

Peace with God and the Peace of God

The Difference Between Position and Experience

Series 1-10

By Paul Tackett





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First Edition — 2026

Published by

VerseQuest Ministries

Peace with God today.

The peace of God today.

The Prince of Peace tomorrow.

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Peace with God and the Peace of God — The Difference Between Position and Experience

Peace with God and the Peace of God

The Difference Between Position and Experience

There are two kinds of peace in the New Testament that Christians constantly mix together, and once they are mixed together, a saved man can spend half his Christian life fighting battles that God settled before he ever knew there was a war. Romans 5:1 says, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Philippians 4:7 speaks of “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding.” Those are not two different ways of saying the same thing. Peace **with** God is positional. The peace **of** God is experiential. One rests upon justification; the other operates in the believer’s heart and mind. One was settled by the blood of Jesus Christ; the other is enjoyed as the Christian prays, believes, obeys, gives thanks, thinks biblically, and refuses to let every passing fear set up headquarters between his ears. A believer can possess the first without consistently enjoying the second. That single distinction explains more unnecessary Christian confusion than a library full of religious self-help books ever will.

Before salvation, man’s fundamental problem is not anxiety, low self-esteem, lack of purpose, unresolved childhood memories, a poor support system, or insufficient positive thinking. The natural man is a sinner before a holy God. Romans 5:10 says, “when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” Enemies. There is a word modern religion would like to place in a museum behind glass where nobody has to touch it. The sinner is not a spiritually inconvenienced friend of God who needs some encouragement. He is on the wrong side of God’s righteousness. He may be polite, educated, religious, generous, patriotic, respectable, and able to quote enough Bible to decorate a refrigerator, but without Christ he is still unreconciled. God did not send His Son to give enemies coping skills. He sent Him to die for them. The gospel does not put a scented candle in the rebel’s bunker. It ends the war through the blood of the cross.

That is why peace with God can never be understood apart from justification. Romans does not tell the sinner to manufacture a peaceful feeling and then assume heaven has accepted him. It says, “being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” The order matters. God declares the believing sinner righteous on the basis of Jesus Christ, and peace with God follows that verdict. The believer is no longer standing before God as a condemned enemy awaiting judgment. The penalty was borne by Another. The debt was paid by Another. The blood was shed by Another. The righteousness in which the believer stands is not self-manufactured. Religion keeps trying to crawl into the courtroom after the verdict and offer additional paperwork. Grace shuts the door and says the Judge has spoken.

Peace with God is not a truce negotiated by your performance; it is a settled result of Christ’s finished work.

But then comes the Christian life, and here is where many believers become their own worst theologians. They are justified, yet they worry. They are accepted in Christ, yet they feel rejected. They stand in grace, yet they imagine themselves balancing over judgment by one trembling thread. They have access to the Father, yet they approach Him as though the door might be locked this morning. Their position is settled, but their experience is all over the map. Romans 5:2 says we have “access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.” Stand means stand. It does not mean wobble in and out of grace according to the emotional temperature of the day. Feelings can rise, fall, race, sink, panic, rejoice, grieve, and change their mind before lunch. God’s declaration does not change every time the nervous system sends up a flare. **The believer’s feet are standing on ground his emotions did not create and cannot remove.**

This is where the peace of God becomes practical. Philippians 4 is not telling lost men how to be reconciled to God. It is telling saints what to do when care begins taking over the machinery of the mind. “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” Then comes the promise that “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” God does not promise to explain every circumstance until nothing remains mysterious. Sometimes the answer comes; sometimes the answer waits. Sometimes the door opens; sometimes grace becomes sufficient behind a door that remains closed. Sometimes the storm stops; sometimes the ship keeps pitching while God teaches the sailor not to drown in his own thoughts. **The peace of God is not always an explanation. Sometimes it is a guard posted at the gate while the battle continues outside.**

And that peace must rule. Colossians 3:15 says, “let the peace of God rule in your hearts.” Something is going to rule. Fear will gladly take the chair. Anger will volunteer. Bitterness already has a résumé. Imagination can manufacture enough disasters before breakfast to keep the entire mind occupied until midnight. Somebody’s opinion wants a vote. The news cycle wants permanent residence. The flesh will hold an election every five minutes if you let it. Scripture says let the peace of God rule. That does not mean following mystical inward impressions as though God buried a private revelation system somewhere behind the ribs. “I have peace about it” is not a substitute for “Thus saith the Lord.” Biblical peace never contradicts biblical truth. The Holy Ghost does not give somebody calm permission to disobey the Book He inspired. **Peace is a poor compass when separated from Scripture, but it is a wonderful atmosphere when Scripture governs the house.**

That is why the words of God become indispensable in this subject. Psalm 119:165 says, “Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.” The doctrinal

setting belongs to Israel under the law, and the Church is not Israel, but the spiritual principle is unmistakable: God's truth gives stability in a world built to shake the mind. The Christian has the completed Scriptures and is told, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16). God did not leave His people dependent upon headlines, moods, trends, inner voices, popular personalities, religious celebrities, or whatever somebody uploaded ten minutes ago. He gave a Book. Doctrine tells the believer where he stands. Promises remind him who God is. Commands keep him from manufacturing unnecessary misery. Prophecy reminds him that history is not driving without a steering wheel. Examples show where other men stepped into holes so he does not have to measure the depth with both feet.

