with a variety of meanings. What I will do in this article is to use stories and teachings from my faith tradition, to help clarify my understanding of each.

While I identify myself as a Christian it is not without reservations, due to the many horrible atrocities that have been committed by people who have identified themselves as Christian. I am a member of a Mennonite church and identify myself as a Christian-Anabaptist-Mennonite. If you are interested in learning more about Mennonites you may find it helpful to consult the following web sites, [www.mwc-cmm.org/](http://www.mwc-cmm.org/) or [www.mennonites.org/](http://www.mennonites.org/) or [www.mcc.org/](http://www.mcc.org/).

My hope is that this article will contribute to a multi-cultural and multi-faith dialogue as we search to understand how we can relate to each other in more constructive ways, especially when wrongdoing, violation, and injustice have occurred. It is my hope that the Peacemaking Model and this article will contribute to our dialogue regarding Restorative Justice in our communities. It is exciting that Restorative Justice (a kind of justice that includes "making things as right as possible") is being discussed at all levels of society and as part of an international discussion. I think it is important to discuss these topics in our faith communities, and it is equally important that we search to find language so that we can discuss these ideas in any community.

It is my hope that this article will not just be read and discussed within the Christian faith community, although I am excited about that possibility. I hope that it will contribute to our discussion of this important topic of peacemaking throughout our secular communities and across our faith traditions. I know that when I read other's ideas, they help me clarify mine. I hope this will serve to do that as well.

I offer the following as my confessional of my understanding of this topic as of the time of writing. I reserve the right to change my mind as I have new experiences and gain new insights.



## **Vision: Peace - *Shalom***

*Shalom*, a Hebrew word that is translated into the English word "peace," is a central theme of the Bible. *Shalom* is at the center of my vision of how God would want us to live on this wonderful earth.

A vision is our hope and guide.

"A vision is something that doesn't yet exist and is currently seen only in our imagination. It is rooted in values, spirit, and ideals. In our imagination we see images of people, programs, interactions, and procedures which incorporate these values and ideals. A vision is a desired state for the future. It is more intuitive than linear thinking."

"People and programs that don't have vision will likely find themselves floundering or flitting from here to there, or getting stuck in a rut. Vision gives us freedom to wander about, experiment, and make changes with less fear or threat. We can do this because we test our changes against our vision: Is the change moving us in the direction of our vision? Our vision needs to permeate all of our lives and programs."

"Our visual image of our vision changes as we gain new insights and as reality around us changes. Yet the core values do not change. Justice and peace are core values in my vision but my visual images change as I gain new insights through exposure and life experience."

"Vision is more than just a dream. It is that image of our desired state of affairs that reaches all the way back to our current action."

"It is vision that motivates us to do something and guides us along the way." <sup>1</sup>

Excerpted from an article by Ron Claassen, Criminal Justice Network Newsletter (September 1989).

My vision for Peacemaking starts with peace-*shalom* as described in the Bible. The Christian Bible, which relies very heavily on the Hebrew Scriptures, talks about

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<sup>1</sup> Ron Claassen, "Vision," Criminal Justice Network Newsletter (September 1989).

Shalom with very specific and concrete word pictures. One of the hallmarks of *shalom* is an absence of fear of being harmed.

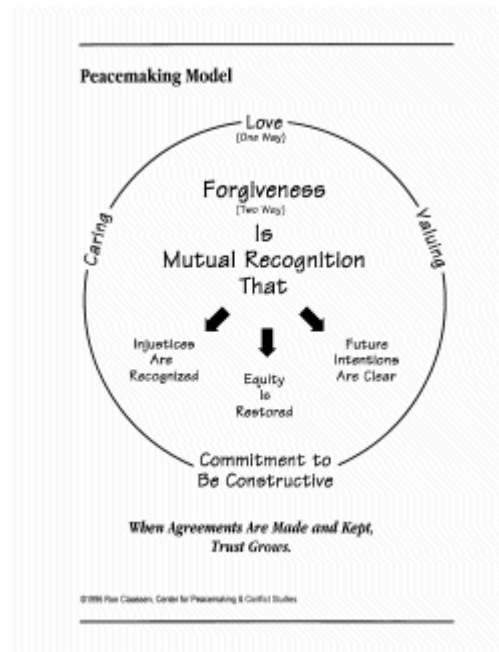
Leviticus 26:3-6 “<sup>3</sup>If you follow my statutes and keep my commandments and observe them faithfully, <sup>4</sup>I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. <sup>5</sup>Your threshing shall overtake the vintage, and the vintage shall overtake the sowing; you shall eat your bread to the full, and live securely in your land. <sup>6</sup>And I will grant peace-*shalom* in the land, and you shall lie down, **and no one shall make you afraid**; I will remove dangerous animals from the land, and no sword shall go through your land.” (all quotations NRSV)

Isaiah 65:25 “<sup>25</sup>The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent--its food shall be dust! **They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain**, says the LORD.”

Micah 4:3,4 “<sup>3</sup>He shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; <sup>4</sup>but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, **and no one shall make them afraid**; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.”

