

4 Key Partners to Bring You God-Given Peace

I've been thinking about peace quite a bit lately. I'm probably so obsessed with peace because my life is so wild. As I write this, we are traveling. First Nebraska, then England and then Kenya, Africa! Wow! What a whirlwind. As I enjoy my very full life, I've been pausing and asking myself, "Am I feeling peaceful?" Ah. Such a great question.

According to the apostle Paul, we're "called to peace" (see Col. 3:15). Isn't that phrase intriguing? Have you ever considered that a part of your calling is peace? It's staggering to consider. God calls me and you to peace. As someone who can be a bit hyper at times, that phrase gives me pause. If it's part of my calling, I need to take peace seriously. What does it look like to let the peace of Christ rule in my life so that I am living out the calling that God has placed on me? As I've been thinking on this, I've recognized a few key partners to peace:

Key No. 1: Praise is a partner to peace. When Paul calls us to a life of peace, he's not calling us to be inauthentic. He's not saying, "Pretend everything is great, and peace will guard your heart!" No. God is truth, and He calls us to deal with our anxieties with honesty. What remains in the dark can't be healed. If we honestly pour out our hearts to Jesus, telling Him exactly how we feel, He can take our worries and exchange them for His grace. As we shift our focus to Christ and praise Him for His almighty character over our anxieties, He brings calm. The Holy Spirit changes our hearts and transforms anxiety into peace.

Key No. 2: Forgiveness is a partner to peace. When you're holding anger and bitterness in your heart towards someone, you simply can't experience peace. Instead, your mind engages

in mental arguments, plots how to get even and connives how to build walls so the other person can never hurt you again. When you forgive, peace enters and there is calm in the chaos. Over the weekend, I spoke about forgiveness. When you let others out of the prison in which you are keeping them—you set yourself free! And, you open the door to peace.

Key No. 3: Gratitude is a partner to peace. Cultivating a continual attitude of gratitude lowers blood pressure and quiets stomach ulcers. As we thank God for the beauty around us, for His goodness and for the great gifts He gives us, our brain chemistry literally changes and we're much more able to dwell in peace (1 Thess. 5:18).

Key No. 4: Rest is a partner to peace. You can't be governed by peace if you go nonstop 24/7. I know—I've tried! But rest is a part of God's plan for our lives. It's been suggested that in order to give your brain recovery time, you need 15 minutes per day of sitting in silence, with absolutely no technology, to daydream. Supposedly if you do this, your creativity will begin to soar again. Now, in all honesty, I haven't tried it yet—but it makes sense to me, and I'm going to try it soon. God has created our brains to need rest, silence and beauty to revive peace. If we're going to allow peace to rule in our hearts, we need to create the space for creative rest.

Peace can feel challenging, but I'm praying for you that the Lord of peace himself will give you peace at all times and in every way (see 1 Thess. 3:16). {eoa}

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