The Christian who feeds on the world all day and Scripture for five minutes should not be surprised when the world's voice sounds louder. Men sit under hours of outrage, speculation, fear, argument, political noise, scandal, crisis, financial predictions, medical fears, wars, rumors of wars, and somebody shouting that the sky is falling for the seventh time this week—and then wonder why the mind will not rest. There is no mystery there. A man can starve truth and fatten fear until fear can hardly fit through the door. Philippians 4:8 commands believers to think on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy. The mind is not an open field where every thought gets grazing rights. **You cannot let the world preach to you sixteen hours a day and then blame God because its sermon stuck.**

Neither does biblical peace mean compromise. Romans 12:18 says, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." Every phrase deserves its place. "If it be possible" means peace is not always possible. "As much as lieth in you" means you are responsible for your spirit and conduct, not for another man's rebellion. Christ was the Prince of Peace, and men crucified Him. Paul preached the gospel of peace, and riots followed him from city to city. Elijah stood against Baal. John the Baptist confronted Herod. Paul withstood Peter "to the face" when the truth of the gospel was at stake. Biblical peace is not cowardice wearing a church suit. It does not require truth to sit in the corner while error gets the microphone. Yet the believer can stand without becoming fleshly. **Truth does not need your temper to make it true, and conviction does not require bitterness to make it strong.**

There will also be seasons when peace must operate in suffering rather than after suffering. Jesus said in John 16:33, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." The Lord did not advertise a trouble-proof Christianity. He told the truth before the trial arrived. The believer may face grief, rejection, sickness, betrayal, unanswered prayer, financial difficulty, persecution, disappointment, and long stretches

where providence refuses to explain itself. None of those circumstances cancels Romans 5:1. A Christian can still have peace with God while walking through something that severely tests the peace of God. Daniel's three Hebrews were not kept from the furnace; God met them in it. Paul's thorn was not removed; grace became sufficient. Paul and Silas sang before the prison doors opened. **Sometimes God changes the circumstance. Sometimes He changes the believer's relationship to the circumstance. Either way, the throne never changes occupants.**

We must also expose counterfeit peace, because not every calm feeling comes from God. Jeremiah 6:14 records false prophets saying, "Peace, peace; when there is no peace." A man can be perfectly calm and completely wrong. A seared conscience can be quiet. A lost man can feel secure. Religion can soothe him. Money can distract him. Morality can flatter him. Church membership can reassure him. Philosophy can teach him acceptance. A false teacher can tell him there is nothing to worry about. Then judgment arrives right on schedule. Peace that contradicts Scripture is counterfeit no matter how pleasant it feels. Jonah slept while running from God. The sailors were frightened, but the sleeping prophet was the one disobeying. **Never make tranquility the final test of truth. A lie can sing a lullaby just as softly as truth can.**

And finally, this series must end where the Bible's entire subject of peace eventually points: Jesus Christ Himself. Isaiah calls Him "The Prince of Peace" and says, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end" (Isaiah 9:6-7). Notice the connection: government and peace. The world wants peace without the government of the Prince of Peace. That has been mankind's program from Babel onward. Men hold conferences, draft treaties, establish alliances, build institutions, deploy armies to preserve peace, and then prepare the next generation to fight the wars the previous generation promised would never happen again. The problem is not insufficient diplomacy. The problem goes down into the fallen heart. Lasting peace cannot be built while the rightful King remains rejected. **The world keeps trying to produce the fruit while cutting down the Tree.**

The prophetic promises of Christ's kingdom must remain exactly where God placed them. The Church does not replace Israel. The throne of David does not dissolve into a vague metaphor. Isaiah 9:7 says the Messiah will reign "upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom." Luke 1:32 says God will give Jesus "the throne of his father David." Romans 11 says God has not cast away His people. The present Church Age does not cancel Israel's national promises; it reveals another part of God's purpose while those promises await their appointed fulfillment. The Rapture of the Church and the Second Advent are not the same event, and Christ's future earthly kingdom is not the present Church in disguise. **God**

knows the difference between a bride, a nation, a throne, a kingdom, and a cloud. Bible students ought to give Him the same courtesy.

So the road before us is clear. We will begin with the ended war of justification, move through reconciliation by blood, standing in grace, anxious care, the rule of peace, the stabilizing power of Scripture, peace without compromise, peace in suffering, and the deadly counterfeit of false peace. Then we will finish at the throne of the Prince of Peace, where the subject that began inside the believer reaches outward into the government of Jesus Christ over the earth. The whole series turns on one simple but vital distinction: peace **with** God is the believer's settled position through Christ; the peace **of** God is the believer's daily experience as truth governs the heart and mind. Confuse those two and you will spend your life trying to feel your way into something Christ already purchased. Understand them, and the Christian life begins to stand upright.

Calvary ended the war between God and the believing sinner. Daily faith keeps the old battlefield from rebuilding itself in the mind. Scripture keeps fear from becoming theology. Prayer keeps burdens from becoming idols. Thanksgiving keeps trouble from erasing memory. Obedience keeps the believer from creating storms God never sent. Right division keeps promises in their proper place. Prophecy keeps history from looking accidental. And the coming King keeps the final horizon fixed when everything else seems to move. **Peace with God is the ground beneath your feet. The peace of God is the guard around your heart. And the Prince of Peace is the King toward whom the whole story is moving.**

1 of 10 — Peace with God and the Peace of God — The War Is Over Even When Your Mind Hasn't Gotten the News

Key Passage: Romans 5:1 — “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Romans 5:1 does not begin with a suggestion for calming your nerves. It begins with a verdict from the court of heaven. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Every word is loaded. “Therefore” reaches backward into the argument of Romans 1–4, where the Holy Ghost has already stripped the sinner of every rag he might wave in God's face as evidence of his own goodness. Jew and Gentile alike have been shut up under sin. Religion cannot save him, law keeping cannot save him, circumcision cannot save him, morality cannot save him, sincerity cannot save him, and Abraham himself was justified by faith before anybody could turn him into a mascot for salvation by works. Then Romans 5 opens the courtroom door and announces the result.

The believing sinner is justified. God is no longer dealing with him as a condemned enemy awaiting judgment. The war is over, and heaven does not need the believer's feelings to ratify the treaty.

That distinction must be hammered down because modern Christianity has become terribly skilled at confusing position with experience. A man wakes up troubled and concludes that God must be displeased with him. He has a difficult week and starts questioning whether he is secure. He cannot feel peace, so he assumes he does not have peace. That is like a soldier sitting in a foxhole three weeks after the armistice, firing at every rustling bush because nobody told his nerves what headquarters already declared. Romans 5:1 tells the believer what headquarters has declared. "We have peace with God." Not "we are trying to obtain it." Not "we may have it if we remain calm enough." Not "we can keep it provided we never stumble." We have it. The verb is not waiting for your pulse rate, your mood, your performance review, or your spiritual weather report. God settled the matter judicially through Jesus Christ. Your mind may still be ducking artillery that stopped firing at Calvary.