I love to imagine or envision a world, a community, a school, a church, or even a family in which all experience "**and no one shall make you afraid**" and "**they shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain.**" It does not suggest to me that there will be no conflict but that in the midst of the conflict the participants do not need to be afraid. Each would know that the to other's intention would be constructive. Everyone could feel safe because it would just a question of how to transform the conflict or violation into a just and peaceful way for everyone. *Shalom* is an incredible thought. We might even say it is almost unimaginable!

Yet this is exactly what I believe God wants us to imagine and to put into action. And from my perspective this is what Jesus incarnated. In the New Testament of the Christian Bible the vision of *shalom* continues with the Greek word *eirene*.



Ephesians 2:14 “For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.”

Matthew 6:25, 33 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?” “But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Matthew 11:28-30 “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Vision provides direction and guidance. What one does needs to be tested against ones vision.

Matthew 6:24 “No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

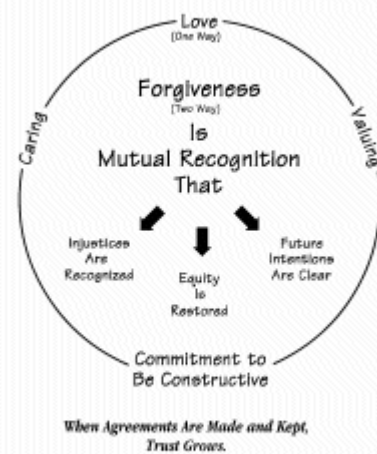
Luke 12:34 “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

If we value peace-*shalom* we will pursue peace-*shalom*. It is this remarkable and radical vision of Shalom that motivated me to want to discover how people move from where there is an injustice or violation to where things are alright or even good, a new creation. The Peacemaking (*Shalom*-making) Model is what emerged. Two of its key elements are love-*agape* and forgiveness.

### Love-Agape

Love-*agape* and Forgiveness are very different words and their meanings are also very different. When I was first asked to think about how I used the words love and forgiveness I realized that I often interchanged them without even thinking about their different meanings. In asking other people to think about how they use these two words, many also report using the words interchangeably and without a clear distinction in meaning. While I am going to suggest examining and even renaming some experiences, this is not intended to minimize or invalidate any reported experiences. When people report healing experiences, whatever

Peacemaking Model



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language they use to describe their experience makes no difference in the reality of their experience. What I am suggesting is that I have found that it is very helpful in thinking about and describing my experiences, and others have reported that it has also been helpful to them, to separate love-*agape* and forgiveness and to be more careful in their distinct usage.

Love is the word in the English Bible that is translated from the Greek word *agape*. In the Greek language there are several words that are translated into the English word love. *Eros* is also translated into the word love and it refers to romantic or passionate love. *Philia* is refers to brotherly or sisterly love. Both *eros* and *philia* are two-way in that they expect and to some extent depend on reciprocation. *Agape* is different in that it does not depend on or expect reciprocation. *Agape* is the kind of love that can be offered and does not depend on what is coming back. This is why in the Peacemaking Model I have written (one-way) under the word love. I am thinking specifically of love-*agape*.

One usage of the word love that has been very perplexing to me, and I have seen this most in churches, is when someone says to another or a group, "I am going to do this or that because I love you." But then what they did was very hurtful and was not experienced by the other(s) as love-*agape* at all. Dalton Reimer, a colleague at the Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies, and I discussed this and asked the question, "Was it really love just because the person said it was love or is their a way of testing if something is really love-*agape*?" He suggested we could start by looking at a wonderful definition for love-*agape*.

I Corinthians 13: 4-8a. "Love-*agape* is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant <sup>5</sup>or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup>it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. <sup>7</sup>It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends."

In addition, the importance of love-*agape* is seen in many places in the scripture and perhaps most clearly in I John 4.

I John 4: 7,8. "Beloved, let us love-*agape* one another, because love-*agape* is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup>Whoever does not love-*agape* does not know God, for God is love-*agape*."

Since love-*agape* is so important and also so misused Dalton suggested putting the definition that is given in I Corinthians 13 into the form of a scale he called the L-Scale. <sup>2</sup> It is constructed by setting up two columns, one with the heading not *agape* and the other *agape*. I will give an example here and leave it to you to complete it.

"Love is patient and kind" means that patient and kind go under *agape* and their opposites, impatient and unkind, would go under *not agape*. "Love is not envious or boastful" means that envious and boastful would go under *not agape* and their opposites would go under *agape*.

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<sup>2</sup> Ron Claassen and Dalton Reimer, "L-Scale," *Basic Institute Manual*, 1998, p.49.

