



“Living in Peace” Pt 4

Paul specified some specific joy related actions throughout chapter four.

- **Stand firm in the Lord 4:1**
- **Harmonize in the Lord 4:2-3**
- **Rejoice in the Lord always 4:4**
- **Cultivate the Gentleness of the Lord 4:5**
- **Cultivate a life of persistent prayer to the Lord 4:6-8**

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-8

There are three basic instructions in this passage leading toward a life of peace.

Cultivate a life of engaging gentleness over unsettling contention.

Cultivate a life of consistent prayer over persistent worry.

Cultivate a life of positive thinking over negative thinking.

The result of following his instructions is God’s supernatural peace guarding our hearts and minds and enabling us to recognize the presence of the God of peace.

Cultivate a life of consistent prayer over persistent worry.

Mandate to eliminate persistent anxiety 4:6a

Be anxious for nothing

Mandate to practice persistent prayer 4:6b

God’s promise to answer persistent prayer with peace 4:7

And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7

The key word here is “peace”. The general sense refers to a state of calm, health, blessing, well-being, quietness, contentment, ease. Both Old and New Testament have the idea of wholeness. It means to join or tie together into a whole; to restore what has been torn apart. The term relates to a broad range of categories. Although it is hard to define, most everyone recognizes its presence. This sense of wellbeing and internal calm can result from a change in circumstance. It can also be a sense of wellbeing and calm despite circumstances.

Peace is not always the result of circumstantial change but perception change regarding the God who has promised to be with us THROUGH any circumstance. God does not always promise to prevent struggle but promises to enable us to go through it. Peace comes from a thinking adjustment. It comes from the realization that God COULD bring deliverance FROM negative circumstances but if not, He promises to enable them to go THROUGH them. Paul revealed one means of restoring calm in chaos or peace in problems.

Stop worrying about anything but **talk to God about everything.** The result?

And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7

I observe three things about this promised peace, sense of calm or wellbeing.

- **It is from God through persistent prayer**
- **It defies human logic.**
- **It stands guard over our heart and mind.**

Paul may not have intended to draw a sharp distinction between heart and mind but indicated the fact that God's peace would have a calming effect on our whole inner being. Peace guarding our thinking and feeling enables us to face whatever threatening things come our way. One of the keys to winning over worry involves renewed perspective.

The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever, for in GOD the LORD, we have an everlasting Rock. Isaiah 26:3-4

The steadfast mind is the mind determined to trust God. The focuses mind enables us to recognize God's presence. Peter indicated that peace increases as our knowledge of God increases.

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 2 Peter 1:2-3

The more uninformed, the more anxious we become. The more informed, the more peaceful we become. Grateful prayer is the product of humble submission to God's work in our lives. Such submission is equal to "walking in the Spirit" which produces the "fruit of the Spirit" which includes not only love and joy but PEACE. Such humble submission is the core of faith. We experience peace through trust in a loving God.

Faith involves submitting to God's work in our lives.

*"Do not let your heart be troubled (anxious); **believe** in God, believe also in Me. John 14:1*

*Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and **peace in believing**, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13*

If genuine trust in God produces peace, it would follow that absence of peace indicates an absence of trust. The Psalmist purposes to trust God no matter what.

God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains quake at its swelling pride. Selah.

"Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah. Psalm 46:1-3, 10-11

Worry indicates doubt concerning God's involvement in our life. Peace is a matter of trust concerning God's involvement in our life. If we truly trust Him we will talk to Him about what worries us. If we truly trust His love for us, we will cast all our care on Him. Both Paul and Peter coupled two concepts together that I believe stand as the foundation for every Christian. They address our greatest longing and need.

We long for blessing **FROM** God and peace **WITH** God and **WITHIN**. Paul began six of his letters with a prayer for GRACE and PEACE to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. He closed letters with another plea for God's peace. The concept of grace has a broad application. The core meaning is favor or blessing apart from personal merit.

It applies to...

A common "grace" on all people. **Common Grace**

But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Matthew 5:44-45

A specific grace related to our salvation. **Saving Grace**

*For by **grace** you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. Ephesians 2:8-9*

A daily grace related to everyday life. **Living Grace**

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*Let us draw near with confidence to the throne of **grace**, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16*

*Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the **grace** being brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:13*

A grace promised though all eternity. **Eternal Grace**
*and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His **grace** in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. Eph 2:6-7*
After salvation, we continue to have a need for grace. We continually long for God's blessing and power to help in our time of need. It is imperative to have a healthy understanding of grace. Paul and Peter's greeting which includes a plea to God for grace and peace to be yours from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ deals with a living grace. He doesn't pray for saving grace since they are already Christians. He is praying for the empowerment and blessing for their daily living. We also long for a calm confident peace in all areas of life realizing that through Christ everything will work together for His glory and our good.

Paul also prayed for a daily peace. This is not only an ongoing grace and peace but an increasing experience.

*May grace and peace be yours in the **fullest measure**. 1 Peter 1:2*

*Grace and peace be **multiplied to you** in the **knowledge** of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true **knowledge** of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 2 Peter 1:2-3*

This indicates that there is always a fuller experience of grace and peace. This tells me it increases through a fuller knowledge of God and Jesus. Everything we need for life and godliness comes from a growing experience of grace and peace.