Before a man can understand peace with God, he must first understand why peace was necessary. The natural man does not merely need encouragement; he needs reconciliation. He is not born standing in a neutral zone where God is waiting to see which direction he chooses. Romans 5:10 says, "when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." There is the word modern religion would rather whisper: enemies. The sinner may be polite, educated, charitable, cultured, baptized, patriotic, and admired by his neighbors, but without Christ he is on the wrong side of God's holiness. The gospel is not God offering emotional wellness to basically decent people. It is God announcing peace to rebels on the basis of a sacrifice they could never provide. Calvary did not improve the battlefield. Calvary ended the war for every sinner who believes. Until that is understood, the peace of God will always be confused with temporary feelings, and the peace with God purchased by Christ will be reduced to religious sentiment.

1. Justification Is a Verdict, Not a Vibration

Romans 5:1 begins with "being justified by faith," and that phrase establishes the foundation beneath everything that follows. Justification is not God pretending that sin does not matter. It is not God lowering the standard because mankind could not reach it. It is not a heavenly participation trophy handed to sinners because everybody tried hard. God remains righteous while declaring the believing sinner righteous because Jesus Christ satisfied the demands of divine justice. Romans 3:26 says that God is "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." God does not have to corrupt His own courtroom to save the defendant. The bill was paid. The judgment fell. The blood was shed. The

resurrection proved the sacrifice was accepted. Consequently, when the sinner believes, God does not place him on spiritual probation and tell him to report back every thirty days. He justifies him. Religion keeps reopening the case. Grace says the Judge has already rendered the verdict.

This is why feelings make such miserable theologians. A feeling can tell you that you are tired, frightened, discouraged, excited, angry, relieved, or hungry. It cannot tell you whether God has justified you. Your stomach is not an inspired commentary on Romans. Your nervous system did not write the epistle. If salvation depended upon maintaining a particular emotional temperature, half the church would lose eternal life before breakfast and recover it sometime after lunch. Yet countless believers live exactly that way. They measure their standing by the sensation of the moment. When they feel close to God, they think the doctrine must be working. When they feel troubled, they imagine heaven has changed its mind. But Romans says justification comes “by faith,” not by feeling. Faith takes God at His word. The believer’s assurance therefore rests on something outside himself: the finished work of Christ and the written promise of God. Feelings change rooms every five minutes. God’s verdict stays where He put it.

The very order of the verse matters. First comes justification; then comes peace with God. Peace is not the cause of justification. It is the consequence. You do not work yourself into a peaceful state so God will accept you. God accepts the believer in Christ, and that settled acceptance establishes peace. Ephesians 1:6 says He “hath made us accepted in the beloved.” That is stronger than any passing sensation. A man can stand in a thunderstorm and still own the deed to his house. The storm does not transfer the property. In the same way, emotional turbulence does not cancel the believer’s standing. The Christian may need correction, confession, chastening, renewed fellowship, or a good dose of Scripture because his thoughts have gotten loose, but none of those things reverses justification. God did not justify the believer with a pencil so He could erase the verdict every time the man had a bad Tuesday.

2. The Sinner Was Not Misunderstood—He Was an Enemy

Romans 5 will not permit us to sentimentalize the condition of the lost man. Verse 6 calls us “ungodly.” Verse 8 calls us “sinners.” Verse 10 calls us “enemies.” That is not flattering, but truth was never required to flatter anybody. Men prefer language that leaves a little polish on human nature. They talk about people being “spiritually disconnected,” “searching,” “wounded,” or “on a journey.” The Bible goes straight through the upholstery and names the condition. Man is guilty before God. His problem is not merely that he has failed to reach his potential; his problem is that he has sinned against his Creator. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). The distance between

sinful man and holy God is not closed by self-esteem. You cannot compliment a rebel into reconciliation. A criminal may feel very positive about himself on the way to sentencing, but the judge is not consulting his mood.

The enmity is deeper than open atheism. Romans 8:7 says, “the carnal mind is enmity against God.” A man does not have to shake his fist at heaven to prove the point. He proves it every time he substitutes his judgment for God’s, every time he rejects God’s authority, every time he loves darkness rather than light, and every time he imagines that his own righteousness should purchase what Christ alone could provide. Religion itself can become camouflage for rebellion. Cain brought an offering, but he brought the wrong one. The Pharisee in Luke 18 prayed, but his prayer was a monument to himself. A man can carry a Bible under one arm while carrying his own righteousness under the other, and the second burden will sink him. Peace with God begins only when the sinner quits negotiating terms and receives God’s terms: justification by faith through Jesus Christ.

That makes the gospel far more glorious than the thin message commonly offered today. God did not send His Son merely to make enemies feel less anxious about being enemies. He reconciled them. Colossians 1:20 says Christ made “peace through the blood of his cross.” There is the price of peace. Not incense. Not candles. Not penance. Not sacraments. Not a moral cleanup campaign. Blood. The cross shows both the wickedness of sin and the greatness of divine grace. If sin were a minor defect, Calvary was unnecessary. If man could repair himself, Christ died in vain. But the Son of God took the sinner’s place, bore judgment, shed His blood, died, was buried, and rose again. The world calls that message narrow because the world wants ten thousand exits from a burning building. God provided one Door, and the remarkable thing is not that there is only one. The remarkable thing is that rebels were given any Door at all.

3. Calvary Did Not Arrange a Ceasefire—It Made Peace

A ceasefire is temporary. Both armies remain armed, suspicious, and prepared for the shooting to begin again. That is how many Christians imagine their relationship with God. They picture salvation as a nervous truce: God has agreed not to condemn them today, provided they behave well enough to keep Him from reconsidering tomorrow. One failure, one season of weakness, one ugly thought, one neglected duty, and they imagine heaven reaching for the artillery again. But Romans 5:1 does not say we have a ceasefire with God. It says we have “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” The peace rests upon Christ, not upon our ability to maintain diplomatic relations. Hebrews 10:14 says, “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” One offering. Perfected for ever. That does not sound like an armistice written in disappearing ink.