<u>Not agape</u>		<u>Agape</u>
Impatient	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Patient
Unkind	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Kind
Envious	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	_____
Boastful	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	_____
Arrogant	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	_____
Rude	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	_____
Insist on one's own way	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Looks for our way
Irritable	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	_____
Resentful	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	_____
Rejoice at wrongs	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Rejoice in the right-truth
_____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Bears all things
_____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Provides hope
Gives up quickly	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Never ends

When completed the scale is a very practical tool to measure love-*agape*. One can use it to measure how one is doing on the L Scale in regard to a spouse, a co-worker, a neighbor, or even an enemy. It is an especially helpful tool to use before confronting another. Just constructing it was a significant experience for me. When I first did it on my own, it was not a particularly enjoyable experience. It made it so clear and took away the idea that something was love-*agape* just because I said so. I Corinthians 13 used to elicit warm feelings in me when I would read it but after this it became a significant time of self-evaluation and I didn't always measure up. What made it even more significant for me is that I also believe I John 4 which says that those who know God, love-*agape*. And that meant that I needed to check in on my relationship with God.

What I am suggesting with the Peacemaking Model by having one of the labels on the circle, *Love-agape*, is that it is when people move toward the *agape* side of the scale, they are ready to work on the process inside the circle. In secular language, moving toward the *agape* side of the scale is another way of saying, moving toward the "Commitment To Be Constructive" side of a constructive/destructive continuum. On the Peacemaking Model, a "Commitment To Be Constructive" is at the bottom of the circle.

Through observations and listening to stories I noticed that people were not very effective at doing the work inside the circle until they had moved to the constructive side of the continuum. I describe the observations and stories more thoroughly in the article "A Peacemaking Model."

I have also noticed the same pattern studying the Bible. The Bible is clear that God love's all people, just due to the nature of God. I John 4. Just as God loves all people, we (those of us who call ourselves the people of God) are also told that if we love-*agape* God we will also love-*agape* all people. The complex inter-relationship between loving God, neighbor and self appears to be of central importance.

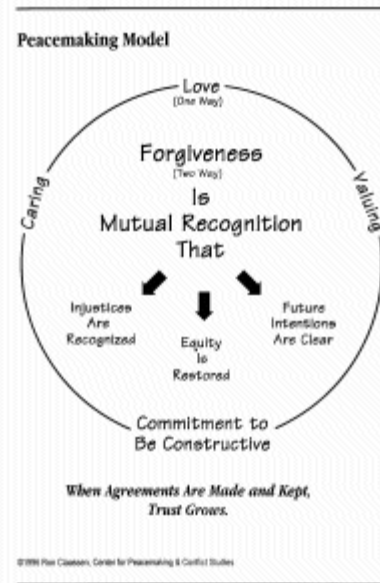
In Matthew a question posed to Jesus is, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" In Mark the question is, "Which commandment is first of all?" And in Luke the question is, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus' answer is the same.

Matt 22:37ff, Mk 12:29ff, Lk 10:27ff "...You shall love-*agape* the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength and with all your mind... You shall love-*agape* your neighbor as yourself."

Upon hearing this answer Jesus was asked the follow-up question "who is my neighbor?" The question seems to be intended to clarify that there must be a boundary or limit somewhere. But Jesus answered this in a variety of ways and even emphasized the enemy to clarify that this love-*agape* is intended to extend to all people.

Matt 5:43,44 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love-*agape* your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, 'Love-*agape* your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.'"

This unconditional love-*agape* provides the basis for the relationship between all people and God and therefore is also the basis for all relationships between those who know God and all people. This one-way commitment to be constructive (*agape*) is a



basic starting point prior to forgiveness and provides the basis for forgiveness, which is conditional.

I John 1. 9. "If we confess..., God is faithful and just to forgive..."

If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness

Forgiveness is two-way but love-*agape* is one-way. Love-*agape* provides the basis for forgiveness.

On the circle in the Peacemaking Model I include words valuing and caring because these are included when a person has decided to be constructive (*agape*). As described above, I also include "Commitment To Be Constructive," because this idea, coupled with the one-way idea seems to be a very useful description of *agape* in more secular language. Interestingly, in a book from the Harvard Negotiation Project, *Getting Together*, Fisher and Brown describe the idea of an unconditional commitment to be constructive as the basis for effective negotiation of interests.<sup>3</sup> The Peacemaking Model simply clarifies that a commitment to be constructive (*agape* in Greek and in biblical language) is also a starting point and provides the basis for dealing with injustices or violations.

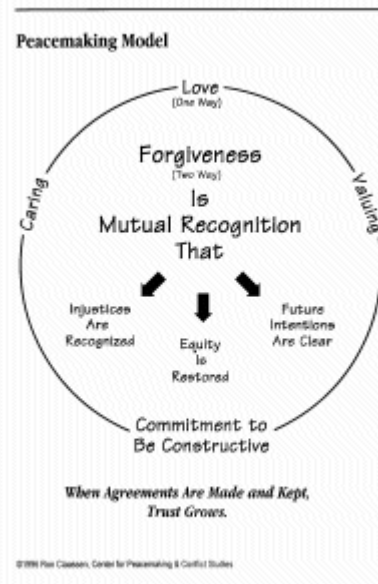
The Bible describes forgiveness as the process that transforms a relationship that has been damaged by a hurt, violation, or injustice, into a new creation.

