

Finding Peace, a Guardian of Our Hearts and Minds

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Introduction: God pleads with us to pursue things that allow *His power to work in us*.

- A. We often take on things that only will bring us painful failures. God has given us conditional promises that will always bring success. **(1 Thess 2:13; Phil 2:12-13)**
 - 1. Trusting God's way is a great challenge when we are constantly taught the world's way!
 - 2. When we consider the subject of peace, the world will have a false definition and false ways to find "peace." Let us listen to God. **(Jer 6:14)**
- B. God identifies Himself as "the God of peace" four times in the New Testament. **(Rom 16:20)**
 - 1. Peace is found in the fruit of the Spirit. **(Gal 5:22-23)**
 - 2. When we come to know God and His nature then peace will become a very precious thing that we will diligently pursue.
 - 3. The key to a long and good life is found when we "seek peace and pursue it."
(1 Pt 3:10-11)

I. Why is God's peace so powerful?

- A. Because it comes from God's nature and is the basis of our relationship with Him.
 - 1. What is "peace?" **Peace** - εἰρήνη, (1) literally, as a state of *peace* (LU 14:32), opposite πόλεμος (*armed conflict, war*); figuratively, as an agreement between persons (JA 3:18), in contrast to διαμερισμός (*division, dissension*); (3) as a religious disposition characterized by inner rest and harmony *peace, freedom from anxiety* (RO 15:13); (4) as a state of reconciliation with God (GA 5:22);....
 - 2. God's very nature seeks to bring all men into a relationship with Himself that results in real purpose and harmony in our lives!
- B. As a holy God He has provided forgiveness so that we might abide in fellowship with Him. **(Rom 5:1; Heb 13:20-21)**
 - 1. God was able to bridge the gap that seemed insurmountable! **(Rom 6:23)**
 - 2. God continues to change us *towards His holiness* as we walk by faith.
 - 3. We point all men toward the Lordship of Jesus Christ where we live a life of claiming His precious promises by faith. **(Acts 10:36; 1 John 1:5-7)**
- C. We now can have a great peace of mind knowing God is with us!
 - 1. We are born again by responding to God's conditional promise!
(1 Pt 3:21 NASV)
 - 2. We continue to be forgiven as we repent and confess to Him!
 - 3. Many struggle with guilt and as a result are weakened by inner conflict. God can give you peace if you will *pursue it*. **(2 Tim 2:22)**
 - 4. Casual people will not pursue holiness and will never find God's peace. Our hearts must be exposed so that our guilt leads to repentance and forgiveness!
(Heb 4:12-13; Jer 6:14-15)

II. How can God's peace produce peace with others?

- A. Here is where our faith in God will put to the test.

1. We cannot change others against their will. When we try we will have misery.
 2. We may dearly want to have peace with others but our loyalty to God will actually cause conflict! **(Mt 10:34-39; Gal 1:10)**
 3. We must want men to be right with God. Until they yield to the Lordship of Jesus there can be no peace with God or His people.
 4. Satan's peace comes through compromise and putting earthly relationships above a relationship with God. Peer pressure is a powerful tool of Satan.
- B. There is a doctrinal core we build which will help others find peace with God. **(1 Pt 3:10-11)**
1. We will seek truth. We will tell the truth.
 2. We will always live by God's truth and not play favoritism.
 3. We will not rejoice in what is wrong. Consider the kind of humor we like!
 4. We will watch our tongues and refrain from gossip. We will not participate!
 5. Worldly people will notice when you live like this!
 6. We will not compromise God's conditional promises to please men. **(Gal 6:12)**

III. How can we have peace within a local church?

- A. We together must pursue holiness and be humbly transformed. **(Heb 12:14-15; Phil 4:9)**
1. Our brothers in Christ will often disappoint and hurt us. Work all problems out!
 2. We must release all desire for vengeance and seek repentance for any sin.
 3. Longsuffering and forgiveness allows us to be free from a terrible burden. **(Eph 4:31-32; 4:1-3)**
- B. We must never assume God's place in working with our brethren.
1. When someone is struggling with personal growth, we need to know our proper place in working with him. **(Rom 14:1-4)**
 2. We must seek justice and mercy as we view others. We cannot read minds and "instinctively" know what another has said or done.
 3. We must watch our tongues. As an example, what should we do when we have knowledge of another's sin? Are we sure? What does the Lord want you to do? **(Lk 17:3)**
 4. We must watch our thoughts! We cannot discard our brethren because our imagination or another's gossip has poisoned our hearts. (Ex. "Oh if you really knew him!" Innuendo is gossip!) **(1 Pt 1:22; 2 Cor 13:11)**

IV. How can God's peace guard our hearts and minds?

- A. We learn to give to God those things which He is to handle! **(Phil 4:6-7)**
1. What silly burdens we often bear that God has not given us.
 2. We lose strength and then become weakened to sin.
 3. When we are fatigued we often lose control of our thoughts.
 4. We need both physical and mental rest. **(Mt 11:28-30)**
- B. A thankful heart will daily remind us of the providential care of God. **(Col 3:15)**
1. Thanksgiving is a choice. What is your decision?
 2. Others will see the Lord in you when you live in the peace of His calling!

Conclusion: Will you take the first step to finding God's peace?