

KAREN  
KINGSBURY

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# THE BAXTERS

*Devotional*

30 Timeless Truths from Your  
Favorite Fictional Family



*THE BAXTERS DEVOTIONAL*  
*30 Timeless Truths from Your Favorite Fictional Family*  
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# Peacemakers Are Thankful

Baxter Book: *Redemption*  
TV SHOW: SEASON 1, EPISODE 8

*Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
his love endures forever.*

—I CHRONICLES 16:34

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THANKSGIVING IS a sacred time for the Baxter family—and for mine. A time when we gather around the table and share the moments and miracles, happenings and highlights, of the past year. But holidays—even family-oriented ones like Thanksgiving—often come with a heightened sense of expectation and tension.

John Baxter is one of my favorite characters because he knows how to focus his family on the goodness of God rather than on the often uncomfortable differences in the people he loves. In season 1, my favorite line from John is when he gently says, “Okay, now. Let’s try to be calm,

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here.” That sums up this godly patriarch, the man this family looks to in all situations.

No, he is not perfect. But John *is* a peacemaker—always—and he needs to be on this particular Thanksgiving. First, Ashley shows up late, which irritates her siblings. They’re very aware that she is rarely on time. The way the rest of the young Baxters see it, Ashley doesn’t make family a priority the way they do.

As Ashley sits down at the table, Luke directs a few rude remarks to her. Awkward silence follows, but only for a moment. Always the peacemaker, John breaks the tension first. He smiles at Ashley and tells her she’s welcome whenever she wants to be there, and that all of the children in the family are always welcome.

Then he thanks God for each of them.

This isn’t the first time we’ve seen John step in as peacemaker. When Kari moved home for a while after Tim’s affair, John was the first one to truly listen to her. The one who did his best to understand where she was coming from and why she wanted to stay with her husband.

In relationships, it’s easy to spout off our thoughts without thinking them through. We can make a rash decision to snap back or get the final word. Always, our human nature wants to be right when a disagreement arises. In fact, the enemy of our souls waits for an opportune time to strike, and suddenly we find ourselves stirring up conflict with the very people we love most—all

## PEACEMAKERS ARE THANKFUL

in the name of “fairness,” or because we disapprove of something the other person said or did. Whether that irritation was momentary or something that built up over time, often it’s better to wait before speaking. Remember the goodness of God, thank Him, and pray about your response. In doing so, you will become a peacemaker in a volatile situation.

In our anger we can act in some pretty out-of-character ways. Look at what Ashley does next. She leaves the family’s Thanksgiving dinner and meets up with Ryan Taylor, her sister Kari’s former boyfriend. And before either of them knows what’s happening, they’re kissing.

See how it works? Impulsive, angry words beget impulsive, unbecoming actions, and in moments like these, we often make decisions we can’t undo.

This is why planning ahead to be a peacemaker is so important.

Proverbs 15:1 says, “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” I know I’ve seen that play out in my own life.

My mom was the peacemaker when my siblings and I were growing up. Five of us kids and our parents lived in a small house, and regularly one of us would become upset with another. What did my mom do about it? She simply spoke peace into the situation. Sometimes that made me even more upset, because I had been looking for an ally, someone to understand my struggle and take my side.

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But my mom wasn't looking for what was fair or right. She had no interest in who was at fault and who was not. She only wanted us to love God and love each other.

Jesus was the ultimate peacemaker. On several occasions we see His disciples arguing among themselves over which of them was the greatest. I can only imagine these conversations.

Each time, Jesus stops their fighting and reminds them what greatness truly means. How the greatest will be like a little child, and the one who leads will be the one who serves. Jesus tells them not to be like the Jewish leaders who wield power over others with arrogance and superiority. Rather, Jesus stresses the importance of enduring love, explaining how the first shall be last and the last shall be first.

We don't know how those words went over with Jesus' friends, whether they were troubled by this instruction, or whether some of them felt unheard. "Not my fault," they might have mumbled to themselves. Or, "I didn't start this." But much like John Baxter or my mom, Jesus wanted His disciples to get along. As the greatest Peacemaker who ever lived, He constantly pushed His followers to live at peace with each other. More than that, He wanted them to become peacemakers in their own right.

And that's what God wants for you too.

## PEACEMAKERS ARE THANKFUL

### *What about You?*

1. How does gratitude for God lead to being a peacemaker?
2. In what way can you be a peacemaker today?
3. Why do you think it's important to Jesus that we act as peacemakers? Why is being a peacemaker more important than being right as we live out the love of Christ?

### *Going Deeper*

What do these Bible verses teach you about bringing peace to a situation?

- 1 Corinthians 13:4-5
- Philippians 2:4
- James 1:19
- Galatians 6:2
- 1 Chronicles 16:34

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### *Hide It in Your Heart*

We do a better job handling the Word of God when we tuck it deep in the fabric of our hearts. Read Matthew 5:9. This verse will remind you of the calling on your life not only to live at peace with others but to be a peacemaker.

- Why do you think Jesus called peacemakers “blessed”?
- What does being a peacemaker have to do with being a child of God?
- This Bible verse is at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, one of Jesus’ first recorded full-length teachings. How are the attributes of those blessed by Jesus different from what the world would expect, then and now?

### *Learning from the Baxters*

1. What did you learn from this part of *The Baxters*?
2. What surprised you or challenged you?
3. How can you apply this to your life?