

# Abiding in PEACE

A Bible Study  
on Experiencing  
Calm in a  
Chaotic World

LORRAINE HILL

# Abiding in PEACE

---

*A Bible Study on Experiencing Calm in a Chaotic World*

---

LORRAINE HILL

# Table of Contents

---

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>7</b>
---------------------	----------

## **PART I: THE PROMISE OF PEACE**

<b>Week 1 – Peace in the Everyday</b>	<b>10</b>
Day 1: An Open Invitation	11
Day 2: The Gift of God	17
Day 3: The Power of Prayer	23
Day 4: Transforming Our Thought Life	30
Day 5: Embracing Obedience	38
 <b>Week 2 – Peace in the Storms</b>	 <b>45</b>
Day 1: Calm in the Storm	46
Day 2: Refined by the Fire	52
Day 3: Resting in God's Sovereignty	59
Day 4: Treasured by God	65
Day 5: Learning to Suffer Well	70

## **PART II: THE PEACE STEALERS**

<b>Week 3 – Buried in Busyness</b>	<b>78</b>
Day 1: Creating Margin in Our Lives	79
Day 2: Pursuing the Excellent	84
Day 3: Truly Important or Just Urgent?	90
Day 4: Living for the Line Not the Dot	96
Day 5: Rest for the Weary	101

<b>Week 4 – Ensnared by Fear</b>	<b>106</b>
Day 1: Facing Our Fears	107
Day 2: Worried and Anxious	114
Day 3: Choosing to Be Courageous	120
Day 4: The Snare of Man	126
Day 5: A Necessary Fear	132
<b>Week 5 – Overcome by Anger</b>	<b>138</b>
Day 1: Sin at the Door	139
Day 2: Righteous Anger	146
Day 3: The Heart Matters	151
Day 4: Overlooking an Offense	158
Day 5: Blessed are the Peacemakers	163
<b>Week 6 – Wearied by Waiting</b>	<b>171</b>
Day 1: The Crucible of Time	172
Day 2: Clinging to God’s Promises	179
Day 3: Trusting God for the Greater Glory	185
Day 4: Patient Endurance	191
Day 5: Waiting in the Wilderness	196
<b>Week 7 – Living for Self</b>	<b>203</b>
Day 1: An Ongoing Struggle	204
Day 2: Dying to Truly Live	210
Day 3: He Must Increase	215
Day 4: Releasing Our Rights	223
Day 5: A Portrait in Godly Living	229
<b>Week 8 – Drowning in Discontentment</b>	<b>235</b>
Day 1: Restless for More	236
Day 2: The Curse of Comparing	242
Day 3: Threads of Thankfulness	248
Day 4: Trusting in God’s Wisdom	254
Day 5: Embracing God’s Ways	260
<b>ENDNOTES</b>	<b>267</b>

**WEEK 1**  
*Peace in the Everyday*



**DAY 1**  
**An Open Invitation**

**DAY 2**  
**The Gift of God**

**DAY 3**  
**The Power of Prayer**

**DAY 4**  
**Transforming Our Thought Life**

**DAY 5**  
**Embracing Obedience**



## DAY 1

# *An Open Invitation*

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

– John 14:27

Do you have a favorite song, one that uplifts your spirits and soothes your soul? One of my favorites is “It is Well with My Soul,” which was composed by Philip Bliss and penned by Horatio G. Spafford. What makes it so special is the deeply moving backstory behind the lyrics. It was written after a series of traumatic events in Horatio’s life.

Horatio Spafford was a devout Christian and successful attorney in Chicago in the nineteenth century. In 1871, heartbreak struck the Spafford family when their beloved four-year-old son died of scarlet fever. On the heels of this tragedy, Spafford lost a significant portion of his wealth in the Great Chicago Fire in 1871. Despite these trials and hardships, Horatio and his wife, Anna, remained devoted to the Lord and continued to trust in Him. In 1873, Horatio planned to assist D. L. Moody on an evangelistic campaign in England. Due to business matters, Horatio was not able to depart with his family on the ship but sent Anna and his four children ahead of him. While crossing the Atlantic Ocean, the ship collided with another sea vessel and quickly sank. All four of the Spafford’s children died. Anna survived and hastily sent a telegram to Horatio, who immediately boarded the next available ship to join his grieving wife. As Horatio’s boat passed by the area of the shipwreck, he penned the lyrics to the well-loved hymn. For over 150 years, “It is Well with My Soul” has comforted and encouraged countless Christians, bringing them great peace.

