

**PEACE** – Literal: a time without any fights or wars. More broadly, peace (peacefulness) can mean a state of harmony, quiet or calm that is undisturbed. *Now we switch: Physical Sight to Spiritual Sight.*

**PEACE – Spiritual/Biblical:** NOT the absence of crisis or conflict, but rather our present recognition of our Solution Creator!

**“Peace with God”** (from Greek word ‘eireinei) refers to a mental attitude of tranquility based on a relationship with God; a phrase which describes the result of a person’s correct response to God. [christianityinview.com]

Jesus is called the ‘Prince of Peace’ (Isa 9:6) as God is the King, the Father, Author and endless Source of Peace!

**Significance of Peace: “No Jesus, No Peace / Know Jesus, Know Peace”**

It has been said that Heaven can be defined as God’s eternal abode, entirely filled with His presence, and that Hell can be defined as a place absolutely separate and removed from God. To be entirely in God’s presence IS to be in perfect peace (Isa 26:3), and to be removed from Him is to have all peace removed from us, and so we can thereby see the direct connection between real peace and abiding in God’s presence!

The Relationship God created in Eden was entirely founded on His peace: peace with Him as Sovereign God and man as His obedient creation in His Presence. When man fell, fracturing the relationship, that peace was also broken. As we have studied the past few weeks, the Cross ushered in the plan to restore the Relationship, and the foundation of that relationship is our peace with Him. All good attributes arise from that space of peace with Him, while all ungodly attributes come forth from absence of His peace. This is why man, caught up in his sin, continues to escalate, growing in their sins, while trying to fill a void that peace has been designed to fill.

**Our level of peace is a direct indication of our level of trust in Him at any given moment.** If we are choosing to trust Him less today, we will likely feel less peaceful, more restless and stressed, perhaps grasping at straws more frequently, than perhaps on another day when we have prayed more intently, put on the armor of God, and determined within ourselves that we will choose His peace over whatever our situation looks like.

**God’s Peace is Power in our Lives – With Power Comes Responsibility** (Psalms 29:11; 119:165; Prov 16:7)

Our adversary absolutely targets our peace wherever and whenever he can, and here is why: if he can cloud our mind enough for us to relinquish our peace, he can try to weaponize our words or actions (intended or not) and use them to attack other’s peace.

(ie) That time when we’ve had a bad day and it seems the ONLY way to diffuse the negativity or compensate for our troubles is to let it roll downhill and make everyone else join us in our ‘celebration’!?!

Or, we can choose to operate from a place of peace (peace-maker), recognize who is in control of all things, and allow God’s power to move through us into the circumstances.

**It Is a Choice However** Every day (sometimes many times a day) we are confronted with a choice: to either choose peace or to choose a response based upon our circumstances or someone else’s actions.

Isaiah 26:3 “You will keep in Perfect Peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in YOU.” (choice)

To enter perfect peace with God, we must be aware and diligently guard ourselves in 3 areas. To lose peace in any of these areas will impact our peace with God.

**We need to pursue peace** (Psalms 34:14; 37:37) **with Ourselves, with Others, with our Circumstances.**

## PURSUE PEACE WITH OURSELVES

We have spent some time on this topic, most recently in the study 'Relationship with Him Restores our Confidence'. Here are some other passages that enlighten us to the power and opportunity this self-reflection and choices afford us.

- Prov 16:7 When the LORD takes pleasure in anyone's way, he causes their enemies to make peace with them
- Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness...
- Phil 4:7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
- Psalms 29:11 The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.
- Psalms 37:37 Consider the blameless, observe the upright; a future awaits those who seek peace
- Psalms 119:165 Great peace have those who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble

## PURSUE PEACE WITH OTHERS – an Active Purpose and Requirement

As we went through the study on Unity, we looked at the responsibility each of us bears to do whatever it takes to build up each other and the body in a unified spirit. We all share in this indivisible accountability as members of the body.

Jesus chooses quite a powerful word to describe what HE means on this topic.

Matt 5:9 "Blessed are the Peace-Makers, for they will be called children of God." In Christ's own words, it is they who are Peace-Makers that will be given the title of God's children. It is critically important that we give this passage and its meaning proper view in our understanding of Unity. We might more often respond as though He said *Peace-Keeper* – an idle bystander not throwing fuel on a fire, or perhaps simply avoiding certain people or situations so as not to rock the boat. But Peace-Maker is inherently a description of action. It announces an active accountability on all our part to do whatever is prayerfully possible to bring healing unity and harmony to the body. It may require extra steps that we don't think we should have to do. It may require us to return words of real love and grace to the very one we think is hurting us, even while the injury happens.

Choosing to surrender to God what we are "right" on, is not conceding we are wrong or validating the other person to be right; we are simply saying we are trusting God to handle it better than we can, and we trust that His end game in the situation will be a far greater outcome than we could possibly manufacture on our struggle alone.

- James 3:18 Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.
- Col 3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.
- 1 Thess 5:15 Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else
- Romans 8:6 The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.
- Romans 12:18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.
- Romans 14:19 For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.
- Psalms 34:14 Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. *(it can take diligence/dedication to chase it down.)*
- Hebrews 12:14 Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord

- 1 Peter 3:9-11 Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For, “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it.

### PURSUE PEACE WITH OUR CIRCUMSTANCES – **The Door to our Breakthrough is in our Choice to Trust!**

Not being at peace with our circumstances causes a visible break in our peace with God. We know it, we feel it, and others around us notice also. The result: we again resort to our own strength, our own wisdom, our own desire and the doorway to peace gets further away. We manufacture “wisdom” based on our logic and not what His Spirit is leading us to do.

When we have entered a Life Storm (life altering set of crises or challenges that disrupt or change our way of life forever) it is easy to get buried and lose our bearings. How quickly we decide to regroup, gather ourselves, and recognize the Presence of the Creator will determine how quickly we will regain our peace.

**Our level of peace is directly connected to our level of trust.** We Christians have learned to say the words ‘Trust in God’ so effortlessly, but sometimes forget the implications. It is NOT trust, if we know how the situation will end, what the toll will be on us, how God decides to work on the situation, or how long He decides to work on it. To trust Him means to carry out the words in **1 Peter 5:7 “Casting all your cares on Him.”** To cast means to throw; to throw means to surrender control regardless of how awkward the throw was, how those cares land, what they look like once they’ve landed, or how long it takes Him to address them. It’s NOT giving up; it’s giving it over to Bigger Hands to finish the job! Full Trust = Full Peace.

- John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (*paraph ‘My kind of peace comes DURING the trouble – so don’t be afraid.’*)
- John 16:33 I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (*paraph ‘When you stop looking for worldly solutions, you’ll find your peace in Me.’*)
- Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace **as you trust in him**, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Isaiah 54:10 Though the mountains be shaken, and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,” says the LORD, who has compassion on you. (*paraph ‘When your world is shaken enough to move mountains and make hills disappear... My unfailing love for you remains unshaken...and still my PEACE IS MY COVENANT WITH YOU’*)

**CONCLUSION: What is going on in our life does NOT have to define us; we are not the sum of every high and low in our life.**

Phil 4:7 “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the Peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

God’s Peace overwhelms all understanding, and guards our hearts and minds in Christ. That means this Peace has more power than our logic, than our fretting, than our sorrow, than our losses, than our grief, than even those plans we made that we think have been forever lost. The Peace of God has the power to consume us and fill us WHILE the storm has seemed to focus its entire attention on us.

**Perfect Peace – not based on what we experience – but based on WHO we have decided to Trust!**