

Romans 12:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Analysis

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. This verse balances realism with responsibility. **If it be possible** (εἰ δυνατόν, ei dynaton) acknowledges that peace isn't always achievable—some people refuse reconciliation, some conflicts can't be resolved this side of glory. Jesus warned, 'I came not to send peace, but a sword' (Matthew 10:34), meaning gospel truth sometimes divides. Yet Paul qualifies: **as much as lieth in you** (τὸ ἐξ ὑμῶν, to ex hymōn), literally 'the part from you'—your responsibility is to pursue peace to the limit of your ability. You can't control others' responses, but you can control your own peacemaking initiative.

The goal is **live peaceably with all men** (μετὰ πάντων ἀνθρώπων εἰρηνεύοντες, meta pantōn anthrōpōn eirēneuontes). Eirēnē (peace) in Hebrew thought (shalom) means comprehensive flourishing, not merely absence of conflict. 'All men' includes fellow believers (verse 16), persecutors (verse 14), and everyone in between. This doesn't mean compromise on gospel truth or passive tolerance of evil, but relentless pursuit of reconciliation where conscience allows. Jesus is our model: he lived at peace with all people while speaking prophetic truth and enduring their hostility.

Historical Context

Rome prided itself on the Pax Romana (Roman Peace), maintained through military dominance and political coercion. Paul envisions a different peace—gospel-shaped

reconciliation flowing from hearts transformed by Christ. Jewish-Gentile tensions simmered in the Roman church over dietary laws and holy days (Romans 14-15). Believers needed to pursue peace across ethnic and theological differences without sacrificing truth. Martyrdom was approaching under Nero, yet Paul called Christians to peacemaking, not violent resistance or passive resentment.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. In which relationships have you given up on peace prematurely, and where is God calling you to fresh peacemaking initiative?
2. How do you balance 'living peaceably' with speaking necessary truth that may provoke conflict?
3. What does it mean that peace is 'as much as lieth in you'—where are you responsible, and where must you entrust outcomes to God?

Interlinear Text

εἰ	δυνατόν	τὸ	ἐξ	ὑμῶν	μετὰ	πάντων
If	it be possible	G3588	as much as lieth in	you	with	all
G1487	G1415		G1537	G5216	G3326	G3956
ἀνθρώπων	εἰρηνεύοντες					
men	live peaceably					
G444	G1514					

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 12:14 (Peace): Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

Romans 14:19 (Peace): Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

Matthew 5:9 (Peace): Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

2 Corinthians 13:11 (Peace): Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

Galatians 5:22 (Peace): But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

Mark 9:50 (Peace): Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltiness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

Proverbs 12:20 (Peace): Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellors of peace is joy.

1 Peter 3:11 (Peace): Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

2 Timothy 2:22 (Peace): Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Psalms 34:14 (Peace): Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

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