

Peace: The Immediate Answer to Life's Frustrations

Peace is so important. Life isn't worth living if you don't have peace.

I know what it's like to live with no peace at all. I grew up in a house that was full of turmoil, and I learned to respond to my frustrations with anger and bitterness and a lot of yelling and screaming. It was just the normal atmosphere that I lived in. But thankfully, God gave me a husband who is extremely peaceful, and that helped me realize what peace is and how I can have it.

There was a time when Dave's peaceful temperament actually aggravated me because I wanted him to get upset when I was upset. At first, I thought it was because he just didn't care if I was upset. But that wasn't the case at all. He just knew how to cast his care on God (1 Peter 5:7), and his peaceful consistency became an example to me. Dave didn't preach that message to me. He *became* the message. That's what God wants us to do for other people.

We live in a world that's full of anger, stress and strife. Even though many people have a desperate need for peace, they may not be interested in hearing about God and what He's doing in your life. But you can share Christ with them by maintaining a peaceful attitude week after week, and month after month. Sometimes it takes years, but God will use you in an amazing way if you will consistently walk in the fruit of the Spirit.

Peace is not something that comes naturally to people. Sometimes it is downright difficult to stay peaceful, but God is always here to help us!

Jesus said in John 14:27, *Peace I leave with you; My [own]*

peace I now give and bequeath to you.

Peace is a gift God gives us, and it grows in us just like fruit grows on trees—with time and nurturing. As we work with the Holy Spirit to develop the fruit of peace in our life, He teaches us how to deal with our frustrations in a completely different way. One thing I learned is that it wasn't my circumstances that made me upset, it was how I responded to them.

I remember getting so tired of being upset all the time. Finally, I decided I was going to learn to walk in peace if it was the last thing I ever did.

I started by praying, and studying peace in the Bible. I asked God to show me how the devil stole my peace. Then I started paying attention to how I responded to people and situations and made a real effort to change my behavior.

Sometimes you need to learn what the root of your problem is before you can make any real progress. For example, if I lost my peace every morning, I'd have to stop and ask myself why. It may have been that I didn't spend any time the night before getting prepared for the morning when just taking a few extra minutes to get organized and lay out my clothes would have been an easy fix. But I realized there was a deeper problem underneath.

God showed me that I had to start taking responsibility for my own happiness, instead of doing what I had always done before, which was blaming everyone but myself. "Well, if you would do this, then I wouldn't get upset" or "If you'd help me more around the house, then I wouldn't have to be late all the time."

In those days, whenever I started to get upset, I could feel the anger bubbling up inside me and my main goal was to stop it before it ever got out of my mouth, because saying what I wanted to say *right then* would have made the situation ten

times worse.

The bottom line is, if what you're about to do is not peaceful, it's not God's will. More than anything, we need to follow peace.

Colossians 3:15 says, *And let the peace (soul harmony which comes) from Christ rule (act as umpire continually) in your hearts [deciding and settling with finality all questions that arise in your minds....*

It takes a lot of growing and maturing to let the Holy Spirit have His way in your heart. But if it's your heart's desire to be more like Christ, He will help you accomplish your goal. And when you've come to a new level of maturity in Christ, that's something the devil cannot take away from you.

While you're praying and waiting for your attitudes to change, and for your circumstances to improve, stand firm in your faith. No matter how you feel, continue to say, "I'm believing, and God is working in my life."

God is not nearly as interested in changing *our circumstances* as He is in changing *us*. As a matter of fact, our circumstances are what we must use to practice a peaceful attitude. When something or someone pushes your buttons today, let God have His way and say, "I refuse to live without peace."

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