The peace accomplished at Calvary is inseparable from substitution. Isaiah 53, speaking prophetically of the suffering Servant, says, “the chastisement of our peace was upon him” (Isaiah 53:5). The punishment necessary for peace fell upon Another. In the Church Age, the believer looks back at the completed work of Jesus Christ and knows that the wrath he deserved was borne by his Substitute. Second Corinthians 5:21 says, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” There is the great exchange. Christ took what belonged to us, and we receive what belongs to Him. Modern religion wants to improve the sinner until God can tolerate him. The gospel crucifies that whole project. God does not renovate Adam until Adam becomes acceptable. He puts the believer in Christ. No paint job on the old condemned house could accomplish what God accomplished by giving the sinner an entirely new standing.

Once that standing is understood, the believer stops treating every failure as though Calvary must happen again. Christ “once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:18). Once. The word should save many Christians a great deal of unnecessary theological panic. Yes, sin in the believer’s life matters. Yes, fellowship can be damaged. Yes, chastening is real. Yes, the Judgment Seat of Christ is real. Grace is not a license to live carelessly. But none of those truths should be twisted into the teaching that the justified believer becomes God’s condemned enemy again every time he fails. A father may discipline his son without dragging him back to the courthouse and declaring him an orphan. Calvary settled the judicial question. The Christian life deals with fellowship, growth, obedience, and reward on the foundation of a relationship Christ already purchased.

4. “We Have Peace” Means the Possession Is Present

The wording of Romans 5:1 is gloriously inconvenient for every system that keeps the believer hanging over hell by a religious thread. “We have peace with God.” Present possession. The verse does not say, “We hope someday to obtain peace if our final score is high enough.” It does not say, “We have peace until the next serious failure.” It does not say, “We have peace as long as our faith never trembles.” Paul writes to justified believers and speaks of peace as theirs. This fits the whole structure of Church Age salvation. Romans 8:1 says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:6 says God “hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Colossians 2:10 says, “And ye are complete in him.” Religion keeps handing the Christian a ladder. Scripture keeps telling him where God has already seated him.

This present possession does not mean the believer always enjoys the emotional benefits of what he possesses. A millionaire can lose sleep worrying about a twenty-dollar bill. His

anxiety does not empty the bank. A man may possess a secure house and still jump at every sound in the hallway. His fear does not remove the locks. In the same manner, a believer can possess peace with God while failing to enjoy the peace of God. That distinction is not wordplay; it explains a great deal of Christian misery. The standing is fixed in Christ. The daily state varies with faith, obedience, prayer, thought life, fellowship, and attention to Scripture. Philippians 4 deals with the peace of God guarding the believer's heart and mind. Romans 5 deals with peace with God resulting from justification. Mix those two and you will eventually make salvation depend upon the condition of your nerves.

This also protects the believer from introspection masquerading as spirituality. There is a legitimate place for self-examination, confession, and dealing honestly with sin, but some Christians spend so much time taking their spiritual temperature that they never get around to believing what God said. They dig around inside themselves looking for evidence that Romans 5:1 is still true, as though the proof of God's faithfulness were buried under their ribs. The proof is at Calvary and in the Book. Faith looks outward to Christ. Unbelief keeps rummaging through the basement of the emotions with a flashlight. The believer who continually asks, "Do I feel justified?" has asked the wrong question. The question is, "What hath God said?" When God says, "we have peace with God," faith bows its head and says Amen even while the emotions are still trying to schedule another committee meeting.

5. The Mind Can Keep Fighting After Heaven Has Declared Peace

Here we reach the practical contradiction that gives this essay its title. The war can be over while the mind has not gotten the news. A veteran may wake from sleep years after battle, his body safely home while his imagination briefly returns to the field. Something similar can happen spiritually. The Christian has been reconciled to God, yet old patterns of fear, guilt, religious bondage, and unbelief keep replaying accusations. He knows Romans 5:1 on paper but lives as though God is perpetually standing over him with a hammer. That is not humility. It is failure to reckon with revealed truth. Humility agrees with God. If God says the believer has peace through Christ, then acting as though Christ failed to secure it does not make a man more reverent. It merely gives his feelings greater authority than Scripture.

The devil has no objection to a Christian possessing riches he never uses. He is perfectly content for the believer to have peace with God doctrinally while living like a fugitive experientially. Revelation 12 calls Satan "the accuser of our brethren," and accusation has always been one of his favorite weapons. He points to yesterday, to weakness, to inconsistency, to unanswered questions, and to every place where the believer has failed. The answer is not to pretend those failures never occurred. The answer is to put them beneath the blood and then stand where God put you. Romans 8:33 asks, "Who shall lay

any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." That is courtroom language again. The prosecutor may shout himself hoarse, but when the Judge has justified the defendant on the basis of Christ's righteousness, the noise from the gallery does not reverse the verdict.

The believer therefore must learn to distinguish conviction from condemnation. The Holy Ghost will deal specifically with sin and bring the Christian to confession and correction. First John 1:9 gives the believer provision for fellowship: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." Condemnation, however, throws a fog over everything. It whispers that God has abandoned you, Christ's work was insufficient, your standing is gone, and you are back where you began. That voice does not harmonize with Romans 5. Biblical conviction points to a specific wrong and brings the believer back into fellowship. Condemnation tries to erase the cross with a dirty eraser. One produces repentance; the other produces paralysis. The Christian should take sin seriously without taking the devil's theology seriously. There is a considerable difference.

6. Religion Keeps Reopening a Case God Closed

Nothing irritates human pride quite like a salvation in which man cannot claim partial ownership. Romans 4:5 says, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." That verse has wrecked more religious construction projects than a bulldozer with a full tank. Man wants to contribute something. If he cannot pay the whole bill, he would at least like to leave a tip. So religion develops systems in which Christ begins salvation and human performance finishes it, Christ opens the door and sacraments keep it open, Christ pays most of the debt and moral endurance covers the closing costs. Scripture refuses the arrangement. Peace with God comes "through our Lord Jesus Christ." If your peace finally rests upon your church membership, baptism, perseverance, ritual, morality, or ability to stay impressive, then Christ has become an assistant rather than a Saviour.

