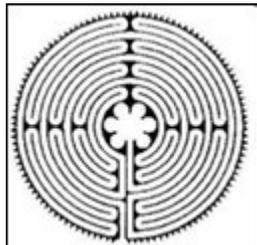


Shalom Blessing

“The Lord bless you
and keep you;
The Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn her face toward you
and give you *shalom*.”

-Numbers 6

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North Valley Friends Trail

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Steps Into Shalom:

Walking Toward Right Relationship with God,
Self, Others, and Creation



“Blessed are the shalom-makers.”

-Jesus

There is a universal human longing, spanning across many cultures and religions, for a renewed world. We see the world as it is, but hope and pray for the world as it should be. Different cultures have different language for this longing, but the biblical tradition of Christianity draws from the Hebrew vision of *shalom*.

Shalom is translated as “peace,” but it is much larger than the absence of conflict. Shalom imagines and calls forth the world that God intended. It is about the restoration of right relationship: with God, self, others, and creation. It could also be described as:

- well-being
- harmony
- wholeness
- abundance
- justice



As you walk the path, you are invited to stop at each pole and use these reflections to consider how we can pray for and practice shalom.

“Shalom is the substance of the biblical vision of one community embracing all creation. It refers to all those resources and factors which make communal harmony joyous and effective.”

-Walter Brueggemann

Stops Ten—Twelve: Right Relationship with Creation

“The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;
and a little child will lead them.”

-Isaiah 11

Stop Ten: Lions, Leopards, and Lambs

God’s concern is not only human life but for all life and all creation. Shalom calls us to right relationship with the earth. Our relationship with creation is broken and global wholeness requires a new balance and healing.

Query: How has our relationship with creation been distorted?

Stop Eleven: Living With

In this prophetic vision, the wolf learns to “live with” the lamb. In God’s kingdom, enemies are reconciled and the ecology of every person and creature is honored. Shalom envisions an order where we live together in harmony and interdependence.

Query: What would a new ecological order of shalom look like?

Stop Twelve: Laying Down

In shalom, diverse and competing creatures can “lie down” together in harmony. Humans and animals alike can rest in peace and satisfaction at the restorative activity of God.

Query: What is the connection between rest and restoration?

Stops Seven-Nine: Right Relationship with Others

“Seek the *shalom* and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers [*shalom*], you too will prosper [*shalom*].” -Jeremiah 29

Stop Seven: Shalom in the City

In a culture of individualism, we often think of wholeness as being for individuals. Yet God is deeply concerned about the shalom of communities, societies, and all human systems. God calls us to work toward the shalom of our neighbors and cities.

Query: What would shalom look like for your home, workplace, neighborhood, or city?

Stop Eight: Exile and Prosperity

God called God’s people to work for shalom even while they were in exile. The purposes of God are not only for our prosperity but for the prosperity of the “other.” God’s abundant blessing is not shalom until it flows through us out to others.

Query: How has God’s blessing flowed through you for the prosperity of others?

Stop Nine: Shalom and the Common Good

Shalom is connected to the African concept of “Ubuntu,” which suggests that our humanity is caught up in the humanity of others. This passage reminds us that our shalom is discovered in the shalom of others.

Query: How can we live out Ubuntu and shalom in the way we relate to our friends and neighbors?

Stops One—Three: Right Relationship with God

“I am the Lord your God,
who teaches you what is best for you,
who directs you in the way you should go.
If only you had paid attention to my commands,
your *shalom* would have been like a river,
your well-being like the waves of the sea.”

-Isaiah 48

Stop One: If Only

Do you hear the longing in this prophetic text? God longs to release the river of shalom into our hearts, lives, and systems. Yet God waits for our cooperation and openness. God says to us “if only...” When our relationship to God is restored to mutuality and partnership, joy and well-being are released.

Query: What would it look like if God could release shalom in our lives and in the world?

Stop Two: Pay Attention

This passage suggests that God’s shalom is released when we “pay attention” to God’s ways. Paying attention is an important way to restore our relationship with God. Yet we are so busy and distracted that we often miss God’s presence and activity in our lives.

Query: What practices help you “pay attention” to God’s movement in your life?

Stop Three: Teaching and Direction

This text describes God's people as those who are led and directed by God. If we listen and respond, God leads and directs us into good places and right paths. When we follow our own way, we are often coerced onto paths of distraction and destruction.

Query: How have you been taught or directed by God?

Stops Four - Six: Right Relationship with Self

"The fruit of that righteousness will be *shalom*;
its effect will be quietness and confidence forever.
My people will live in dwelling places of *shalom*,
in secure homes,
in undisturbed places of rest.
Though hail flattens the forest
and the city is leveled completely,
how blessed you will be,
sowing your seed by every stream,
and letting your cattle and donkeys range free."

-Isaiah 32

Stop Four: Secure Homes

Life is complicated and often painful; we cannot count on unending ease and happiness. Our peace is not dependent on perfect circumstances; we must find a secure, centered space in God-a "secure home."

Query: How have you experienced the security of shalom in difficult circumstances?

Stop Five: Dwelling Places

God's longing is not for shalom to be an occasional encounter, but a "dwelling place" for each person and all people. Restoring right relationship with self involves learning how to dwell graciously in our own bodies, with our own personalities, and our own stories. Only when we integrate our inner and outer lives can we truly "live in dwelling places of shalom."

Query: What would it mean for you to live as your true self and dwell in wholeness?

"First keep peace with yourself, then you can also bring peace to others"

-Thomas A Kempis

Stop Six: Sowing Seeds

The Judeo-Christian creation myth locates humanity in a flourishing garden. Humans were invited to care for and cultivate the earth. Restoring right relationship to self means welcoming our creative capacities and "sowing seeds" of vocational tasks. In God's shalom our sowing will result in fruitful abundance.

Query: How do you fulfill your human vocation by "sowing seeds"?