Today, we live in a world that is desperately seeking peace. We are anxious, stressed, and frenzied. Tensions are high, and life seems overwhelming. To obtain peace, we often turn to television, shopping, drugs, alcohol, entertainment, material possessions, and social media. Escapism, overindulgence, and distractedness – nothing seems to truly work in the

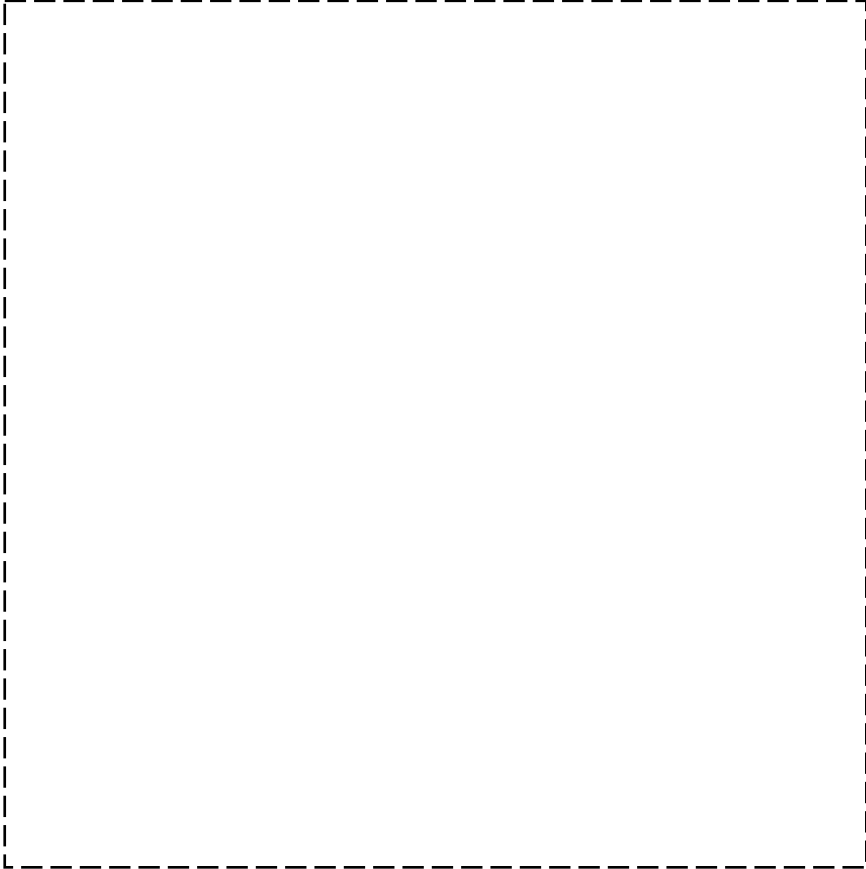
long-term. So what is the answer? Can we experience peace in this life? Absolutely! True peace is found in God and is His gift to all believers. As Christians, we can experience peace anytime and anywhere – in the worst of times, in the hardest of places, and in the lowest of valleys.

**How would you define peace?**

---

### *Exercise*

**Draw a visual of what you think peace looks like.**

A large rectangular area defined by a dashed line, intended for a drawing or visual representation of peace.





whose backdrop was a dramatic thunderstorm, complete with lightning and hail, over a rugged cliff. Tucked into a cleft of a rock, a mother bird protected her nest with her outstretched wings, while her baby birds rested peacefully despite the storm raging around them. The painting offers an interesting view of peace, doesn't it? And yet, it provides a beautiful glimpse into the biblical view of peace.

The world often defines peace as the absence of war, conflict, or trouble. The biblical concept of peace is far more comprehensive. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *shalom*, translated peace, occurs almost 240 times<sup>1</sup> and has a rich, all-encompassing meaning, which includes the ideas of wholeness, completeness, harmony, prosperity, well-being, and fulfilment.<sup>2</sup> The Jewish people used *shalom* in their daily greetings and farewells, expressing a wish for completeness and prosperity for one's life. In the New Testament, the Greek word *eirene* conveys a similar sense of meaning. Biblical peace does not refer to the absence of conflict or fighting but rather a sense of wholeness and well-being that transcends external circumstances, a tranquillity or restfulness that presides over the soul. Peace is being reconciled with God because our sins are forgiven and knowing that we lack nothing because we have Christ. Our souls are at rest, content and fulfilled in God amidst the chaos of the world around us.

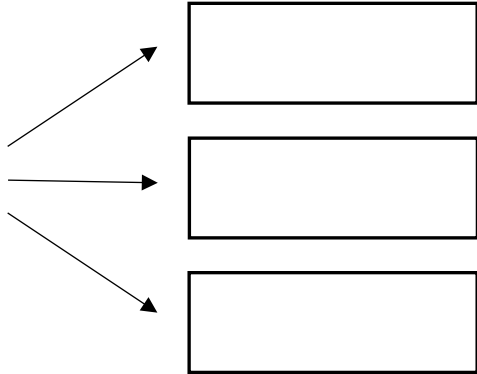
Biblical peace encompasses not only inner tranquility and calmness but also harmonious relationships with believers and nonbelievers in our communities. As we seek harmony and peace with other people, however, we never compromise God's Word or His truth: "if possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men" (Romans 12:18). The New International Commentary captures the essence of peace by describing it as the "health of body, welfare and security, perfect serenity and tranquility, a life and a state in which a man is perfectly related to his fellowmen and to his God."<sup>3</sup>

Our view of peace is important because if we think peace is merely the absence of conflict, then we will seek to remove the difficulties and stresses from our life. God, however, offers us something far greater than the elimination of life's problems. He provides us with a sense of well-being in a world of conflict and tranquillity in a world of chaos. Interestingly, peace is best displayed in the midst of challenges, difficulties, and hardships. The peace of God does not depend on our

circumstances, the people we encounter, or the problems we face. It depends solely on our relationship with the Lord. Philippians 4:7 describes this peace as a peace which surpasses understanding. We cannot quite explain how, in a world of problems and hardships, we can possess tranquility and inner calm.