This is why legalistic religion produces people who are endlessly uncertain. If peace depends upon performance, how much performance is enough? If sin removes justification, which sin does it? How many times may a man repent before heaven closes the account? How sincere must the repentance be? How long must he maintain victory before God trusts him again? Once you leave the finished work of Christ, you enter a swamp with no bottom. Religion can keep a man busy his entire life measuring himself with a ruler that changes length every Sunday. Grace ends the madness. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." The believer does not obey in order to convince God to keep him saved. He obeys because he belongs to the One who saved him. Good works

belong in the Christian life, but putting them into the foundation of justification is like installing curtains before pouring concrete. Everything is out of order.

The settled position of the believer actually gives stronger grounds for holiness, not weaker ones. Romans does not move from justification to careless living. By chapter 6 Paul says, “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” Grace does not excuse rebellion; grace removes the condemned sinner from Adam and places him in Christ, then teaches him to walk accordingly. Titus 2:11–12 says “the grace of God” teaches believers that, “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,” they should “live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” The man who thinks eternal security encourages sin has not understood either security or grace. A son does not become more obedient by wondering every morning whether he is still in the family. Security gives him a fixed relationship from which obedience can grow. God closes the courtroom case, then begins the Father’s work in the household.

7. Faith Must Tell the Mind What God Has Already Said

The Christian life repeatedly requires the believer to bring his thinking into agreement with his position. Romans 6 uses the word “reckon”: “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:11). To reckon is not to imagine something into existence. It is to count as true what God has declared true. That principle applies directly to peace with God. The believer does not create reconciliation by thinking positively. He recognizes reconciliation because God has already accomplished it. Biblical faith is not mental magic. It does not say, “Everything will be fine because I choose optimism.” It says, “God has spoken, Christ has finished the work, and I will bring my thoughts under that authority.” Positive thinking tries to train the mind to believe in itself. Faith trains the mind to stop arguing with God.

That means the troubled believer must learn to answer his own accusations with Scripture. When the mind says, “God must be against me,” Romans 5:1 says otherwise. When fear says, “You are condemned,” Romans 8:1 says otherwise. When memory says, “Your past still owns you,” Second Corinthians 5:17 says, “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” When religion says, “You are not complete until you add something,” Colossians 2:10 says, “ye are complete in him.” This is not chanting verses like magical formulas. It is submitting thought to revelation. The sword of the Spirit is still “the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17). A soldier who leaves his sword hanging over the fireplace should not complain that the enemy keeps crowding his position. God gave the believer truth to use, not merely truth to underline and admire.

Eventually the Christian discovers that many of his greatest battles are not battles to obtain something from God but battles to believe what God has already given him in Christ. He begs for acceptance while Ephesians says he is accepted. He begs for access while Romans says he has access. He begs God not to condemn him while Romans 8 says there is no condemnation. He begs for peace with God while Romans 5 says he has it. There is a strange sort of unbelief that wears kneepads and calls itself devotion. Prayer is precious, but prayer should agree with doctrine. God is not honored when the believer spends an hour pleading with Him to do what He has already said He did. Read the deed. Believe the signature. Then live like the property is yours.

Conclusion

Peace with God is one of the great settled facts of salvation. It is not fragile, emotional, or probationary. It rests on justification by faith through Jesus Christ. The sinner who was ungodly, guilty, and at enmity with God has been reconciled through the death of God's Son. The blood has been shed. The sacrifice has been accepted. Christ has risen. The believing sinner has been justified. God is not maintaining an uneasy truce while waiting for the Christian's next mistake. The judicial war is over. That does not make sin unimportant, fellowship automatic, or Christian living unnecessary. It simply puts those subjects where they belong. A justified son may need correction, but he does not need another Calvary. A believer may lose joy, usefulness, reward, or fellowship through disobedience, but he does not crawl back under Adam's condemnation every time he stumbles. Christ did not purchase a revolving-door salvation.

The next great lesson is that possession and enjoyment are not identical. A Christian may possess peace with God and still spend half the night staring at the ceiling. He may be eternally secure while temporarily frightened. He may be accepted in Christ while wrestling with guilt, confusion, circumstances, or the accusations of the enemy. That contradiction does not prove Romans 5:1 has failed. It proves the mind must be governed by truth. The peace with God established at salvation becomes the solid ground from which the believer learns to enjoy the peace of God in daily life. Position comes first. Experience must be brought into line with it. You do not build assurance from your feelings upward; you build from God's Word downward into your thinking. Otherwise the whole Christian life becomes a house balanced on a thermometer.

So when the mind begins hearing artillery from a war God already ended, go back to the dispatch from headquarters: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Read every word. Believe every word. Refuse to amend the sentence because you had a difficult day. The Judge has spoken. Christ has paid. The believer has peace with God. Your nerves may need time to learn what your Bible already

knows, but they do not get the deciding vote. The cross is not waiting for your emotions to approve its work. Calvary ended the war, the empty tomb confirmed the victory, and Romans 5:1 announces the settlement. **The Christian's mind may still be fighting yesterday's battle, but heaven is not.**

2 of 10 — Peace with God and the Peace of God — From Enemy Territory to the Family Table: What the Cross Actually Reconciled

Key Passage: Romans 5:10 — “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son...”

Romans 5:10 does not flatter anybody. It does not say that we were confused admirers of God, spiritually underdeveloped children of God, decent people who had lost our way, or friendly neighbors who needed a little religious improvement. It says, “when we were enemies.” That word knocks the perfume bottle out of modern religion's hand. God does not diagnose the natural man as spiritually inconvenient; He declares him hostile. The sinner may not feel hostile. He may admire Jesus, own a Bible, attend church at Christmas, give money to charity, and say grace before Thanksgiving dinner. None of that rewrites the verse. Man's opinion of his relationship with God is not the final authority on his relationship with God. A trespasser can feel perfectly comfortable while standing on somebody else's property. His comfort does not alter the deed. Before salvation, man stands in enemy territory because sin has put him against the holiness, righteousness, and authority of the God who made him.