Our focus has been on God's peace.

- It is from God through persistent prayer and knowledge of Him
- It defies human logic.
- It stands guard over our anxious heart and mind.

God makes it possible to experience this sense of calm and well-being in every aspect of life.

Peace with God

Peace within ourselves

Peace with people

Peace even in difficult times.

Before the fall, interaction in all these realms of life was peaceful. Interaction with God was healthy, peaceful, prosperous, and secure. Adam and Eve lived in perfect love, trust and obedience. There was no ground for fear or worry or insecurity. There was continual open communication between each other and God. There was no ground for Satan's influence. It was a time of peace. The physical world functioned perfectly as designed. No death, disaster, sickness, decay, deterioration. There was perfect health. There was perfect interaction between man and man and man and beast. It was God's original creation and it was good as God declared! It was a perfect peaceful environment. Adam and Eve related as God designed. Absolute vulnerability, no shame, no blame, no selfishness. Perfect communion. Perfect compatibility. Perfect cooperation. The peace of God ruled their relationship. Each functioned to the full capacity of their gifts and carried out responsibility with competence and joyful satisfaction. No depression, no inferiority, no negative feelings. Because everything functioned as designed, it was a time of absolute peace.

That was before disobedience and sin disrupted the peace in every aspect of our world. Disobedience turned peace with God to fear, judgment, shame, cover-up, strained relationship. Protection from the evil one turned to vulnerability and control. Their once peaceful physical environment turned to complete disruption and

deterioration. Fruitfulness and health turned to futility, sickness, disease, pain and the inevitability of physical death. The climate changed, weeds erupted, animals turned hostile, the whole physical world turned upside down resulting in chaos rather than peace. Romans says the whole of creation was subjected to futility and groans; longing for redemption. Family peace and bliss turned to blame, selfishness, jealousy, murder, strife and disharmony. Inner peace turned to fear, stress, anxiety, confusion, brokenness, depression and inner turmoil.

Peace turned to chaos because nothing now functioned as God designed. Ever since, man has desperately tried to find some sort of peace in his world. The only hope of true peace would come only from the Prince of Peace. God's peace would come to every circumstance and area of life. Paul prayed for such peace.

Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all! 2 Thessalonians 3:16

I purposely listed these life categories mentioned above in this particular sequence because they each build on the other. If we don't have peace with God we will not have inner peace, peace with people or peace in difficult times. Peace with God enables peace within ourselves. Peace within ourselves is the key to establishing peace with others. Peace with God, ourselves and people will facilitate peace through tough times. Paul listed "peace" realized through the Gospel message as an essential element in our battle against Satan and his sorry soldiers. Ephesians 6

Without peace in these areas we become easy pickings for the enemy who is the author of strife and chaos.

But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. James 3:14-16

God's way is...

first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. James 3:17-18

I want to touch briefly on each category. Each one of course could occupy a full sermon.

PEACE WITH GOD

God made peace with Him possible through the work of Jesus.

*Having been justified by faith, we have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. Romans 5:1-2*

Because Jesus cleared all the offences separating us from God, we can enjoy true reconciliation with God.

When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Colossians 2:13-14

*But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our **peace**, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing **peace**, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. And he came and preached **peace** to you who were far away, and **peace** to those who were near; for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. SO THEN, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is*

growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. Ephesians 2:13-22

Children of wrath to beloved children of God's household.

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

There is NOW no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. Romans 8:1-2

Jesus made it possible to come to a God with open not arms.

PEACE WITHIN OURSELVES

This has been the focus of our passage in Philippians.

The peace of God will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

PEACE WITH PEOPLE

Since the fall completely disrupted meaningful community and relationships, the restoration of peace between people appears often.

If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Romans 12:18

Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. Hebrews 12:14

Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. 1 Peter 3:10-11

...being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:3

Flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. 2 Tim 2:22

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Colossians 3:15

Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. 2 Corinthians 13:11

Be at peace among yourselves. 1 Thessalonians 5:13

Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these (end times), be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. 2 Peter 3:14

PEACE IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Be anxious for NOTHING but let your request be made know unto God in EVERYTHING. The ultimate source of peace is God's manifested presence alongside us amid a tumultuous world.

Here is a summary of the principles concerning peace found in my study.

- Peace comes from an eternal (Biblical) perspective. (Keep in the word)
- Peace is a gift of God. (Thank Him for it.)
- Peace is a work of the Holy Spirit as we yield to His direction and pray for His enablement. (Yield to Him daily)
- Peace comes from the work and words of Jesus. (Affirm and apply)
- Peace increases as our knowledge of God increases. (Get to know Him better)
- Peace requires permission from us. (Let His peace rule your hearts)
- Peace is the result of genuine trust in God's goodness. (Entrust your soul to Him)
- Peace is the fruit of fervent believing prayer. (Pray about everything)
- Peace is the result of knowing and practicing God's instructions. (Let your mind think on the right things and do them)
- Peace is the result of diligent pursuit. (Make it a priority)