

Peace

Let the peace of Christ [God]¹ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. (Colossians 3:15)

Peace is a part of the fruit of the Spirit, so God desires that we know and experience it. Perhaps besides love, having inner peace is most sought after by people. However, life is often very difficult, and we struggle to be at peace. Instead, we tend to be weighed down by the opposite of peace, such as being worried about something or anything, or being in strife with others.

As with joy, the peace spoken of in Galatians 5:22 is not dependent on our circumstances—it is influenced from within. We should remind ourselves that Paul was in prison in Rome when he encouraged his coworker Timothy as well as the Ephesian, Philippian, and Colossian brethren to know the peace of God and live accordingly (II Timothy 2:22; Ephesians 4:3; Philippians 4:6-9; Colossians 3:15).

Understanding the source of peace is the key to living in peace. Brethren, we have peace with God because of our salvation. Before we were saved, we were enemies of God. If we believe that Christ died for our sins, His shed blood reconciles us to God—God made peace with us (Romans 5:1-11; Colossians 1:19-20). We are able to know and experience the peace of God in our daily lives because we have peace *with* God.

God is the author of peace (Romans 15:33; Ephesians 1:2). Therefore, our lives should demonstrate the peace of God. We can know the peace of God daily by turning our concerns over to Him through prayer, thinking about what He has done for us, and living our lives according to His will (Philippians 4:4-9; Colossians 3:1-3, 12-17). Furthermore, we should:

- Pursue the things that make for peace and the building up of one another (Romans 14:19).
- Live in peace with each other (II Corinthians 13:11; I Thessalonians 5:13).
- Endeavor to preserve the unity of the Spirit with each other in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:1-3).
- Pursue peace—take hold of it (II Timothy 2:22; Hebrews 12:14; I Peter 3:10-12).

Unfortunately, experiencing the peace of God seems to be elusive among brethren. Many of us seem to live in fear and discontent and behave no differently than those of the world (nonbelievers) around us. Instead of understanding God's power and sovereign will, we are afraid of or even resistant to those who are in authority over us (Romans 13:1-7). Instead of putting on the full armor of God and standing firm in the truth and our freedom in Christ (Ephesians 6:10-17; I Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 5:1), we are afraid of what others may think of us or of possible persecution and suffering. Instead of believing that the word of God and His grace are sufficient and understanding that we are already blessed with all spiritual blessings (II Corinthians 12:9-10; Ephesians 1:3; Philippians 4:11-13), we are not satisfied (content) and seek more or better things. If we walk worthy of our calling, however, recognizing that our strength and ability to do so is by God's grace, then the peace of God will rule in our hearts.

¹ The NASB says *the peace of Christ*, whereas the KJV says *the peace of God*. The latter may be more correct based on the context of the passage, but Paul conveyed to believers the grace and peace of God *and* Christ in the opening statement of all his letters. Therefore, I believe that the difference in translations is inconsequential.

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. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable [honest], whatever is right [just], whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence [virtue] and if anything worthy of praise, dwell [think] on these things. 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 4:6-9)