**What steals your peace?**

In the boxes on the right, list the top three things that are currently stealing your peace.



Three empty rectangular boxes are arranged vertically on the right side of the page. Three arrows originate from the text 'What steals your peace?' and point to the top, middle, and bottom boxes respectively.

**Read John 14:27 about peace and answer the following questions.**

What did Jesus say? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What was the context for this verse?

☐ Jesus was relaxing      ☐ Jesus was about to go to the cross

Compare the world's peace with Jesus' peace. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**What encouragement did Jesus provide in John 16:33?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who is someone you know who seems to consistently experience peace? What stands out about this person?

---

## *Challenge*

Select one of the people below who demonstrated peace and answer the following questions.

**Shadrach (Daniel 3)      Daniel (Daniel 6)      Stephen (Acts 7)**

Describe the situation.

How did the person display peace?

How does this encourage you?

In John 14:27, Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.” Can you imagine receiving Jesus’ peace? Wow! I want that! Reflect for a moment on Jesus’ life while He was on earth. Despite facing mockery, hostility, and suffering, He was never anxious or troubled, always maintaining an inner calm. Can you envision experiencing that kind of peace daily in your life? When Jesus spoke these words in John 14, He was nearing the end of His life. It was Passover, and He was at the Last Supper sharing a final meal with His beloved disciples. The following day, He would undergo brutal suffering and a horrific death. Yet, even in this moment of impending agony, Jesus comforted His disciples and promised them – and all believers – His divine peace; a peace that transcends understanding, a peace that soothes our souls and comforts our anxious spirits. It is not the world’s peace which is fleeting and temporary because it is based on favorable circumstances, but a supernatural peace which is lasting and permanent because it is rooted in God.

I love that Scripture also provides examples of people other than Jesus who experienced peace, or we might think that Jesus only had peace because He was God. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, for example, experienced peace as they were cast into a fiery furnace for refusing to worship a Babylonian idol (Daniel 3). Daniel experienced peace while continuing to pray to God, fully aware that it could lead to being thrown into the lion's den (Daniel 6). Even more remarkable was Stephen, who experienced peace while being stoned to death (Acts 7). These accounts of biblical figures finding peace during their trials and hardships encourages us, showing us that we too can experience such peace. If God could provide Stephen with peace while he was being stoned, imagine what He can do for us!

Now that we have explored the true nature of peace, how do we obtain it and why does it seem so elusive at times? This study will help us to better understand how to experience consistent peace in our lives and the various things that can hinder it. Are you ready to begin our exciting journey? I can't wait to hear how God enables you to experience His peace, a peace that surpasses understanding, at all times and in all situations!

---

## DAY 2

# *The Gift of God*

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

— Galatians 5:22-23a

When my husband and I were in our twenties, we eagerly prayed for a child, looking forward to this new chapter in our lives. Our prayers continued as the years went by, even as I entered my thirties. Then, we received the exciting news that I was pregnant with twins, and we were overjoyed! However, our happiness was tempered by a difficult twist: we were informed that one of the twins had a severe medical condition

and would not survive, which also jeopardized the health and successful birth of the second twin. The news was overwhelming, leaving me deeply saddened and heartbroken. At twenty-four weeks, I was put on strict bed rest, and at twenty-eight weeks, I began experiencing labor contractions. Despite twelve long hours of doctors' efforts to halt the contractions, I delivered both twins, each weighing just over two pounds. Miraculously, both of our precious boys survived! Praise God!

Although everything ultimately worked out, my pregnancy was a challenging journey that required complete trust in God and His plan for my life. While working full-time, I struggled with severe “morning sickness” due to the heightened hormonal levels from carrying twins. I lost weight from persistent nausea and vomiting and was hospitalized for dehydration. Compounding this was the doctor's prognosis that we might lose one or both of our twins. Despite feeling as though my world was falling apart, I experienced an inner calmness that I have never known. I cannot quite explain how I survived those months, except to say I felt enveloped by God's goodness and peace. And the beautiful thing is that God's peace is available to every one of us! To experience this peace, however, we must first be reconciled with God and be at peace with Him.

**How does Scripture describe our relationship with God before we accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior?**

Isaiah 48:22 \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 3:23 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**What do you learn about salvation from the following verses?**

Romans 10:8-10 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Romans 5:1 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise

Take a few moments and write out how you came into a relationship with Jesus and accepted Him as your Lord and Savior.

*My Salvation Story*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

God created man to be in a beautiful relationship with Him. However, when Adam and Eve sinned, mankind became separated from God, becoming His enemies (Romans 5:10). Mankind is now subject to God's wrath and judgment because we are sinners (Romans 3:10-23). Sin is any act of rebellion against God, involving a deliberate choice to disobey His commands and dishonor Him. Because God is holy, He cannot overlook sin and must punish it. The punishment for sin is death and eternal separation from God in Hell.

To reconcile mankind to Himself, God graciously sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins. "He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5, ESV).

Through Jesus' death and resurrection, our relationship with God can be restored. When we acknowledge our sinfulness, repent, and place our faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we are saved. God declares us just, assigning the righteousness of Christ to us. "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Once we are reconciled to God, we are no longer God's enemies and are now at peace with Him. "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). Once we are at peace with God, we can then experience peace daily in our lives.