The glory of Romans 5:10 is not merely that enemies stopped fighting. It is that enemies “were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” Something objective happened. Reconciliation is not a mood, a religious atmosphere, or a warm feeling produced during the last verse of a hymn. God did not send Jesus Christ into the world merely to make hostile sinners feel friendlier toward heaven. The Son of God died because sin had created a real barrier requiring a real payment. Colossians 1:20 says Christ made “peace through the blood of his cross.” There is blood underneath biblical peace. Take away the blood and you do not have Christianity; you have religious aromatherapy. The cross did not teach God to overlook sin. It satisfied the righteous demands that sin had violated. Peace with God therefore rests on an accomplished death, not an improved attitude. The sinner's emotions may change later. The legal and spiritual ground of reconciliation was settled first at Calvary.

That is why the distance between enemy territory and the family table is far greater than modern preaching often admits. God does not merely move the sinner from “unhappy” to “happy,” from “struggling” to “successful,” or from “negative” to “positive.” He takes one who was alienated and reconciles him; one who was condemned and justifies him; one who was dead in sins and quickens him; one who was afar off and brings him nigh. The gospel is not a renovation project on Adam’s old house. It is a divine rescue from one standing into another. Romans 5 will not let the believer forget what he was, but neither will it let him forget what Christ accomplished. The man who was once on the wrong side of God’s righteousness can now approach God through the Son. The enemy has become family. The battlefield has given way to access. The door that sin shut has been opened by blood.

1. “When We Were Enemies” Means Exactly What It Says

The word “enemies” must be allowed to stand without being sanded smooth for modern ears. Romans 8:7 explains the condition plainly: “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Notice that Scripture does not say the carnal mind merely suffers from an unfortunate misunderstanding about God. It is “enmity against God.” The natural man resists God’s rule because the natural man wants the throne. He may not announce his rebellion with banners and trumpets; most rebellion prefers respectable clothing. A man can reject God while sitting in a padded pew just as efficiently as another man rejects Him from a barstool. One says, “There is no God.” The other says, “I believe in God, but I will approach Him on my terms.” Heaven recognizes the family resemblance. Both have placed human authority above divine authority.

Sin itself is rebellion because every sin carries the same poisonous assumption: God has spoken, but man knows better. Eve did not need a degree in atheistic philosophy to rebel in Eden. She simply believed another voice over God’s voice. Cain did not need to write a manifesto against divine authority. He brought what he wanted instead of what God required. Pharaoh summarized fallen man perfectly when he said, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice?” (Exodus 5:2). That question still echoes through human nature. The vocabulary changes; the rebellion does not. Modern man says, “That may be your truth,” which is simply Pharaoh wearing glasses and carrying a laptop. The issue underneath remains authority. The lost sinner wants a god who advises without commanding, blesses without judging, forgives without blood, and accepts without repentance. In other words, he wants a god who behaves like a well-trained employee.

The enemy condition is made worse, not better, by self-righteousness. An openly wicked man may know he is far from God, but the religious man can build a chapel on enemy

territory and convince himself it belongs to heaven. Romans 10:3 says of Israel in that context, “For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” The principle is devastating wherever men attempt to substitute their righteousness for God’s provision. Human righteousness does not reconcile the sinner; it competes with the righteousness God supplies in Christ. The man who offers God his goodness as payment has not understood either his sin or God’s holiness. You do not settle treason charges by bringing the judge a scrapbook of your better moments. The sinner needs something far greater than evidence that he has occasionally behaved himself. He needs reconciliation.

2. Sin Created More Than Bad Feelings

Modern Christianity often treats sin as though its worst consequence were emotional discomfort. Sin makes people feel guilty, damages relationships, produces shame, and interferes with personal fulfillment; therefore, Christianity is presented as God’s program for helping everyone feel whole again. Scripture goes deeper. Sin brings death. “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Sin places man under condemnation. “He that believeth not is condemned already” (John 3:18). Sin separates man from the life of God. Ephesians 2:1 describes the lost as “dead in trespasses and sins.” Those are not therapeutic inconveniences. A dead man does not need encouragement about his potential. A condemned man does not need improved self-esteem while the sentence remains. An enemy does not need a breathing technique. He needs peace made on righteous terms. The Bible diagnoses the disease before prescribing the cure, which is why it has no interest in flattering the patient.

The holiness of God is what makes reconciliation necessary. If God were merely a larger version of fallen man, sin could be handled with a shrug. Men forgive themselves cheaply because men do not understand what sin is. God does. Habakkuk 1:13 says, “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.” Isaiah 6 presents seraphim crying, “Holy, holy, holy,” while the prophet, confronted with divine holiness, immediately sees his own uncleanness. The problem was never that God had become overly sensitive and needed Calvary to calm Him down. God’s holiness is perfect, His law is righteous, His judgment is true, and sin genuinely deserves judgment. The cross does not apologize for God’s severity toward sin. The cross proves it. If sin could have been dismissed with sentimental kindness, the Son of God would not have needed to bleed.

This exposes the shallowness of every gospel that offers Jesus merely as an accessory to an otherwise acceptable life. Christ did not come to decorate the enemy’s living room. He came to reconcile the enemy to God. The angel told Joseph, “thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). Paul said, “Christ Jesus

came into the world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15). The gospel assumes catastrophe before it announces rescue. Take away man’s guilt and the cross becomes an overreaction. Take away God’s holiness and judgment becomes cruelty. Take away substitution and salvation becomes self-improvement. But keep the biblical pieces where God put them and Calvary makes perfect sense: guilty sinners stood under righteous judgment, and the sinless Son of God stepped into the place judgment demanded. That is not therapy. That is redemption.

3. The Cross Settled What Sentiment Could Never Touch

Colossians 1:20 says, “having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself.” The wording destroys every bloodless version of Christianity. Peace was “made.” It did not simply appear because God decided everybody should stop being so serious about sin. It was made “through the blood.” Scripture will not allow the cross to become a decorative symbol dangling from jewelry while its meaning is drained away. Blood means death. Blood means sacrifice. Blood means sin cost something. Leviticus 17:11 established the principle in Israel’s sacrificial system: “it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.” Those sacrifices could never perfect the conscience permanently, as Hebrews explains, but they pointed toward the final sacrifice. When Christ came, He did not bring another lamb. He was the Lamb. The shadows ended when the Substance arrived.