### Forgiveness

The first mention of forgiveness in the Bible is not until the last part of Genesis.

Gen 50: 15-18<sup>15</sup> Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, 'What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?'<sup>16</sup> So they approached Joseph, saying, 'Your father gave this instruction before he died,<sup>17</sup> "Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you." Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father.' Joseph wept when they spoke to him.<sup>18</sup> Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, 'We are here as your slaves.

In Genesis 45 Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, named the evil that his brothers did to him, and said that although they intended to do evil to him, God had other plans. Since God used this experience for good, he said they should not worry. Joseph



<sup>3</sup> Roger Fisher and Scott Brown, *Getting Together: Building Relationships As We Negotiate*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), p. 38



asked them to get their father and come and live with him and assured them he would care for them. They accepted the invitation and had lived together for many years but when their father died, the brothers got worried. They knew that they had intentionally done evil to Joseph and although they had lived constructively together, they had not yet completed the forgiveness process with Joseph. So although they experienced love-*agape* in that they lived civilly together for many years, they were afraid (not *shalom*) because they had not completed the forgiveness process. They still didn't trust Joseph fully as is demonstrated in that they used their father's words, it appears, to increase the likelihood that Joseph would listen to their appeal to complete the forgiveness process. In spite of the context of their constructive living relationship (*agape*), they had not yet discovered forgiveness. The part that had been left out in their reunion was their confession, recognizing the injustice, something they had never done. Genesis 50, part of which is quoted above, describes their confession. After Recognizing the Injustice, they Restored Equity when the brothers offered restitution in the form of service and Joseph offered grace, saying that their service was not necessary. Joseph was already convinced that their Future Intentions were genuine and to assure them of his, he then clarified his intentions for their future relationship.

Genesis 50:21 <sup>21</sup>So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones.' In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

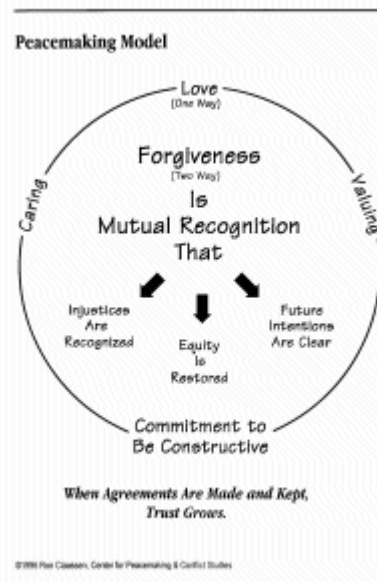
Finally, after many years, forgiveness was discovered. The final verses in the book of Genesis indicate that agreements were kept and more agreements were made. It appears that trust grew and reconciliation was experienced. If you compare the Peacemaking Model with the story you will see all of the elements.

### Two-way nature of forgiveness:

I John 1:9. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Matt 6: 12, 14: <sup>12</sup>And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. <sup>14</sup>For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you;

The two-way nature of forgiveness is illustrated in these verses. What these passages illustrate is that there is even the possibility that God will not forgive and one of the reasons for that is when one is unwilling to forgive others. But when I point this out in a training session, I am usually asked, "Doesn't the Bible say that I am commanded to forgive so I must forgive?" The question of 70x7 is usually raised at this point.



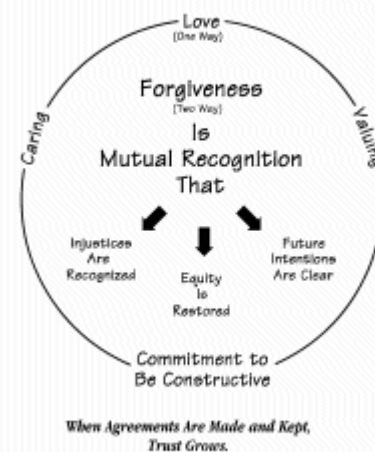
Matt 18: 21,22: 21 Then Peter came and said to him, ‘Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?’ 22 Jesus said to him, ‘Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. <sup>h</sup> ( h. Or *seventy times seven*)

In Matt 18: 15-17 a process had just been spelled out giving direction about how to approach a situation when one has been sinned against (an injustice or violation). The entire balance of the chapter is devoted to providing some illustrations of the two-way nature of forgiveness. Verses 15-17 make it clear that the one who has been sinned against has an obligation to make the sin known to the one who did it. But that leaves the question open regarding how one should approach the other and for what reason.

