

ARMOR



GROUP STUDY



ARMOR: Group Study

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Week 7: The Shoes of Peace

15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

1. PRAY

This week we focus on fitting our feet with the Gospel of Peace. We want to start this vGroup session praying for peace. However, we want to clarify because, as believers, we find we pray mostly for peace when we need it or don't have it momentarily. Paul is speaking here for a lasting peace, and a people defined by their peace. We urge you to open in prayer for the Spirit's lasting peace that fits our entire person like shoes for every journey, movement, or daily task.

2. SHARE

Let's start this week by sharing experiences when we have prayed for temporary peace or when we were desperate for peace and had none. This can clarify entire seasons of our lives or moments we have had in the past week. Each share is welcome because it will help give purpose to our opening prayer. Feel free to spend some time here, peace is often sought quickly and briefly, but so easily lost, forgotten, and given away. This week we are really hoping to explore peace. This starts with sharing moments where we as believers willingly gave away the Lord's peace, which he gave to us. Lets also ask questions that may help the sharers explore where they gave away their peace. This time has the power to be extremely rich and uplifting, especially to long time believers.

3. STUDY

The language Paul uses is that our "feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace." (Eph 6:15). First, we will inquire why this piece of armour is the only one in the entire catalogue that is "fitted". I believe this gets at Paul's inclination that the peace he speaks of, the peace that flows from the Gospel, and the peace he has had and gone without, has an enduring quality. We don't take time to fit something, if it is fleeting or momentary. So, Paul isn't describing the peace we need when we are so frustrated that we want to ring someone's neck.

Someone read Philippians 4:6-7.

Paul is speaking of the same peace he would later describe in his letter to the Philippians as “transcending all understanding” and “guarding your hearts and your minds” (4:7). This should challenge almost every believer who gives their peace away so quickly, and every non believer who desires peace! We, as Christians, know the source of enduring peace, peace you can wear as armour, peace that guards and protects. The question is “Are we going to give it to them?”

Take some time in your groups this week:

- How would you define peace?
- How does it conflict with Paul’s use here?
- How can we change it?

It is important to clarify the differences between worldly definitions of peace, common definitions, and the **Peace of God**. This exercise, hopefully, makes us blatantly aware that the differences are quite large!

We are going to dig into an Old Testament story whose main character does a great job of helping us redefine peace. The book of Esther is notorious for being one of two books in the entire Biblical narrative that never mentions God. Although, there is still so much to learn about Esther and how her peace is fitted to her at key moments and grows as the story goes on and on.

A bit of background into the situation before we read from the book of Esther. The book opens with a great king of Persia and Media throwing a banquet to highlight his own glory and splendor. The first chapter ends with his pride leading him to dismiss his queen and search for another. This is the situation that we find Esther entering the mix to be a candidate for the next queen. Someone in your vGroup read Esther 2:5-18. There is a major contrast that runs through this entire passage. Esther from the onset seems to have a quality the other girls lack.

- First, Esther has a quality that all the other girls lack, which Hegai recognizes
- Second, Esther takes nothing unlike all the other girls
- Third, the king recognizes Esther as greater than all the other girls

Take a minute to respond among your group whether people immediately notice there is something different about you. It is unavoidable in Esther's story from the onset that there was something drastically different about her. Next, we fast forward into the story. The king has been duped into giving a decree to essentially wipe the Jews out. Esther, who is a Jew, is distressed and word has reached her that her uncle is majorly distressed. Someone in your group read Esther 4:4-17. I know most people in the group are scratching their head because we wouldn't say she exhibits peace. I would implore you to consider your new definition of peace, not rethink Esther's story.

We have to know that Esther would probably face death doing what her Uncle suggested. You couldn't approach the king unless summoned and going unsummoned was punishable by death. Lets consider the verses we have seen from Paul with Esther's story.

- Does Esther's heart seem to be **guarded** from fear of death that would prevent her from appearing before the king?
- Does Esther's peace seem already **fitted and ready** or does she seek it out?
- Does Mordecai's **understanding** of her being in a role for a time such as this seem from God?

I would assume most people before this study wouldn't have attributed Esther with peace in this situation. I would challenge you through tonight's study to re-define peace in a Biblical way for your life.

4. RESPOND

We would challenge every person in the group, as we close, to clarify and share 2-3 aspects of Biblical peace. They have forgotten or learned for the first time. We will respond this week by sharing how we will specifically implement these in our lives. Christian's are supposed to be easily identifiable by an aspect of their character that Paul clarifies as Biblical peace that comes from God for the people of God. So, lets respond by putting on Biblical peace. This can be a slow and sanctifying process, but lets start this week!