**How is God described in the following verses? Match the verse to the description.**

- |                           |                                |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| _____ 1 Corinthians 14:33 | A) Jesus – the Prince of Peace |
| _____ Romans 15:33        | B) Christ is our peace         |
| _____ Ephesians 2:14      | C) God of Peace                |
| _____ Isaiah 9:6          | D) God of Peace, not confusion |

Scripture describes God as Jehovah-Shalom, the "God of peace." That's interesting, isn't it? When we describe God, we rarely think of Him as

the God of peace. It is usually the God of love or mercy or holiness. Yet, Scripture repeatedly describes God as the “God of peace.” Because Yahweh is the God of peace, He can provide us with perfect peace – the wholeness and well-being that we were meant to experience. God, and God alone, is the author of true peace. Scripture reveals that peace is associated with every member of the Godhead.

- God the Father, the first person in the Godhead, is repeatedly described as the “God of Peace” (Romans 15:33, Philippians 4:9, 1 Thessalonians 5:23).
- Jesus, the Son of God and second person in the Godhead, is called “the Prince of Peace” and “the Lord of peace” (Isaiah 9:6, 2 Thessalonians 3:16).
- The Holy Spirit, the third person in the Godhead, produces the fruit of peace in us (Galatians 5:22-23).

John MacArthur makes this interesting observation: “It’s as if the Father authored peace, the Son purchased peace, and then gives it to us now in this age through His Holy Spirit.”<sup>4</sup>

Peace is a beautiful thread that artfully weaves its way throughout Scripture, appearing over three hundred times.<sup>5</sup> In the beginning, there was peace when Adam and Eve walked with God in the Garden of Eden. Although sin shattered this peace, Jesus, the Prince of Peace, beautifully restored it through His sacrifice on the cross. The Gospel, which brings reconciliation between God and humanity, is called the Gospel of Peace (Ephesians 6:15). Ultimately, there will be lasting peace again when Jesus reigns in the new creation and we dwell with Him.

**According to Galatians 5:22-23, who creates peace in our lives? Circle the answer.**

We do

The Holy Spirit

The world



As a fruit of the Spirit, peace can be nurtured or withered. What are some things that can nurture peace? Wither it? Complete the chart below. An example has been provided to guide you.

Wither	Nurture
Gossip with friends	Read the Bible

How well are you nurturing the fruit of peace in your life? Circle the answers that best describes you.

	Never					Always				
Read God’s Word daily	1	2	3	4	5					
Seek God’s will consistently	1	2	3	4	5					
Pray continually	1	2	3	4	5					
Attend corporate worship weekly	1	2	3	4	5					
Experience Christian community	1	2	3	4	5					
Serve others regularly	1	2	3	4	5					
Humbly accept God’s will	1	2	3	4	5					
Immediately repent of sin	1	2	3	4	5					

The fruit of peace is withered by sin. Do you need to repent and confess any sin? See 1 John 1:9.

Peace is a gift from God, a fruit of the Spirit that is produced naturally in us as we abide in Christ. Upon accepting Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we received the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us (Ephesians 1:13). The Holy Spirit cultivates spiritual fruit in us, including the fruit of peace. We nurture the fruit of peace by deepening our relationship with God, reading the Bible, obeying God's commands, choosing to trust God, attending church, praying, and submitting to His Word. On the other hand, we can wither the fruit by grieving the Holy Spirit, disobeying the Lord, or keeping known sin in our lives, such as unforgiveness, complaining, gossiping, envying, worry, and so forth. As long as we play with sin, we forfeit the blessing of peace. Once we repent and confess our sin, God is gracious to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Then we once again experience peace.

Life will always have its challenges, difficulties, and obstacles. Yet, God's promise to us is peace during the difficulties and tranquility in the storms. He stands as our Protector, Sustainer, and Provider. If we will trust Him and rest in His goodness, we will experience a peace that soothes our souls and calms our anxious spirits.

---

## DAY 3

### *The Power of Prayer*

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 4:6-7

A few years ago, my husband was diagnosed with his second round of skin cancer. This time, the cancer was more aggressive than before, raising serious concerns among the doctors. As I coped with the situation, I felt anxiety creeping into my Christian walk, accompanied

by a flood of “what ifs.” What if my husband didn’t survive this time? What if they didn’t remove all of the cancer? What if there were complications? When difficulties surface, it is easy to become anxious and stressed. Yet, God has a better way – He invites us to cast our burdens and concerns on Him through prayer and allow the peace that transcends all understanding to blanket us.

**What is your attitude toward prayer? Check all the apply.**

- ☐ I am a prayer warrior
- ☐ I don’t really understand how to pray
- ☐ I don’t feel that prayer works
- ☐ I am excited to pray
- ☐ I feel like I go through the motions
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Read Philippians 4:6-7 about the importance of prayer and fill in the blanks (NASB).**

Be anxious for nothing but in everything by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ let your requests be made known to God. And the \_\_\_\_\_ which surpasses all comprehension will guard \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ Jesus.

