

Got Peace?

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✖ Peace is a precious commodity that sometimes seems just out of reach. But the Bible teaches that God has already provided us with peace. John 14:27 records Jesus' words to His disciples, which apply to followers today as well: "'Peace I leave with you; My [own] peace I now give and bequeath to you'" (The Amplified Bible). If peace is available, then it is up to us to learn how to appropriate it.

Sadly, many Christians have no idea what God's peace really feels like. The first 40 years of my life, I lived without the blessing and benefit of peace, and I can tell you from experience that life without peace is miserable.

We simply cannot enjoy life when we live in turmoil—always worried, anxious and upset about something. But Psalm 4:8 says, "In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for You, Lord, alone make me dwell in safety and confident trust." The good news for believers is that even in difficult times we can be safe, blessed and content when we are led by peace.

How do we experience this all-encompassing peace? The answer is quite simple: obedience. We are called to walk in the Spirit—to be led, guided and willingly controlled by the Holy Spirit.

But God will not force us to do what is right. He shows us what to do and leaves the choice up to us. If we make right choices, we will reap peace; if we make wrong choices, all we will have is regret.

I have often said that peace is the umpire that lets us know if we are in God's will or not. Ask yourself the following

question, and be honest with your answer: Are you walking in God's will to the best of your ability, or are there areas in your life in which you know you are not obeying Him?

You will not experience peace if God is pulling in one direction and you are pulling in the other—you will feel as though you are being torn apart.

A perfect example of what can happen when we disobey God is found in the story of Jonah. God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach repentance to the people. But Jonah did not want to go, so he boarded a ship headed for Tarshish—in the opposite direction!

A violent storm came up and frightened the men on the ship. Jonah knew he had disobeyed God, so he told the men to throw him overboard in order to deliver them from danger.

When they did what he asked them to, the storm immediately stopped, and a whale swallowed Jonah. From the whale's belly he cried out to God for deliverance and repented of his stubborn ways.

When the whale vomited Jonah out on dry land, the word of the Lord came to him again. God told him a second time to go to Nineveh and preach to the people there (see Jonah 3:1-2).

Many of the storms we face in life are the result of our own stubbornness. We may try to blame our problems on other things, but the truth is that in many instances we have been disobedient to the voice of God.

No matter how long we try to avoid God's will, we eventually must learn that God's way is better than any plan we could devise.

Peace with God is available to all of us, but we cannot have it on our own terms. We have to trust that God's way is better. God is good, and He has good things planned for His

children. His Word assures us, “For I know the thoughts and plans that I have for you, says the Lord, thoughts and plans for welfare and peace and not for evil, to give you hope in your final outcome” (Jer. 29:11).

It is far, far better to trust God to take care of us and enjoy His peace than to insist on our own way and live in fear, turmoil, and anxiety. Enjoying the peace of God requires us to trust Him enough to allow Him to lead us and take care of us.

If God is leading you to do something difficult, choose to obey Him by taking baby steps of faith. He will lead you step by step on the path toward peace. Relax and allow yourself to be led by the only One who knows what is best for you—the Prince of Peace.

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