

To Experience God's Peace

Today's Treasure
"If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea" (Isa. 48:18).

Benefit 1: to know God and believe Him

Benefit 2: to glorify God

Benefit 3: to find satisfaction in God

Are you beginning to see a need for greater freedom in Christ? I am praying for you on this journey. If you grant God complete access to your heart, mind, and soul, as you turn the last page you will be "free" to love Him in ways you never dreamed. This Bible study is going to lead you to freeing Scriptures and demand from you a level of cooperation God will honor. A harvest of fruitfulness is coming.

Today we consider Benefit 4: To experience God's peace. I don't believe I can over-emphasize the importance of peace as a real and practical benefit of our covenant relationship with God. His peace should not be an infrequent surprise but the ongoing rule of our lives.

*A*ccording to 2 Thessalonians 3:16, how often and in how many areas of life does God desire to give you peace?

Peace can be possible in any situation, but we cannot simply produce it on demand. In fact, we cannot produce it at all. It is "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22).

We have Christ's peace. It has already been given to us if we have received Christ. We just don't always know how to activate it. Today we're going to discover the key to experiencing the practical reality of God's peace. Then throughout the course of our journey, we're going to work on becoming more free to turn the key we've found.

The Book of Isaiah uses the word *peace* 26 times. God continually promised peace when His captives returned wholeheartedly to the Lord. Let's begin to uncover the key to experiencing the peace Christ left as our inheritance.

*I*dentify what each of the following passages teaches you about peace; watch for hints of a common denominator between many of them.

Isaiah 9:6-7 _____

Isaiah 26:3 _____

Isaiah 32:17 _____

Isaiah 53:5 _____

Isaiah 54:10 _____

Isaiah 57:2 _____

Isaiah 60:17 _____

Did you see any hints of a common denominator tying several of these Scriptures together? Yes No If so, what was it?

Isaiah 9:6-7 perfectly portrays the key to peace, “And he will be called...Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end.” Beloved, let God write this principle on your heart forever: The key to peace is authority. When we allow the Prince of Peace to govern our lives, peace either immediately or ultimately results. Peace accompanies authority.

The key to peace is authority.

***I*dentify a time in your life when you undoubtedly experienced the peace of God transcending your understanding.**

Can you also say, as I can, that you have had an absence of peace in much less difficult circumstances? Have you ever wondered what the difference was? Peace comes in situations completely surrendered to the sovereign authority of Christ. Sometimes when we finally give up trying to discover all the answers to the “why’s” in our lives and decide to trust a sovereign God, unexpected peace washes over us like a summer rain. We sometimes lack peace in far less strenuous circumstances because we are not as desperate or likely to turn them over to God.

I finally had to turn some of the hurts of my childhood over to God’s sovereign authority because I realized they would consume me like an invasive cancer. When at last I allowed Him to govern everything concerning my past, not only did the Prince give me His peace, He actually brought good from something horrible and unfair. If you have not yet bowed the knee to God’s authority over areas of your past, my friend, something is holding you captive.

Christ desperately wants His people to experience His peace. Perhaps you would be blessed to know how much. Several Greek words are translated into the English words *crying* or *weeping* in the New Testament. Each Greek word represents different degrees of externalized grief. The Greek word *klaio* is the strongest word used in the New Testament for *grief*. It means “to weep, wail, lament, implying not only the shedding of tears, but also every external expression of grief.” Christ wept on several occasions, but on only one occasion is His grief described with the word *klaio*.

***R*ead Luke 19:41-42. Why did Jesus show such extreme grief?**

I believe Christ still grieves when He sees hearts in unnecessary turmoil. You can have the peace of Christ, believer, no matter what your circumstances; but you must believe, bend the knee, and learn how to receive.

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Some of us will be able to submit to His authority in troublesome areas almost immediately. For others, surrendering to Christ seems harder. We will hopefully be able to discover a few reasons why we are so reluctant to submit to God’s authority. We must also remember that bending the knee is ultimately a matter of pure obedience. You may never feel like giving your circumstance, hurt, or loss to Him; but you can choose to submit to His authority out of belief and obedience rather than emotion. Obedience is the mark of authentic surrender to God’s authority in any matter.

When I finally bent the knee to the Prince of Peace over hurts in my childhood, I realized He was directing me to forgive the person who hurt me. God did not insist on my forgiving for the sake of my perpetrator but for the sake of peace in my life. Once I began to surrender to Him in this painful area, He began to give me a supernatural ability to forgive. A segment of Scripture in Isaiah beautifully reveals the relationship

of obedience, God's authority, and peace. God has a right to all authority because of Who He is.