**Based on Philippians 4:6-7, what is the relationship between prayer and peace?**

---

**List any problems that are currently making you anxious, stressed, or worried.**

---

## What encouragement do you receive from Psalm 55:22?

---

Philippians 4:6-7 offers some of the most comforting words in Scripture because they are God's promise of peace to us. In these verses, Paul connects the practice of prayer with the gift of peace. Prayer is the means by which we do not become anxious, while peace is the result. Instead of becoming worried and upset, we present our requests to God through prayer. Did you notice that Paul said we are to be anxious about nothing – not one single thing. That doesn't seem possible, does it? Given the many challenges we face, it seems unrealistic to live without worry. Yet, when Paul made this command, he was not living in ease and comfort. He was currently in prison, awaiting a verdict on his release or death. Prior to that, Paul had endured shipwrecks, floggings, stoning, beatings, severe food deprivation, and much more. Paul could have easily surrendered to worry and anxiety. Instead, he encouraged the Philippians and us to remain prayerful and to trust in God, just as he himself was doing.

Philippians 4:6-7 highlights how God's peace protects our hearts and minds. The Greek word for "guard" *phroureo* is a military term involving a soldier standing watch on duty to protect a city.<sup>6</sup> Imagine a soldier pacing back and forth in front of his post, with weapon in hand, constantly on duty and aware of his surroundings. In the same way, God's peace stands guard around believers who trust Him, keeping out anxiety and worry and covering those who rest in Him. When we genuinely surrender our concerns to God and trust in His greatness and provision, then we will experience His peace, a peace that transcends understanding and that soothes our anxious spirits. In Scripture, Paul often uses peace and joy together (Romans 14:17, 15:13). Interestingly, joy is commanded, but peace is promised. Let's embrace God's promise of peace by choosing to trust Him.

## What is the purpose of prayer?

---

**What do you learn about prayer from the following verses? Match the verse with the description.**

Verse	Prayer Description
Luke 11:5-13	Pray continuously
Matthew 6:5-8	Involves the Spirit
James 1:6-8	Pray persistently
1 Thessalonians 5:17	Ask with faith
Ephesians 6:18	Pray sincerely

**Which of the above descriptions of prayer do you personally find challenging? Why?**

---

---

**Philippians 4:6-7, which we read earlier today, states that our prayers should be offered with thanksgiving. Why is thanksgiving important?**

---

---

What is prayer? Prayer is constant communion with the Lord expressed through honest and open communication. It involves sharing our hearts with the Lord and trusting Him to work things out for our good and His glory. Prayer is not going to God expecting Him to serve as our genie and provide us everything we want.

Prayer allows God to redirect our passions and desires to godly things and righteous pursuits. Through prayer, God provides us strength and wisdom, often transforming our hearts to align with His will. This results in a sense of peace and inner calm in us. The greatest benefit of

prayer, however, is that it grows our relationship with God. The more we commune with God, the deeper we know Him and love Him.

Scripture reminds us that we are to devote ourselves to prayer. But what does prayer look like?

- Prayer is sincere and heartfelt (Matthew 6:5-6). It involves us genuinely crying out to God and sharing our innermost thoughts with Him.
- Prayer is simple and unpretentious. Prayer does not have to be lengthy or sound impressive in order to be powerful or effective (Matthew 6:7). If prayer feels monotonous, try to imagine yourself in the throne room of God, presenting your requests to Him. It may bring the added zeal you need to re-invigorate your prayer life.
- Prayer is continuous (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Since prayer is a conversation with God, it can happen throughout the day as needs arise.
- Prayer is persistent (Luke 11:5-13) and passionate. Charles Spurgeon once said that “he who does not pray with fervency does not pray at all.”
- Prayer takes belief (James 1:6-8). We must believe that God will actually answer us. Knowing that God will answer our prayers brings us peace and comfort during difficult times.
- Prayer involves the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 6:18, Romans 8:26-27). The Holy Spirit helps guide and lead our prayers, often bringing to mind people and situations for which we need to pray.
- Prayer should be made with thanksgiving (Philippians 4:6-7, Colossians 4:2). Yesterday’s answered prayers are often today’s praise. Let’s make sure we thank God for His amazing provision while also acknowledging His greatness and majesty.

## Challenge

**What additional insight do you receive about prayer from the following verses?**

Hebrews 4:16

James 5:13-16

1 John 5:14-15

**Take a few moments and reflect on your prayer life.**

What prayer has God recently answered? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What prayer have you been praying the longest? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**What practices have you found effective in your prayer life?**

\_\_\_\_\_

Philip Brooks insightfully remarked, “Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men and women. Do not pray for tasks equal to your power. Pray for powers equal to your tasks.” I love these words because they encourage me to deepen my prayer life. What are some other practical ideas to help us experience fuller prayer lives?

- Start our day with prayer. This can be a formal time of prayer or an informal time, where we ask God to help us bring Him glory in our day. This sets the tone for what follows and focuses us on Him. We can also talk with God about items that are sources of our worry and stress. During the day, as needs arise, continue to talk with God and pray about them.

