

# PEACE

## THE LESSON: GENESIS 4 + JAMES 3

*To give to all nations unity, peace, and concord,  
that they may serve thee without fear,  
We beseech thee, good Lord.*

Ever since humanity rebelled in Eden, there has been violence and conflict on the earth. When we disobeyed God we broke the peace that had existed, and our relationships with him and each other have borne the consequences.

The world is marked by the absence of peace, and it is hostile to Jesus and those who follow him. Jesus said to his disciples, “In the world you will have tribulation” (John 16:33). He has given us inner peace and peace with God, yet we know life in this world will not be smooth sailing. In spite of this, we are called to be at peace with others “so far as it depends on you” (Romans 12:18), and to pray for the leaders of the world, so that “we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way” (1 Timothy 2:2).

At the same time, we remember that we are citizens of the kingdom of heaven and we pray with longing for that kingdom to come. But for now, we do what we can to work for peace, remembering that Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9).

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Genesis tells us that Adam and Eve had two sons after being expelled from Eden. It took only one generation for the disobedience of that first sin to devolve into murder. Take a look.

## AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

THE WEEKLY “AT-HOME CHALLENGE” IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

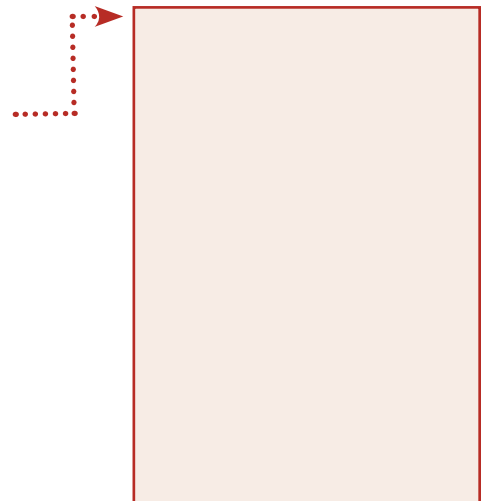
*During this unit, we’re going to focus our prayers on specific people in our world.*

Each day this week, take time to pray for each of the names on your group’s list. Ask God to bring his peace into these situations and areas and to bless the efforts of those who are actively working to make that happen.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this prayer.

*Almighty Lord and everlasting Father, who wouldst have the kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of thy Son Jesus Christ: Bestow thy blessing, we beseech thee, upon all who labour for peace and righteousness among the nations, that the day may be hastened when war shall be no more, and thou shalt take the nations for thine inheritance; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.* (COLLECT FOR ADVENT EMBER DAYS, BCP PAGE 100)



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## GENESIS 4 + JAMES 3: **A CASE STUDY IN CONFLICT**

**(GENESIS 4):** <sup>3</sup>In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, <sup>4</sup>and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup>but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. <sup>6</sup>The Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? <sup>7</sup>If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.”

<sup>8</sup>Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. <sup>9</sup>Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?” <sup>10</sup>And the Lord said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground...”

**(JAMES 3):** <sup>16</sup>For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. <sup>17</sup>But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. <sup>18</sup>And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.