

5 Secrets to a Achieving a Peace-Filled Life

We can have a lot of things in life, but if we don't have peace, we're never going to truly enjoy our lives the way God intended.

First Peter 3:11 (AMP) is one of my favorite scriptures. It says, "Let him search for seek it eagerly. [Do not merely desire peaceful relations with God, with your fellowmen, and with yourself, but pursue, go after them!]"

"Pursue" is a strong word. It requires action and doing whatever it takes to maintain peace in our lives. It means not always getting "our way" or having the last word in an argument. It requires us to trust God even more with the people in our lives. *But it's all worth it.*

Are you ready to enjoy new levels of peace? If so, here are some ways you can cultivate peace with God, yourself and others:

1. Receive God's forgiveness. Peace with God is the foundation for peace in every other area of our lives. Jesus is the "Prince of Peace," (Is. 9:6) and it's only through a relationship with Him that we will ever experience true contentment.

When we sin, the greatest thing we can do is repent, ask God to forgive us, and then make a decision to not live in guilt. Guilt is useless. Constantly feeling guilty actually weakens us and causes us to fall into more sin.

I encourage you to read and meditate on 1 John 1:9 (AMP): "If we [freely] admit that we have sinned and confess our sins, He is faithful and will forgive our sins [dismiss our lawlessness] and [continuously] cleanse us from all

unrighteousness.”

2. Make a decision to like yourself. This may sound funny to ask, but what kind of relationship do you have with yourself? The truth is, you can’t get along with anyone else until you get along with *you*.

For years, I dealt with self-hatred because of the sexual abuse I endured growing up. Because I didn’t like myself, it was almost impossible for me to enjoy peace with my husband or other people. However, as I spent time in God’s Word and asked Him to change me, I eventually began to see myself the way He sees me; I began to like myself!

I encourage you to find out what God says about you in His Word. Ask Him to help you change your self-image. Enjoying life and enjoying other people all begins with knowing who God says you are and truly liking yourself.

3. Don’t compare yourself to others. Comparing and competing with other people is one of the fastest ways to lose your peace and joy. There is such freedom in learning to be happy with who you are without being jealous of someone else’s skills or achievements.

For example, I have a friend who likes to memorize parts of the Bible. There was a day when I would have been threatened by that, feeling like I should do the same thing. I know a lot of Scripture, and I have even memorized several verses, but memorization has never been my strength ... and that’s okay. It doesn’t mean I am less spiritual or somehow not as good as my friend. It just means I am being myself!

4. Accept other people just the way they are. I almost wore myself out trying to change people until I realized they’re not all supposed to be like me. We are all born with different God-given personalities and were never meant to be the same.

For example, my husband Dave is easy-going and has the ability

to enjoy just about anything he does. I'll never forget our grocery trips as a young married couple. I had my list and was serious about accomplishing our mission. Dave, on the other hand, was pushing the kids around in the cart, laughing and having a great time. It made me so mad!

Dave has always been a very wise and responsible man, but I wanted him to be "serious" like me. When I finally stopped trying to change him, it brought tremendous peace. Now, I truly enjoy and value Dave's personality. In fact, over the years the Lord has helped me to enjoy my life and be even more like him!

Sure, we all have areas where we truly need to change, but only God can change us. The best thing we can do for others is to pray for them ... and accept them right where they are.

5. Let God have control of your life. Proverbs 16:9 (AMP) says, "A man's mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps and makes them sure." I used to have a plan for everything—including my husband, my kids and my ministry—and would sometimes get frustrated if things didn't go accordingly. In other words, I wanted the Lord to do things my way! However, God is smarter than we are, and He wants us to place our trust in His great plan for our lives.

I often say that trust requires unanswered questions. In the moment, we may not always understand "why," but like the psalmist David we can say, "My times are in Your hands" (Psalm 31:15). Later on, we'll look back and discover the Lord had our best in mind all along.

I encourage you to continue trusting God even when things don't make sense. It's one sure way to enjoy your life ... *and experience more peace than ever before.*

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