- Create a prayer list that includes family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, the government, societal issues, non-Christian countries, missionaries, and so forth. In our prayer lists, let's make sure to note when God answers our prayers and include other praises. We can never praise or thank God enough.
- Have an accountability partner or group of close friends with whom we can share personal prayer requests. Some days, we may need to only text "Pray!" This group becomes vital when we enter a season of trials because discouragement can easily overcome us.
- Make it a habit to pray with those close to us and with other Christians. If we are married or have children, let's pray with them regularly. In addition, we can pray with other believers in our church or our Bible studies. It creates a special bond of intimacy, deepening our relationships.
- Pray the Scriptures over our spouses, children, friends, and others. It is powerful to pray for ourselves and others using God's Word.
- Stay focused during prayer. If our mind tends to wander, let's keep a notepad handy where we can write down stray thoughts. This helps us remain engaged in our time with God.
- Vary our posture of prayer. Try praying on our knees or laying prostrate before God. Changing our physical posture can enhance our sense of humility and reverence.

As we end this day, I want to share a story about the power of prayer. Several years ago, I had the privilege of speaking to a pro-life clinic. When I first met the ladies, they were fervently praying that God would eliminate abortion in their county, which seemed like an ambitious goal. A few years later, I had the opportunity to revisit those same women and they shared some incredible news: every abortion clinic in their county had closed due to lack of "clients." Praise God! Their years



of persistent prayer and dedication led to a remarkable outcome. There is nothing too big or too small for our God. Let's trust Him to give us victory and not become anxious!

---

## DAY 4

# *Transforming Our Thought Life*

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

— Philippians 4:8

A few days ago, an issue unexpectedly arose at work, causing me stress and anxiety. Before I knew it, I had considered a thousand what if scenarios and had started to spiral with a barrage of negative thoughts. By lunch time, I felt spiritually and mentally exhausted, completely devoid of joy and peace. Can you relate? If we want to experience peace, we will need to learn to control our thought life. Due to the importance of today's material, the session is longer than usual and may need to be spread over two days.

**Read Proverbs 23:7a and fill in the blanks (NASB, KJV).**

For as he \_\_\_\_\_, so \_\_\_\_\_.

**What did Paul say in 2 Corinthians 10:5? Why is this important?**

---

---

## Exercise

What is the relationship between the following concepts:

Actions

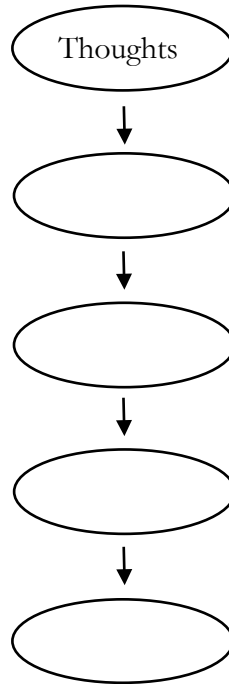
Character

Destiny

Habits

Thoughts

Fill in the circles with the words in the correct order.



Apply the above progression to your life. Do you see patterns in certain areas? Have you formed any bad habits because of your negative thought life?

---

---

Share an example of when one of your negative thoughts led to a negative action.

---

---

## Do you tend to react based solely on your emotions? How can this cause unnecessary stress in your life?

---

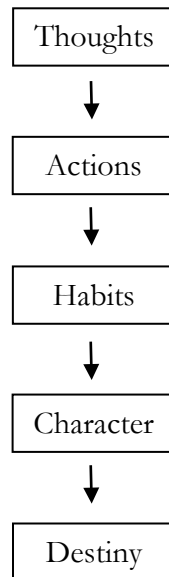
---

Our minds are the battleground where the fight for peace occurs. We will never have peace in this life if we cannot control our thought life. Envious thoughts, unforgiving feelings, lustful desires, doubts, despair, worry, fear, discontentment, and the list continues. All of these negative thoughts gradually erode our sense of tranquility. Each one strips away a bit more of our inner peace.

To experience peace, Scripture not only encourages us to pray as we discussed yesterday but also to think about the right things. Why? Because if we focus on the wrong things, we lose our peace and may even commit ungodly acts. For example, most adulterous affairs begin with a single lustful thought. The person continues to dwell on it and may eventually commit adultery.

Our thoughts have a powerful impact on our life and our peace. Marcus Aurelius, the Roman philosopher insightfully said, “The most important things in life are the thoughts you choose to think...Our life is what our thoughts make it.”<sup>7</sup> Scripture similarly states, “for as he thinks within himself, so he is” (Proverbs 23:7, NASB). Ultimately, we are the product of our thoughts because our thoughts drive our actions. For instance, what I think of a person determines how I respond to him or her. What I normally think of a situation drives how I react to it.

Our thoughts drive our actions, which, over time create our habits. Our habits, in turn, form our character, which eventually shapes our destiny.





**What does it mean to “dwell” on something?**

---

**Read Romans 12:2 and fill in the blank (NASB).**

Do not be conformed to this world, but \_\_\_\_\_

---

**How do we renew our minds?**

Titus 3:5 \_\_\_\_\_

---

2 Timothy 3:16-17 \_\_\_\_\_

---

**When negative thoughts enter your mind, do you try to evaluate them to determine if they are true and biblical?**

- ☐ Yes, I evaluate my thoughts and refuse to dwell on negative thoughts
- ☐ Yes, I try to evaluate my thoughts but struggle in this area
- ☐ Yes, I try to evaluate my thoughts but often react based on my emotions
- ☐ No, I tend to dwell on whatever pops into my mind

To experience peace, we must think rightly. How do we do this? Romans 12:2 commands us to renew our minds. In a world full of lies, only God and His Word are true. One of the main reasons that we sin is because we fall for the crafty lies of Satan and the world rather than

remaining rooted in the truth of God. We must saturate ourselves in the Word of God so we know the difference between the beautiful truths of God and the destructive lies of the enemy. Truth always brings freedom and peace, while lies will always enslave and destroy. The great Puritan writer, John Owen, aptly said, “That good which the mind cannot discover, the will cannot choose, and the affections cannot cleave to.”