First Peter 2:24 says Christ “his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” There is substitution in plain English. Christ did not die merely beside sinners, sympathetically sharing human suffering. He died for sins. First Peter 3:18 sharpens it further: “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” The just for the unjust. That is the bridge from enemy territory to the presence of God. If man could bring himself to God by religion, Christ suffered unnecessarily. If sacraments could bring him, Christ died extravagantly. If morality could bring him, the Sermon on the Mount would have been enough. But Scripture says Christ suffered “that he might bring us to God.” Heaven did not miscalculate the necessary price. The cross tells us exactly how serious the separation was.

The blood also answers the accusing conscience because it provides something stronger than memory. Hebrews 9:14 speaks of “the blood of Christ” purging the conscience “from dead works to serve the living God.” A man can spend years attempting to outwork yesterday, as though enough religious activity today might persuade God to forget what happened last year. That treadmill has ruined many knees and gotten nobody to heaven. Dead works cannot purchase peace. The blood of Christ does what human performance never could because the blood rests upon the death of a perfect Substitute. When the

believer looks backward, he may see plenty to regret, but faith looks farther back—to Calvary. The conscience says, “You were guilty.” Scripture agrees. The conscience says, “Then there is no hope.” Scripture points to the blood. Biblical peace does not deny guilt; it announces that guilt has been answered.

4. Reconciliation Is Toward God, Not Merely Within Man

Romans 5:10 says, “we were reconciled to God.” Second Corinthians 5:18 says God “hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.” That direction matters. The sinner’s fundamental problem is not that he is out of harmony with his inner self. He is out of harmony with God. Reconciliation therefore cannot be reduced to emotional peace or psychological integration. A man can become calm and remain lost. He can learn to forgive himself while God’s judgment remains upon him. He can settle every family dispute, conquer every bad habit, organize his thoughts, sleep eight hours a night, drink enough water to satisfy a camel, and still die without Christ. None of those things answers the question, “What is your standing before God?” Salvation brings the sinner into a changed relationship with God because Jesus Christ dealt with the sin that stood between them.

Second Corinthians 5:19 says, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” This does not teach universal salvation, because the same passage immediately says, “be ye reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20). The provision is in Christ, and the gospel announces it to sinners who must receive what God has provided. God is not begging man to become emotionally comfortable with religious ideas. He commands the gospel to be preached because reconciliation has a historical foundation: Christ died and rose again. The message is not, “Discover that God was never concerned about your sins.” The message is that God was so concerned about sin that His Son bore it, and God is so gracious that the sinner who believes is not charged with the guilt Christ bore. Grace is not God pretending the books were balanced. Grace is God balancing them at infinite cost.

This prevents Christianity from degenerating into spirituality without doctrine. Plenty of people speak warmly about God while rejecting what God says about His Son. They admire “the divine,” cherish spiritual experiences, seek inner peace, and collect religious ideas like souvenirs from an airport gift shop. None of it reconciles. Jesus said, “no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). That statement leaves no diplomatic opening for human pride. Reconciliation is through Jesus Christ because the death of Jesus Christ is what answered sin. You cannot remove the Mediator and keep the mediation. You cannot reject the blood and claim the peace purchased by it. Men want the family table without passing through Calvary, but God has placed the door exactly where human pride does not want it: at the feet of a crucified and risen Saviour.

5. The Enemy Becomes a Son With Access

Reconciliation does not merely remove hostility; it introduces access. Romans 5:2 says, “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.” Ephesians 2:18 says, “For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” In its context, Ephesians is explaining what Christ has done concerning believing Jews and Gentiles in one body during this present dispensation. The old distinctions surrounding Israel’s national privileges are not being handed wholesale to the Church; rather, both Jew and Gentile who believe now approach the Father through Christ. That is staggering when compared with Romans 5:10. The enemy did not merely have his prison sentence canceled and get sent down the road. God brought him in. The man once described as alienated can now address God as Father. Grace does not simply open the cell. It opens the house.

Galatians 4:6 says, “because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” Notice again the order. “Because ye are sons.” The Spirit’s presence and the believer’s cry arise from an established relationship. God does not tell the believer to call Him Father as an exercise in positive thinking. He is Father because the believer has been placed into Christ and received the adoption of sons. First John 3:1 says, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” Religion can hardly tolerate that certainty. Religion prefers the hallway—close enough to hear the dishes at the family table, but never sure whether you are allowed to sit down. Grace pulls out the chair and points to Christ as the reason you belong there.

That access should change the believer’s prayer life. A reconciled son does not approach God as an enemy trying to negotiate another ceasefire. Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace.” Boldly does not mean arrogantly. The believer does not swagger into God’s presence waving his own righteousness. He comes confidently because his access rests upon the righteousness and priesthood of Christ. There is an enormous difference between confidence in self and confidence in the Saviour. One is pride; the other is faith. Many Christians pray as though they have to talk God into remembering Calvary. They spend ten minutes explaining why they are unworthy, as though heaven had somehow missed that detail. Of course you are unworthy. That is why the throne is called a throne of grace. Christ is worthy, and your access is through Him.

6. Peace With God Comes Before the Peace of God

This distinction is essential. Peace with God is positional; the peace of God is experiential. Romans 5:1 says, “we have peace with God.” Philippians 4:7 says, “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” One describes the believer’s relationship to God established through justification. The

other describes an inward guarding peace experienced as the believer brings his burdens to God and governs his thoughts according to truth. Confuse them and assurance collapses. A troubled Christian begins to think, “I do not feel peaceful, therefore I must not be at peace with God.” That is like a citizen concluding that his country has reentered a war because he heard thunder. Noise is not a declaration of war. The believer’s emotional disturbance does not overturn the treaty Christ signed in blood.

The order matters because experience must rest on position. A Christian can seek the peace of God precisely because he already has peace with God. He can pray because he has access. He can cast his care upon God because God is his Father. He can confess sin because the relationship has been established. He can face chastening without interpreting it as condemnation. Hebrews 12 even presents chastening as evidence of sonship: “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth” (Hebrews 12:6). The rod in the Father’s hand is not the sword of the Judge against an enemy. A son who cannot distinguish those two will turn every correction into a salvation crisis. He will mistake discipline for damnation and conviction for rejection. That is not spiritual sensitivity; it is doctrinal confusion with a worried face.

