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The Problem of Personal Perspective and the Challenge of Embracing God's Universal Truth



The Reverend Dr. Jason Richard Curry is Dean of the Fisk Memorial Chapel at Fisk University. He can be reached at jeurry@fisk.edu or www.fiskmemorialchapel.com.

The record of human civilization bears witness that people have faced and overcome tremendous challenges in political, economic and cultural arenas. For example, African-Americans, Jewish Americans, Asian-Americans and Latino-Americans have successfully overcome many challenges in America in order affirm their humanity and to make invaluable contributions to our American democracy. As the current citizens of the twenty-first century, many of us have become extremely skilled in avoiding conflicts that seek to hurt us in personal or professional arenas. Others have been extremely adept at winning verbal, legal or physical conflicts because loosening these conflicts may have result in the loss of our professional or physical lives. In short, both Christians and non-Christians have become outstanding fighters. We often fight hard and we often fight well! By default or through the direct non-

ing of our skills, many of us have learned to fight well because our very survival depended on it. Not long ago, I talked to a friend of thirty years about an issue that I was having with a colleague. Since she is familiar with my personality as well as "putting on the full armor" as described in Ephesians 6:11-17, she said: "Jason, I know that your colleague is difficult, but are you wearing your shoes of peace today?" We both laughed, and I said: "Yes, I think that I remembered to put them on this morning." Her words reminded me that the ideal of peace should always be a Christian goal. In Matthew 5:9, Jesus said: "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God."

In Ephesians 6:15, Paul says that our feet should be "fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace." It is interesting to note that Paul talks about the necessity of pursuing peace while putting on the "full

armor" in preparation for spiritual warfare. As Christians, we may have the power of overcome challenges and to win battles though fighting; however, in order to have our thoughts and actions acceptable in God's sight, we must use the tools and methods that are acceptable by God. The God that we serve is a God of love, not hate or war. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated that means and ends are inextricably connected. In other words, we must use peaceful means to achieve peaceful ends. In response to the idea of fighting to achieve peace or fighting just to continue war, Jesus said: "Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you (Matthew 5:44)." As we remain committed to embracing Christian values in a world that often minimizes the agape, love-ethic of Jesus the Christ, let us continue to pursue the goal of peace in professional and personal relationships.