Philippians 4:8 provides a guide for the types of thoughts on which we need to focus: true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, noble, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. Too often, thoughts enter our minds and we dwell on them without evaluating whether the thoughts are the right types of thoughts. When this happens, we spiral and are prone to make bad decisions. Rather than experiencing peace, we become anxious and stressed. Let’s explore some practical suggestions to keep this from happening.

**What are the inputs for your thought life? Reflect on your last week and put the following inputs in order from 1 to 10.**

**1 – Spent most of my time    10 – Spent least of my time**

_____ Friends and family	_____ Co-workers
_____ Social media	_____ Television/movies
_____ Internet	_____ Books/magazines
_____ Christian radio	_____ Non-Christian radio
_____ Bible study/sermons	_____ Other _____

**Are you receiving godly input or worldly input for most of your thought life? Are your inputs bringing you closer to God or distracting you from Him? Do you need to make any changes?**

---

---

# Exercise

Let’s look at a practical way to think rightly. In the chart below, select two of the thoughts that you struggle with most. Think of ways to guard your mind so you don’t have those thoughts. The first one has been done as an example.

Type of Thought	Ways to Guard Our Mind
Envious thoughts about houses	Don’t look at house magazines, watch house decorating shows, or attend the parade of homes. Thank God for all the things He has already provided. Pray for contentment.
Lustful Thoughts	
Angry/ Unforgiving Thoughts	
Anxious Thoughts	
Complaining Thoughts	
Self-demeaning Thoughts	

In today's world, where tensions run high, bad news is constantly broadcast, sin is glamorized, and events rarely unfold as we expect, taking control of our thought life can be challenging. It is easy to succumb to negative and destructive thoughts and to believe the lies of the world because they come so prettily packaged. But we will never have peace if we cannot control our thought life. We need to be proactive and redeem our minds, training them on what is true, honorable, and right. So what are some practical ways to gain victory in this area?

- Read Scripture on a regular basis. The Word of God has the beautiful and miraculous ability to assess where our thinking needs redemption and to help us refocus on what matters.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help guard our thoughts so that our thought life can honor God.
- Listen to Christian music. Music is a gift from God that has an amazing ability to lift us up and encourage us.
- Change some of the inputs to our thought life. We cannot continue to watch immoral shows, participate in sinful events, continually read social media, and listen to secular music and think it will not impact our thought life. Our inputs have a tremendous impact on what we think. For instance, if we stay on social media, we tend to complain and often experience self-demeaning thoughts, which can then wreak havoc with our self-image. We need to become discriminating of our inputs.
- Post Bible verses around the office, house, bathroom mirror, and in our car, or we can carry notecards in our backpack or purse. They serve as a constant reminder of God's truth and love.
- Refuse to participate in conversations that incite ungodly thoughts. This may mean changing the topic of conversation to what is true, good, or beautiful or even leaving a discussion.



- Determine the type of thoughts we struggle with and unique solutions for those areas. Hopefully the exercise we completed above will provide insight in this area.

We cannot passively allow our minds to dwell on negative, destructive, and untrue thoughts. We need to intentionally reclaim our minds and our emotions for the Lord. Our minds are one of God's greatest gifts to us, but we must use them to bring Him glory. This means guarding our thought life or we will never experience the peace that God so readily offers us.

---

## DAY 5

### *Embracing Obedience*

The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

— Philippians 4:9

When I was first saved, I loved learning about the Christian faith. I read books on theology, listened to sermons, and regularly attended Bible studies. But as time passed, I realized that all this wonderful, newfound knowledge would not help me in my Christian walk unless I applied it to my daily life and actually obeyed what Scripture taught. The difficulty was, and still is, that Scripture has some challenging things to say about how I live my life and what my priorities should be.

**Reread Philippians 4:6-9, focusing on Philippians 4:9, and answer the following questions:**

What should we do with what we have heard and learned? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Who will be with us? \_\_\_\_\_

How is God described? Circle the answer.

God of Love

God of Peace

God of Mercy

**What is your obedience level. Check the box that best describes you.**

- ☐ I always and immediately obey what Scripture teaches
- ☐ I sometimes obey what Scripture teaches
- ☐ I struggle to obey what Scripture teaches

**If you did not answer Always, why do you sometimes not obey God's commands?**

---

---

---

**What did Jesus say about obedience in Luke 8:21?**

---

---

**According to Isaiah 48:17-18, if Israel had paid attention to God's commands, her peace would have been like**

☐ a forest

☐ a river

☐ a valley

## Challenge

What do you learn about peace from the following verses?

