

## Things you can't afford to lose – Peace

I have found three important things we possess which the Bible says we must 'hold on to'. They are things we cannot afford to lose. They are qualities that must be guarded because they have a great reward. The first such thing is **confidence**. Hebrews 10:35 says, ***“So do not throw away your CONFIDENCE it will be richly rewarded.”*** The next quality you need to hold on to at all cost is **joy**. Proverbs 10:28 says, ***“The hope of the righteous is JOY.”*** And, the third and final thing is **peace**. Numbers 6:26 says, ***“May the Lord turn His face toward you and give you PEACE.”***

Judges 6:24 tells us that the Lord is peace. When the heavenly host announced the birth of Jesus they joyously proclaimed, ***“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men”*** [Luke 2:14]. Therefore, from the very start, it was evident that the securing and establishing of peace, and the promotion of peace, were the primary reasons for Jesus coming. And He paid the necessary price for our peace to be acquired legitimately. **Isaiah 53:5** ***“The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.”***

As with both *confidence* and *joy*, peace is an absolute necessity if you're going to have sufficient *strength* to fulfil God's perfect plan for your life. Isaiah 30:15 says, ***“Confidence shall be your strength,”*** and Nehemiah 8:10 declares ***“The joy of the Lord is your strength.”*** And, Psalm 29:11 reveals that there is a direct correlation between peace and strength – ***“The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with PEACE.”***

So much of the time we are looking for the spectacular in order to see and experience God's awesome power; and all along it is evident (or present) in **stillness**. Remember God's revelation to Elijah? 1 Kings 19: 11-12, ***Then God said, “Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord.” And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.*** Other translations read; “a gentle whisper”, “a quiet gentle sound”, “a peaceful breeze.” But whatever words we use, they all suggest stillness, and stillness is a perfect expression of peace.

Notice how God chose to communicate with Elijah through something distinctly unspectacular. Yet it was something unmistakable! His manifest presence and His means of communication were truly representative of His divine character. God is PEACE. In fact, a sure way of knowing that God's presence is with you is through peace. It is probably the best way of knowing that God is pleased with you, or that He is in agreement with you. Following *peace* makes everything idiot-proof!

The Holy Spirit in you is continually trying to manifest the **Prince of Peace** in every situation. He wants to reveal Christ, so He never leads you any other way. Fear or anxiety is never the way forward! Worry and stress are the devil's tools for accomplishing his evil plans, and pressure is how he gets you to do it. Far too many Christians live in Job's confession, ***“I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil”*** (Job 3:26).

Yet, they all have at their disposal one of the most powerful spiritual tools – supernatural peace; a peace that surpasses all human knowledge. ***“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”*** (Philippians 4:7). Notice, peace protects the two main

areas of your existence. Those “parts” of you that determine every decision you make. Understand this fact; more than anything else, your life is influenced by what you have in your heart and in your mind.

Also, the *peace* mentioned here is not a peace from God, but the actual peace of God (a peace that is the manifest presence of God Himself). This divine peace is a sense of stillness that floods the soul of a believer when he is leaning hard upon God. People of the world cannot understand it at all, and when it happens to you there is always a sense of mystery about it. You are often surprised at your own lack of anxiety in the face of adverse circumstances. All of us need this special kind of peace to manifest in times of trouble. The *peace of God* builds a fortress around your heart and mind (your thought life).

And so effective is it that nothing negative can ever penetrate. In a modern society where anxiety, neuroses, nervous breakdowns, tranquillisers, and mental distress are on the increase – what a needed tonic such peace is! How many times in the Gospels do we hear the Lord Jesus say, “*Peace be with you.*” When praying for the Thessalonians, the apostle Paul says, “*Now may the Lord of **peace** himself give you **peace** at all times and in every way.*”

***At all times an in every way!*** The Lord of peace (the Prince of Peace Himself) can give you supernatural peace at all times and He can bring it about in any way He pleases! Therefore, there isn’t a time or a place – or any situation or circumstance – that God’s peace can not impregnate. Not only can peace build a fortress around your mind and your heart, it can flood every aspect of your life. This is why we need to experience **peace like a river**.

Isaiah 66:12, ***For this is what the LORD says: “I will extend peace like a river, and the wealth of nations like a flooding stream.”*** This verse implies that when God’s peace is extended like a river, wealth and riches will manifest like a flooding stream. I’m sure we’d all like some of that! Peace and prosperity are very good partners. How often do you seek prosperity but fail to ask for peace first? What an excellent lesson to learn? Any prosperity you may be seeking can only flood (enter) your circumstances through PEACE. Peace first, then prosperity is sure to follow!

The Greek *noun* translated **peace** (*'eirini'*) describes six attributes – all of which come direct from God;

(1) *Harmonious relationships* (Ephesians 2:14 – “For He Himself is our **peace**, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility”)

(2) *Friendliness* (1 Samuel 20:42 – Jonathan said to David, “Go in **peace**, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord”)

(3) *Freedom from molestation* (Psalm 4:8 – “I will lie down and sleep in **peace**, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety”)

(4) *Order in a nation or state* (2 Chronicles 20:30 – “And the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at **peace**, for his God had given him rest on every side”)

(5) *Harmonised relationship between God and man* (Ezekiel 37:26 – “I will make a covenant of **peace** with them; it will be an everlasting covenant”)

(6) *A sense of rest and contentment* (Isaiah 14:7 – “All the lands are at rest and at **peace**; they break into singing”)

## ACCEPTED

One of the most basic human needs is *the need to be accepted*. “*Acceptance is what we wish for ourselves and often deny others.*” Yet, the first thing to do is to realise that unless you are accepted by God nothing else in life will satisfy you. God desires for everyone, regardless of their nationality or ethnic orientation, to come into relationship with Him. In Jesus Christ there are no barriers, therefore, God's unconditional love is available for all of mankind, and can be received by anyone and everyone.

Man has become very good at building class structures and creating barriers between ethnic groups, and in so doing, he effectively removes the other person's dignity. If we take away a man's dignity we affect him so deeply that it will change his attitude to life permanently. When dying from aids, Arthur Ashe was asked how painful it had been to suffer rejection through the stigma of being HIV positive, and on his death bed he was heard to answer, “*The greatest rejection I have suffered was still because of the colour of my skin.*”

It's hard to believe that a dying man would consider the suffering experienced through rejection and prejudice because he was black, to be far greater than the suffering experienced through having a socially unacceptable disease like aids.

This is why it is critical that we accept people as they are. If God is prepared to do this, why can't we?

Many people in the Bible constantly cried out, “***Let me find favour*** (let me be acceptable) ***in the sight of my Lord.***” Understanding the special privileges you have in Christ helps to create in you a true sense of self-worth, and it develops a beneficial dependence on Him. Also, understanding God's unmerited favour breeds a healthy acceptance of who you are – based on the knowledge that He has already accepted you as you are!

Remember, in God's household you are good and *acceptable* in His sight. And you've been fully *accepted* in His family. No matter what happened to cause you to see yourself differently, the truth is, in God's eyes you are valuable and precious! And always will be!

It doesn't matter how many times you've been downtrodden, crumpled or tainted with dirt you are never worthless. When life's circumstances have overpowered you, or you've made bad decisions; and even when you've let yourself down and tainted yourself, you do not lose your value in God's eyes.

To Him, dirty or clean, crumpled or finely creased, you are still priceless! He loves you as you are... Our Lord Jesus said this, “***Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you***” (John 14:27). Don't throw away your peace – It Has great reward.