

Finding Peace in Troubled Times

Lesson 1 of 4 in the series: "Finding the Missing Peace"

A. We live in a fallen world where everybody wants peace, but nobody knows where to find it.

"All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one... They don't know where to find peace." Romans 3:12,17 (NLT)

"...those who still reject me are like the restless sea, which is never still but continually churns up mud and dirt. There is no peace for the wicked,' says my God." Isaiah 57:20-21 (NLT)

B. We can and will experience peace when we learn to trust God and keep our thoughts focused on Him.

"You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you! Trust in the Lord always, for the Lord God is the eternal Rock." Isaiah 26:3-4 (NLT)

peace = shalom = *completeness, soundness, well-being, security, tranquility, serenity*

perfect peace = *shalom*, *shalom* = calm assurance that God is working and what He is doing is best

1. God will keep in perfect peace all who trust in Him.

"Now may the Lord of peace himself give you his peace at all times and in every situation."

2 Thessalonians 3:16a (NLT)

"I lay down and slept, yet I woke up in safety, for the Lord was watching over me. I am not afraid of ten thousand enemies who surround me on every side... In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, O Lord, will keep me safe." Psalm 3:5-6,4:8 (NLT)

Note: Peace isn't found in the absence of problems but in the presence of God.

"...Jesus said to his disciples, 'Let's cross to the other side of the lake.' So they took Jesus in the boat and started out... But soon a fierce storm came up. High waves were breaking into the boat, and it began to fill with water. Jesus was sleeping at the back of the boat with his head on a cushion. The disciples woke him up, shouting, 'Teacher, don't you care that we're going to drown?' When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Silence! Be still!' Suddenly the wind stopped, and there was a great calm. Then he asked them, 'Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?'" Mark 4:35-40 (NLT)

"They will have no fear of bad news; their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord." Psalm 112:7 (NIV)

2. God will keep in perfect peace all those whose thoughts are fixed on Him.

"Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace." Romans 8:5-6 (NLT)

Note: The battle for peace is a battle of the mind.

"...Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you." Philippians 4:8-9 (NLT)

C. Three things we can do to experience God's peace:

1. We can limit our intake of worldly thinking.

"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect." Romans 12:2 (NLT)

"...Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity. But that isn't what you learned about Christ. Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which

is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.” Ephesians 4:17-24 (NLT)

2. We can spend time each day meditating on God’s Word.

“Now I am coming to you. I told them many things while I was with them in this world so they would be filled with my joy. I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They do not belong to this world any more than I do. Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth.” John 17:13-17 (NLT)

“Those who love your instructions have great peace and do not stumble.” Psalm 119:165 (NLT)

3. We can bring all of our cares to God together with praise and thanksgiving.

“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT)

“Worship the Lord with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy. Acknowledge that the Lord is God! He made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation.”

Psalm 100:2-5 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions

Read Isaiah 26:3-4. Then discuss the following questions:

1. Would you describe yourself as a person who has peace? Why? Why not?
2. What problems or struggles have made it difficult for you to find peace recently?
3. Peace isn’t found in the absence of problems but in the presence of God. Does this statement change your perception of what peace is? If so, how?
4. When facing problems and difficulties, how can the following suggestions help us find peace?
 - We can limit our intake of worldly thinking. (Romans 12:2, Ephesians 4:17-24)
 - We can spend time each day meditating on God’s Word. (Psalm 119:165, John 17:13-17)
 - We can bring all of our cares to God together with praise and thanksgiving. (Psalm 100, Philippians 4:6-7)

Which of these suggestions is most difficult for you? Why?

5. Spend a few minutes as a group praising Jesus by reading through the following list of Jesus’ names and titles out loud. Read slowly allowing time for reflection so God can shift our thinking off of ourselves and onto Jesus.

“We praise you Jesus, you are... the Light of the World, the Living Word, our Redeemer, the Name above all names, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, Christ, the King, the Lamb of God, the Lion of Judah, the Bright Morning Star, our Champion and Shield, our Strength and our Song, the Way for our life, the only Truth, the Real Life, the great I AM, the great High Priest, the Cornerstone, the Sure Foundation, the Resurrection and the Life, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Wonderful Counselor, the Almighty God, the Prince of Peace.”

6. Spend a few minutes as a group thanking God for blessings and answers to prayer.
7. Spend a few minutes as a group lifting your concerns to God in prayer.

Great Resource

You Version 7-day Bible reading plan: “Missing Peace” <https://www.bible.com/en/reading-plans/23174>