I find it very helpful to read verses 15-17 in the context of the entire chapter and God's vision for *shalom*. The first three paragraphs of Matt 18 help clarify whether one is ready to confront. In the first paragraph (vs. 1-4) it seems to be saying that if one is confronting another to prove who is greatest, the one who is confronting is not ready. The second paragraph (vs. 5-9) suggests that if the confrontation is to tempt another to sin, the one confronting is not ready and more preparation is needed. But the third paragraph (vs. 10-14) suggests that if one is confronting for the purpose of regaining a brother/sister as the shepherd who looked for the lost sheep (most likely a rowdy, difficult and wayward ram) to restore *shalom*, then one is ready for confrontation. One is ready when love-*agape*, a commitment to be constructive, has been clarified.<sup>4</sup>

Matt. 18:15-17 describes a process of constructive escalation. The caring confrontation starts between just the two. If one on one confrontation does not bring about hearing or understanding (it doesn't say agreement although hearing and understanding are often the first step toward agreement) then the one who was sinned against is instructed to take others along, again the purpose is for hearing or understanding. If it still hasn't happened, then the one is instructed to tell it to the church (it seems like the group size is increased to increase the likelihood of listening and understanding) and finally if there is still no listening even in that context, the instruction is to "let them be to you as Gentile or tax collector." It is important to remember that the entire last part of this whole chapter is about forgiveness and reconciliation when sin or separation has occurred. For Jesus' audience, a Gentile and tax collector were clearly outsiders. What is often misunderstood is that for Jesus to instruct people to treat a person as a Gentile or tax collector would mean to be very respectful with them and continue to invite conversation and listening if they are willing. It would

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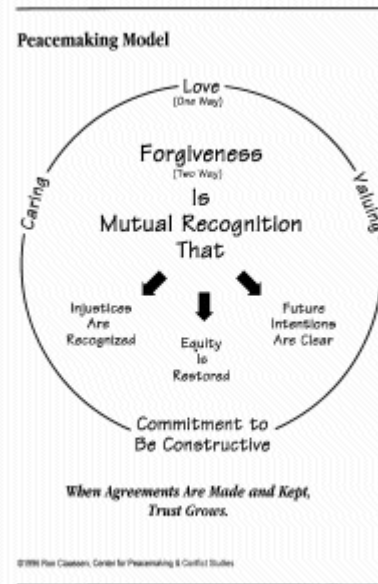
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<sup>4</sup> Ron Claassen "Matthew 18," Basic Institute Manual, 1991. p156.

even include inviting yourself into their home as Jesus modeled with Zacchaeus (Luke 19).

The 70x7 speaks to the openness to and persistence of inviting a forgiveness process. It is very possible that Jesus consciously chose this phrase to reverse the ideas expressed by Lamech that would have been well known to Jesus' audience. Lamech (Gen 4.24) bragged about his revenge and used the 70x7 to express his preference for unlimited revenge. Jesus now suggests that Lamech used his energy in the wrong direction. But the same amount of energy that Lamech put into revenge should be put into working for forgiveness. While 70x7 would have suggested an unlimited energy be devoted to inviting forgiveness, Jesus is not suggesting that forgiveness could be or should be forced on anyone.

Lk 17.3,4: <sup>3</sup>Be on your guard! If another disciple sins, you must rebuke the offender, and if there is repentance, you must forgive. <sup>4</sup>And if the same person sins against you seven times a day, and turns back to you seven times and says, "I repent," you must forgive.'



This instruction is preceded by a caution to monitor how one approaches the rebuke to be sure it is not tempting another to sin. Notice the if/then form of the instruction "if the person repents...then... forgive..."

Jesus was not saying to his disciples that they must simply forgive anyone who harms them but rather they must forgive those who repent. To repent means to change one's mind and to turn, not simply to have regret or remorse for a wrong that was committed. "Repentance" would relate to the "clarifying future intentions" in the Peacemaking Model. When repentance is accompanied with regret it is also an indication of confession or of "recognizing the injustice." To forgive those who have not confessed and repented would be to attempt to force them into forgiveness when they are not ready or wanting forgiveness. (Think about how you feel if someone, even a good friend, just says to you, I forgive you, without any further clarification. What do you think? Are you glad or insulted or confused? Is there a difference if they would say they want to be constructive with you, love-agape, and then clarified the situation?) An assumption Jesus is making before giving this instruction to forgive or not forgive is a prior instruction to love-agape the one who is the offender, whether or not they have repented. While love-agape is for everyone, forgiveness is for those who repent. Just as God is always ready to enter forgiveness with those who "confess" and "repent," it is also clear that those who follow Jesus will always be open to the forgiveness process.

Colossians 3: 11-13 <sup>11</sup>In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all! <sup>12</sup> As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. <sup>13</sup> Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <sup>14</sup> Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

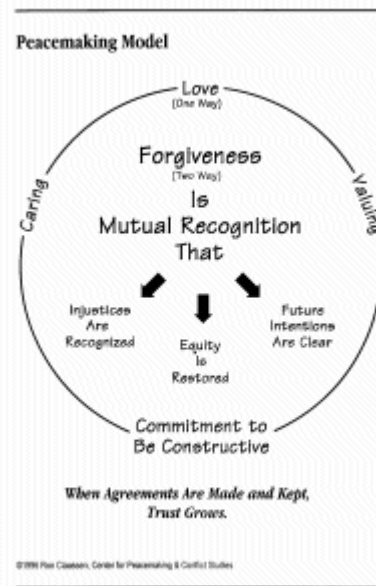
Paul is instructing those in Colossae that the forgiveness process is not reserved for those who are like you in ethnicity, religion, national origin, or economic status. If one has a complaint, it is the ongoing responsibility of everyone involved in the conflict to demonstrate love-*agape* with the others. It is love-*agape* that is "binds everything together in perfect (*unlimited or unbounded*) harmony."