Read Isaiah 48:17-18. By what names is God called in verse 17?

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anointed One | <input type="checkbox"/> Holy One | <input type="checkbox"/> Redeemer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Savior | <input type="checkbox"/> Lord | <input type="checkbox"/> Prince |
| <input type="checkbox"/> God | <input type="checkbox"/> Son of Righteousness | |

Allow me to reverse the order in which He mentioned Himself by name and share with you my outlook on His right to complete authority. He is God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the Supreme author of all existence. He reigns over all and in Him all things exist. He is Lord, the Master and Owner of all living creatures. He is the covenant Maker and the covenant Keeper. He delights in humanity, His prize creation, and woos us to the riches of relationship. He is Holy. As Lord, He will never ask anything of us that is not right, good, and open to the light. He is perfect and undefiled. Lastly, He is Redeemer, the One who bought us from sin's slave master so we could experience abundant life. He bought us to set us free. "What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). Now let's consider the following question:

What would happen if we paid attention to God's commands? (Isa. 48:18).
Check any that apply.

- We would get what we asked.
- Our righteousness would be like the waves of the sea.
- We would have peace like a river.
- We would prosper and have good health.

Consider the following descriptions and applications as you imagine peace like a river.

A river is a moving stream of water. God's Word does not say we'll have peace like a pond. If a few of us were completely honest, we might admit to thinking of peaceful people as boring and a breath from death. We are apt to think, "I really want to live! I'd rather forego peace and have an exciting life!" Beloved, few bodies of water are more exciting than rivers! When was the last time you saw white-water rapids? We can have active, exciting lives without suffering through a life of turmoil.

When God used the analogy of a river, He described a peace that can be retained while life twists and turns and rolls over boulders. Let's resist picturing peaceful people as expressionless monks. To have peace like a river is to have security and tranquility of heart and mind while meeting many bumps and unexpected turns on life's journey through change. Peace is submission to a trustworthy Authority, not resignation from all activity. Remember, however, any activity that cannot be brought under the umbrella of God's authority will prove to be a source of turmoil and exhaustion.

Can you describe a time in your life when peace accompanied a busy schedule that would have caused chaos had you not been in God's will?

- Yes No. If so, briefly describe that time.

A river is a body of fresh water fed by springs or tributary streams. I've found that I can't retain a spirit of peace in the present by relying on a relationship from the past. Peace comes from an active, ongoing, and obedient relationship with the Prince of

Peace. He wants to feed us with the Living Water of His Holy Spirit and a steady stream of His Word until we have peace like a river. This and other Bible studies are examples of ways God desires to feed a peaceful river in your soul.

What are a few other ways you can give God the opportunity to keep a spring of fresh water welling up within you?

A river begins and ends with a body of water. Every river has an upland source and an ultimate outlet or mouth. Rivers are fully dependent and are always connected to other bodies of water. Likewise, peace like a river flows from a continuous connection with the upland Source, Jesus Christ, and a timely reminder that this life will ultimately spill out into a glorious eternal life. The present life is not our destination, hallelujah! We who know Christ personally are continually moving over rocks and sometimes cliffs, through narrow places and wide valleys to a heavenly destination. Until then, abiding in Christ (John 15:4, KJV) is the key to staying deliberately connected with our upland Source.

Take pleasure in knowing that God inspired His Word with great care and immaculate precision. He chose every word purposely. When He said we could have peace like a river in Isaiah 48:18, He wasn't drawing a loose analogy. He meant it. What does it take? Paying attention to God's commands (by obedience) through the power of the Holy Spirit within us. Why should we? Because God is incapable of making mistakes with our lives. Isaiah 48:17 tells us He teaches us only what is best for us. He directs us only in the way we should go. Obedience to God's authority not only brings peace like a river but righteousness like the waves of the sea. Not righteous perfection. Righteous consistency.

Can you think of any ways in which righteousness itself brings peace?

You see, God's way is the safe way. The right way. And the only peaceful way in a chaotic world. Beloved, I hope you've discovered today that peace is not beyond your reach. It's not a goal to one day meet. You can begin a life of authentic peace today. Right now. The path to peace is paved with knee-prints. Bend the knee to His trustworthy authority. Surrender every part of your life and every concern of your heart to the all-powerful, all-sufficient, all-knowing Creator of heaven and earth. "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts" (Col. 3:15).

How does God want you to respond to what He showed you today?

Conclude today's lesson by sharing any new insight you have received into Benefit 4: To experience God's peace.