Isaiah 32:17-18 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Psalms 85:10 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Paul ends this passage in Philippians 4:6-9 by reminding us that we need to put into practice all that we have learned. Simply studying about God's peace and even memorizing the related verses will prove ineffective if we will not apply what we have been taught. Our thinking, as we discussed yesterday, cannot be separated from our actions. What we dwell on in our mind often results in our behavior. Notice that Paul had to encourage us to practice and obey what we learn because it does not come naturally to us. It takes effort to redirect our thoughts and not succumb to the negative whirlwinds of this life. For example, when people hurt us, our instinct is to retaliate. It takes a determined effort and resting in the Holy Spirit to choose forgiveness. Similarly, when our friends start gossiping, it takes strength and grace to stop and redirect the conversation to that which is true, good, and beautiful.

Did you notice that God told the Israelites if they had obeyed His commands, they would have peace like a river, a steady, constant flow of peace regardless of their circumstances. Peace is the result of an obedient, righteous life that submits to God's authority and seeks His glory. Sometimes we view God's commands as burdensome, restrictive, or oppressive, but the opposite is true. God's commands are freeing and allow us to experience true joy and peace. God is not in Heaven pitted against us as some cosmic killjoy, seeking to hurt and destroy us. For instance, when God tells us not to envy, it is because He knows that envy will consume our thoughts, robbing us of joy and peace. God's commands are guardrails, protecting us and allowing us to experience true life.

**Read James 1:22-25 about obedience and answer the following questions?**

Christians are to be \_\_\_\_\_ of the Word  
because hearers of the Word can \_\_\_\_\_ themselves.

Explain the analogy that James used. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who is blessed? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Share an example of a time when you looked in the mirror (heard God’s truth) but walked away (failed to act on God’s truth).**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**What additional insight do you receive from John 13:17?**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**What one or two truths is God currently calling you to act on?**

① \_\_\_\_\_

② \_\_\_\_\_

Obedience to God and His will results in peace in our lives. If we fail to perform God's will or keep known sin in our lives, we cannot expect to experience peace. In James 1:22-25, James commands us to be doers of the Word and not just hearers of the Word. To emphasize the importance of obedience, James provided an analogy on the difference between a listener and a doer, comparing them to men who look at their faces in a mirror. The listener briefly glances at his image and then looks away. We too can briefly glance at the Word. We can hear the Word and read the Word but walk away by not doing what it commands or by only obeying selective parts. Notice that the listener takes the first step: he is open to hearing the Word of God. He desires to know more and grow in his relationship with God, but he stops and does not do what it commands.

On the other hand, the doer carefully examines his reflection in the mirror, studying his image closely; it is not a passing glance. During New Testament times, mirrors were not the highly reflective mirrors we possess today but were created from polished brass or bronze, often showing a distorted reflection.<sup>8</sup> Only by intently looking into the mirror could a person accurately see his image. We need to not just listen to the Word; we also need to act on it and do what it commands. Imagine visiting a doctor because we are sick. He provides us with instructions and a prescription for medicine to help us heal. Now what if we returned home and failed to take the medicine or follow the instructions. It would not help us to get well.

Hearing God's Word and obeying it can be challenging. God's Word calls for an intentional and outward-focused way of living as demonstrated by Christ, where we love unconditionally, forgive what seems unforgiveable, and seek to glorify God in all aspects of our lives. It also rebukes our "pet" sins and ungodly habits. We do not, however, have to do this in our power. In fact, we cannot do it in our power and

strength. God gives us the Holy Spirit who will guide us, encourage us, and empower us to obey His Word.

**God also uses godly friendships to help us. Take a moment and reflect on your closest friendships. Do they encourage you in your Christian walk and hold you accountable?**

- ☐ Always encouraging and hold me accountable
- ☐ Encouraging but need to grow in the accountability area
- ☐ Somewhat encouraging and need to grow in the accountability area
- ☐ Need to pray for godly friendships

**Listed below are three pairs of great friendships that are found in Scripture. Look up the verses and fill in the blanks.**

Elijah and \_\_\_\_\_ (2 Kings 2:1-4)

Naomi and \_\_\_\_\_ (Ruth 1:14-18)

Paul and \_\_\_\_\_ (Philippians 2:19-23)

**Share an instance when a friend encouraged you to obey God.**

---

---

Godly friendships are an invaluable part of our Christian walk. Friends lift us up when we fall down, provide unconditional love and support, and encourage us in our faith. They should also speak God's truth into our lives, even when it is hard to hear it. Godly friends need to hold us accountable, spurring us on to obedience as they encourage us in God. As we veer off course, our friends lovingly guide us back. Do we have friends who challenge our thinking if it is wrong, who love us

enough to confront us when we sin, and who encourage us to obey God? Proverbs 27:17 reminds us that “as iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.” We are meant to live in Christian community as we sharpen one another and encourage each other to obey God and live for His glory.

## *Challenge*

**Let's take a moment and reflect on what we have learned this week. What action items do you have that require obedience from each day?**

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

Day 4

Day 5

As we end this week, remember that to experience the daily peace of God, we need to pray and release our burdens to God, being careful to not take them back. Then we need to think rightly, dwelling on godly, edifying thoughts and redirecting our thought life when necessary. Finally, we need to put into practice what we have learned. It is not enough to read about these ideas and discuss them, we must actually live them out. Only then will we experience the peace of God, a peace that surpasses all understanding and calms our anxious spirits. Doesn't that sound exciting!