Paul's instruction when someone brings a complaint is to "forgive each other, as the Lord has forgiven you." "Forgive **each other**" clarifies the need for "mutual recognition" as described in the Peacemaking Model. "As the Lord has forgiven" indicates that our forgiveness with others is to be modeled after God's forgiveness with us. So it is important to look at forgiveness with God

I John 1.9 <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

God's forgiveness is clearly a two-way, if/then, mutual recognition process. If we confess (recognize the injustice), then God does not require any restitution. Equity is Restored entirely through grace. There is an expectation of change (Repentance - Clarify Future Intentions) and God helps with that, "cleanses us from all unrighteousness." To forgive as God forgives, we have a responsibility to help each other make the changes necessary to live in a new way that does not repeat the injustice. If we confess (recognize the injustice) and repent (turn from unrighteousness) then God is faithful and just and we can be assured that atonement (restoring equity) with God does not require any restitution on our part as the one who offended.

Romans 3:24 <sup>23</sup>since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; <sup>24</sup>they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup>whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith.

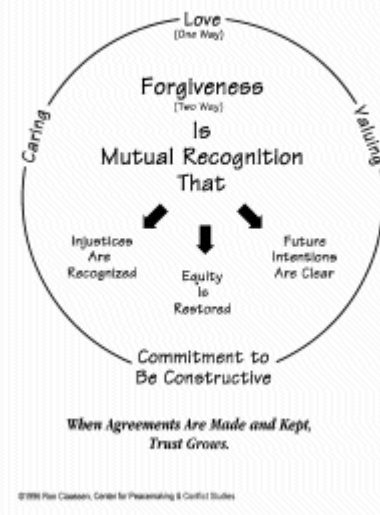


Romans 5:2 Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>2</sup> through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand...

Through the life and teachings of Jesus, which lead to his death and resurrection, we are assured that there is no restitution due. In our relationship with God, Equity is Restored entirely through grace. To forgive as God forgives would seem to suggest that one would not accept restitution. However, there are many examples of restitution, at least openness to paying restitution on the part of the offender, being an important part of restoring equity in relationships.

Luke 19: 1-10 He entered Jericho and was passing through it.<sup>2</sup> A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich.<sup>3</sup> He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature.<sup>4</sup> So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way.<sup>5</sup> When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.'<sup>6</sup> So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him.<sup>7</sup> All who saw it began to grumble and said, 'He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.'<sup>8</sup> Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.'<sup>9</sup> Then Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham.'<sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.'

Peacemaking Model



Jesus modeled for his disciples how to think about and be in relationship with Gentiles and Tax Collectors, people who were despised and rejected by many people including the religious leaders. Jesus started by doing the unthinkable. He initiated going to Zacchaeus' house to stay with him. This was a clear demonstration of caring for and valuing Zacchaeus. I suspect there was more conversation than what we have recorded but it is clear that because of Jesus' presence and their developing relationship, Zacchaeus recognized the injustice (confession) that he had perpetrated on many people, both in hoarding his wealth and in how he received it. He immediately offered restitution (part of what would be needed for restoring equity - atonement) and a genuine commitment to do things different in the future (repentance). And Jesus acknowledged his confession, restitution offer, and clarification of future intentions and although it was

not completed with those he had defrauded, named the forgiveness that was discovered in their relationship. Jesus used the occasion to redefine the title of Son of Abraham (claimed by Jews, Muslims, and Christians). Jesus said the title actually belongs to all who live in right and just relationships with God and neighbor. The title is not a birthright. Jesus' teachings emphasize how important is it to live in right relationships (peace-*shalom*).

Matt 5 23,24: <sup>23</sup>So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, <sup>i</sup> <sup>24</sup>leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.

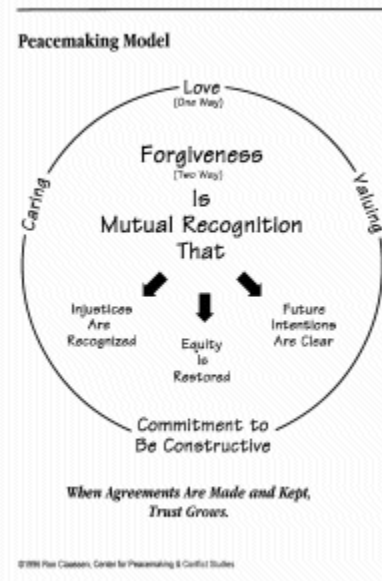
The importance of a two-way, mutual peacemaking process is clear. Jesus did not say, "if you remember an injustice, pronounce or claim forgiveness and then go ahead and worship." Jesus said "go; first be reconciled" and then you will be ready for worship again. The reason for going is because forgiveness cannot be done alone.

