



CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

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PART 5: EXPERIENCING PEACE IN A CRAZY MIXED-UP WORLD

He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. (Eph. 2:17 NIV)

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. (Isa. 26:3 NIV)

A. CENTRAL QUESTION



Jesus said "Don't be anxious for anything..." (Phil. 4:6a). Does Jesus really expect us as Christian believers to live stress-free lives? How is this possible?

Where would you usually put yourself on the following scale?



B. WHAT IS PEACE?

1. Peace (H. *shalom*; Gk. *eirēnē*) is the state of experiencing tranquility, harmony, or security.
2. Peacefulness is the state of being peaceful.
3. The opposite of peace is anxiety and worry
4. Peace is not determined by one's external circumstances (John 14:27, Rom. 8:28; Phil. 4:7, 9).
5. Peace is not the same as peacefulness. It is possible to be in a peaceful environment and still have inner turmoil.

C. THREE KINDS OF PEACE

1. Peace with God. This is spiritual peace — and it's the most important. It affects everything else.

- a) The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:18, "God ... sent Christ to make peace between himself and us" (CEV). God doesn't want us to live disconnected from him.
- b) Peace with God doesn't come from something we do.
- c) Peace with God comes from what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross.

2. Peace of God. The Bible has a word for this: emotional peace. It is peace within.

- a) When I have peace with God, then I get the peace of God inside me.
- b) God wants .
- c) For those with a broken heart, God gives us comforting peace.
- d) For those with a confused heart, he gives us guiding peace.
- e) For those with a shamed heart, he gives us forgiving peace.
- f) When we have a worried heart, he gives us confident peace. He provides peace for every problem.

3. Peace with others. Then the Lord offers relational peace.

- a) The Bible says in Ephesians 2:16, "Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.
- b) The further we are from God, the more our relationships with others are messed up.
- c) If you want to strengthen your relationship with others — like your spouse or your kids — strengthen your relationship with God. It'll pull you together.

D. THREE KEY BENEFITS OF HAVING PEACE

1. I will be able to navigate better through difficult times.

- a) When I have an overwhelming consciousness that my life is in the hands of the sovereign powerful God.
- b) As the Holy Spirit gives me hope (Romans 14:17; 15:13; 1 Thessalonians 1:6).
- c) Because the presence of peace indicates God's blessing on me as I obey him (Isaiah 32:17; Malachi 2:5) and faith (Isaiah 26:3).

2. I will have better long-term health (see WebMD.com).

3. I will be a better testimony to others.

- a) In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matt. 5:16 NIV)
- b) Once God's peace rules in our hearts, we are able to share the good news with others (Isaiah 52:7).

E. HOW CAN I EXPERIENCE PEACE?

1. It comes when I learn to place my trust in God (Isaiah 26:3)

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast because they trust in you. (Isa. 26:3 NIV)

2. It comes when I become more sensitive to the presence or absence of peace in my life.

Let the peace of Christ rule (“be the umpire”) in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. (Colossians 3:15 NIV)

F. WHEN I TRUST GOD AND EXPERIENCE HIS PEACE...

1. I am more **relaxed**.

- a) Rest and relaxation are often an indicator of God's peace for me.
- b) On the flip side, a lack of peace affects my rest.
- c) Peace and rest are connected.
- d) If I'm tense, super agitated, often can't sleep, and my mind seems to be constantly running, prompting an inability to relax, then I'm probably not trusting the Lord.

2. I have a more positive **attitude**.

- a) If I'm at peace with a major issue in my life my attitude will show it.
- b) However, a lack of peace often affects my attitude in a negative way—irritability, impatience, and negativity.
- c) Without God's presence and peace my small problems often become big problems and my attitude takes a turn for the worst.

3. I have a **settled feeling**.

- a) Another indicator is that I “feel” at peace.
- b) I feel like I can trust the outcome, no matter what the results are.
- c) However, a lack of peace is often accompanied by an unsettled feeling...restlessness, I'm simply not able to let the issue go.

4. I am experiencing **genuine joy**.

- a) Simply put, joy is an indicator of peace.
- b) Peace comes when I choose to trust God's goodness rather than in a specific outcome we want.
- c) When I know I can be joyful no matter the outcome, then I know that's peace.¹

¹ Pastor John Warden, Reconciled World, < <https://reconciledworld.org/flourish/4-indicators-of-gods-peace>>.

G. THE BOTTOM LINE



Remember: The **absence or presence of peace** tells us whether you are trusting God or trusting yourself. Colossians 3:15a

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