## A Case Study

An example of both anti-*Shalom* and of *Shalom*-making is presented in Luke 15: 11-32. I think it is also a helpful illustration of the distinction between love-*agape* and forgiveness as well as an example of the other elements of the Peacemaking Model. It is referred to as the story of the Prodigal Son.

Luke 15:11, 12 Then Jesus said, ‘There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup>The younger of them said to his father, ‘‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’’ So he divided his property between them. <sup>13</sup>A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living.

Asking for his inheritance was like asking for his father's death. In addition this heartless and thoughtless act of anti-*shalom* had to have wreaked havoc on family relationships, their financial status and maybe even their ability to continue to their work. They would have had to make many adjustments and work through hard times to recover. The patriarch's elder son stayed with him and helped do the hard work to make this possible. Then the younger son, who had squandered his inheritance and now found himself living in squalor, remembered his family and how his father treated his hired men and decided he would return and ask to be a hired servant.



Lk 15:20 <sup>20</sup>So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.

What an amazing demonstration of love-*agape*! His son had treated him very, very poorly and the father continued to love-*agape* him. The story gives the impression he was watching and hoping for his return and when he saw him he ran to welcome him. He made it clear that his commitment was to be constructive, even though he did not yet know how his son would respond. This welcome was not based on anything the son had done to merit or deserve it. The father was guided by his vision of *shalom*. He started the *shalom*-making by his amazing demonstration of love-*agape*. Even though his son had hurt him and his family deeply, he demonstrated love-*agape*, the first step toward restoring peace-*shalom*. In the Peacemaking Model, this initial step is illustrated by the circle that surrounds the process that leads to forgiveness.

Lk 15: 21 <sup>21</sup>Then the son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.”

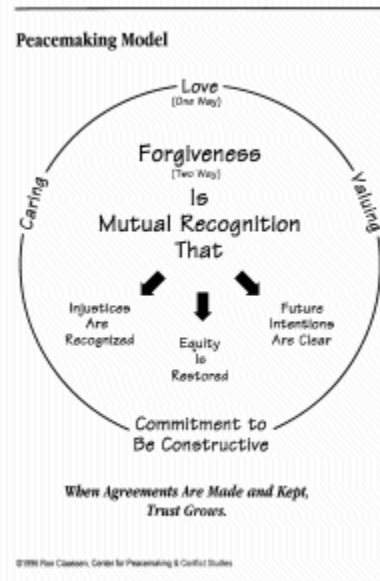
The son and his father, mutually recognized the injustice, one of the core elements in the Peacemaking Model and one essential step in the movement toward forgiveness.

Lk 15: 22 <sup>22</sup>But the father said to his slaves, “Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup>And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate;

What a remarkable demonstration of grace! One of the core elements in the process toward the forgiveness, as illustrated in the Peacemaking Model is called restoring equity, and as illustrated earlier, this restoring equity is always some combination of restitution and grace. The father makes it clear to the son that he doesn't owe him anything to again be his son. Equity is restored entirely through grace. The offer the son intended to make was genuine and most likely understood by the father and not needed.

Lk 15: 18,19 <sup>18</sup>I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; <sup>19</sup>I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.’”

The son intended to offer to work as a hired hand for his father. From that intention and his comments upon his return, it would appear that he made a significant

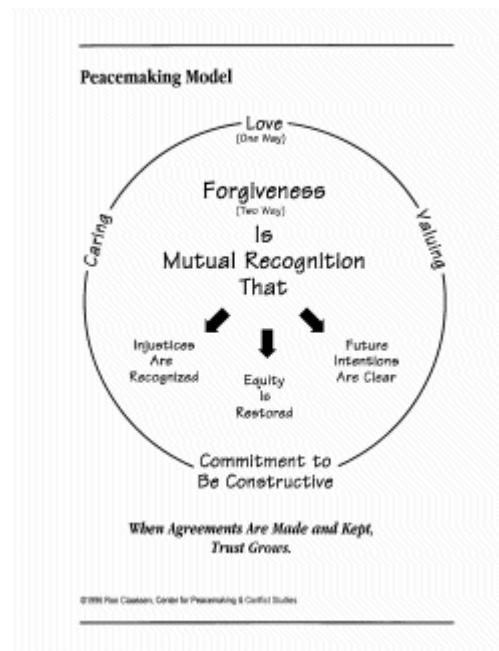


turning in his life and that he would not treat his father as he did before. While the Future Intentions are not spelled out, there seems to be a mutual recognition of the turning and a commitment to a new direction. So it would seem that considerable progress has been made toward forgiveness in the relationship between father and younger son.

The father is so happy about the return that he throws a big celebration. But the elder son is having some different feelings. The anti-*shalom* acts, the injustices of the younger son, affected more than just the father. They also had a major impact on the elder son. The elder son experienced the celebration as a significant injustice toward him. Now the relationship between the father and elder son is damaged.

Lk 15:25 <sup>25</sup>‘Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing.

Lk 15:28-30 <sup>28</sup>Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. <sup>29</sup>But he answered his father, “Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup>But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!”



The elder son had been hurt deeply by the acts of the younger son and now by his father. He thought it was very unfair of his father to celebrate this return and especially in this extravagant way. Perhaps he was thinking, as many who are victims of injustice think, he needs to be punished. He might have been thinking, he hurt us and now he needs to experience being hurt. Whatever he was thinking his father responds to him in an amazing way. First, he goes out to meet him, just as he did with the younger son. The father demonstrated his commitment to be constructive by being patient, and kind and listening to the elder son instead of denouncing his anger. In this way the father provided another demonstration of love-*agape*, clearly motivated and guided by his vision of *shalom*. The father listened to his elder son's feelings and experiences of injustice and then he let him know that he had been heard. The father's response recognized his elder son's loyalty in staying with him and clarified what was probably an unspoken but understood angry demand. He clarified the fair starting point in the negotiation that had to eventually take place.

Lk 15:31 <sup>31</sup>Then the father said to him, “Son, you are always with me, and **all** that is mine is yours.



Father and elder son mutually recognized the injustice, restored equity, and clarified the future intentions between them. While we don't know what happened, based on these exchanges I would guess that the father and elder son experienced forgiveness between them.

The relationship that the story does not address is the elder son and the younger son. Because all that belonged to the father is now the elder son's it will be very important for them to work through the Peacemaking Model to establish a new creation between them. In addition to recognizing the injustices, some difficult negotiations would have to take place regarding restoring equity and clarifying their future intentions. Even if they both decided to be constructive together, forgiveness would have to wait a little longer until the negotiations were completed. Unfortunately we don't have the rest of the story.

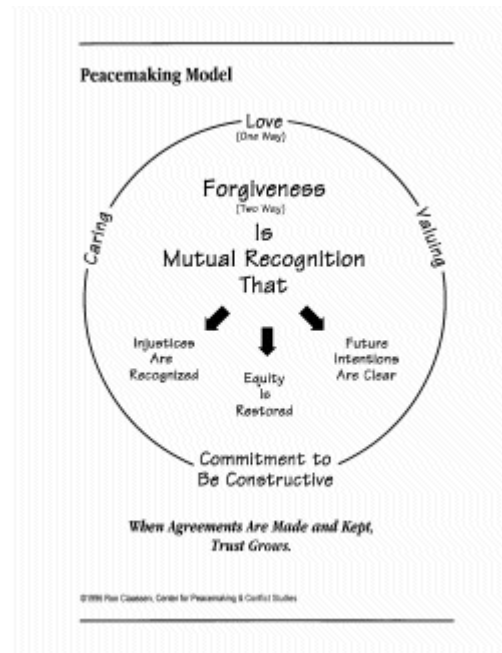
The story would suggest that the father is likely to be a mediator in this situation. Based on his past constructive action we would anticipate his continued constructive action, love-*agape*. He would surely invite the younger and elder son to join him in being constructive (*agape*) and invite them to enter a forgiveness process between them. If in the forgiveness process some agreements are made, and if those agreement are kept, trust will grow. And as trust grows, reconciliation and shalom will be experienced.

What a wonder story of victim offender reconciliation. It is a story in which the father was guided by the vision of shalom. Henri Nouwen suggests that the point of the story is that all people who love God are being invited to act like this father, especially when they are offended.<sup>5</sup>

## Conclusion

This article, a companion to "A Peacemaking Model," is intended to illustrate the close relationship between the *shalom*-making process taught and illustrated in the biblical text and the stories of reconciliation I have observed and heard. I believe that they are so similar because God is our creator and sustainer.

The Peacemaking Model is simply intended to illustrate the way that people make peace between them or with God. It illustrates that peacemaking (*shalom*-making) is a process that includes love-*agape* and forgiveness. The basis for the two-way process of forgiveness is one-way love-*agape*. The vision of *shalom* encourages that love-*agape* is



<sup>5</sup> Henri Nouwen, The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming. (New York: Doubleday, 1992) p. 123.

extended to everyone, even the enemy. This one-way extending of love-*agape* creates the safe space where people are not afraid of being hurt or destroyed. Then substantial effort is expended demonstrate and make this safe space visible while invitations are extended to enter a two-way forgiveness process. Forgiveness is discovered when the injustices are recognized (confession), equity is restored (atonement through restitution and/or grace) and genuine commitments are made to turn and clarify future intentions (repentance). To the extent this process is completed, forgiveness is realized. As the agreements are made in the forgiveness process and are kept, trust grows and reconciliation will be experienced. If participants are unwilling to make agreements or if agreements are made and not kept, trust goes down.

It was the vision of shalom that motivated me to begin the search for a Peacemaking pattern in the early eighties. It is the vision of shalom and the encouragement of many people that motivated me to share the Peacemaking Model in this form. My hope is that it will contribute to a dialog that will help our world move in the direction of the vision of *shalom*.