Once peace with God is settled, the believer can deal honestly with the fluctuations of daily experience without putting his salvation on trial every evening. Some days the mind is quiet; some days it feels like a train station during an evacuation. Some prayers seem immediately answered; others require long waiting. Circumstances change, bodies weaken, people disappoint, bills arrive, plans collapse, and grief knocks without making an appointment. None of those things returns the reconciled believer to enemy status. The peace of God must be cultivated through prayer, thanksgiving, right thinking, obedience, and Scripture, but peace with God was purchased once by Christ. The believer should never use today’s storm to rewrite yesterday’s cross. Experience is real, but it is not Lord. Jesus Christ is.

7. The Family Table Is Furnished by Grace

Ephesians 2:19 says believers are “no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” That phrase—“the household of God”—shows how complete the change is. The sinner was not simply moved from the enemy trench into neutral territory. Grace brought him into God’s household. Romans says reconciled. Galatians says sons. Ephesians says household. Colossians says “translated into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Colossians 1:13). The New Testament keeps piling one expression upon another because one picture is hardly enough to display the riches of the believer’s new position. The devil would love for a Christian seated at the table to keep

eating like a prisoner hiding crusts under the mattress. A believer who does not understand his standing can possess the riches of Christ while thinking like a spiritual refugee.

The family table also destroys boasting because nobody sits there by merit. Ephesians 2:8–9 says, “For by grace are ye saved through faith... Not of works, lest any man should boast.” The man who arrived by grace has nothing to brag about except the Saviour who brought him. That keeps the table wonderfully level. The educated man and the laborer, the respectable woman and the former wreck, the Jew and the Gentile, the wealthy and the poor—all who are in Christ stand on the same blood-bought ground. Heaven has no premium seating section for people who were easier to save. The self-righteous man hates that arrangement because he would like his résumé laminated and displayed near his chair. God throws the résumé away and points to the cross. Everybody at the table got there through Another Man’s merit.

And because reconciliation is complete, the believer should live from gratitude rather than insecurity. Romans 5:11 says, “we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” The word “received” matters. Salvation is not wages collected after a successful career of holiness. It is a gift received through Christ. That produces joy, worship, obedience, and confidence when believed properly. The Christian does not serve God to claw his way from enemy territory to the table. Christ already brought him there. He serves because grace has done what law, religion, morality, effort, and human goodness could never do. Grace does not make obedience unnecessary; it gives obedience the right motive. The servant who works to become a son has the gospel backward. The son serves because the Father has already brought him home.

Conclusion

Romans 5:10 leaves no room for a weak view of either sin or salvation. “When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” We were enemies. Christ died. Reconciliation occurred. Those facts form the backbone of peace with God. The gospel does not begin by telling man how wonderful he is; it begins by telling him how wrong his position is. That is why the good news is actually good. If man were merely inconvenienced, Calvary would be excessive. If man were merely uninformed, God could have sent a lecturer. If man merely lacked motivation, heaven could have supplied a coach. But man was sinful, guilty, alienated, dead, and at enmity with God. So God sent a Saviour. The remedy reveals the seriousness of the disease, and the blood of Christ reveals both the holiness of God and the greatness of His grace.

The cross therefore stands at the center of every legitimate claim to peace. Not peace through denial. Not peace through self-forgiveness. Not peace through religion. Not peace

through convincing yourself that judgment is an outdated doctrine. “Peace through the blood of his cross.” That is biblical peace. The hostility was not brushed beneath heaven’s carpet; it was answered in the body of Jesus Christ. The penalty was not waived as though righteousness had taken the afternoon off. The Son bore the sinner’s judgment and rose from the dead. Consequently, the believer does not stand before God hoping his better qualities outweigh his worse ones. He stands in Christ. The enemy has been reconciled. The stranger has been brought nigh. The condemned man has been justified. The outsider has become a son. **Calvary did not teach God to tolerate the sinner; Calvary provided the righteous ground upon which God could receive him.**

Now the reconciled believer must learn to think from the family table instead of from the old battlefield. He has access to the Father. He stands in grace. He belongs to the household of God. He can seek the peace of God because he already possesses peace with God. When fear whispers that he is still an enemy, Romans 5 answers it. When religion tells him he must earn another audience with God, Ephesians says he already has access through Christ. When memory drags him back toward enemy territory, the blood points toward the cross where reconciliation was accomplished. The believer did not crawl across the battlefield and persuade God to stop shooting. The Son of God came onto the field, took the judgment Himself, and brought the believing sinner home. **The chair at the Father’s table is not held there by your feelings. It stands on the blood-stained ground of Calvary.**

3 of 10 — Peace with God and the Peace of God — Standing in Grace While Your Feelings Are Falling Apart

Key Passage: Romans 5:2 — “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand...”

Romans 5:2 says, “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.” That is not the language of a man wobbling on probation. It is the language of position. The believer stands. He does not crawl, hover, swing, drift, or hang over the edge of acceptance by one frayed religious thread. He stands in grace because Jesus Christ gave him access to a place he could never have entered by merit. The verse does not say the believer stands in grace when he feels spiritual, when his prayer life is strong, when the bills are paid, when his family is peaceful, when his body feels good, or when his mind is free from trouble. It says he stands in grace because his access is “by faith” and “by whom,” meaning through Jesus Christ. That position is anchored in Christ, not in the believer’s emotional weather.

Feelings are real, but feelings are not revelation. A Christian can feel discouraged while standing in grace, fearful while standing in grace, exhausted while standing in grace, ashamed while standing in grace, lonely while standing in grace, and even confused while standing in grace. The feeling may be painful, but it is not sovereign. Modern religion has trained people to examine their internal atmosphere as though the Holy Ghost moved into the nervous system and appointed the emotions as doctrinal judges. The result is predictable. If the heart feels warm, God must be near. If the heart feels cold, God must be far away. If peace is present, everything must be right. If anxiety appears, something must be wrong with salvation. That is not faith; that is reading tea leaves in your own chest. Romans 5 points the believer away from internal sensation and toward objective standing.

One of the devil's oldest tricks is turning a bad morning into a theological crisis. A man wakes up tired, remembers a problem, feels dread settle over him, and before breakfast he has mentally put his salvation back on trial. The devil does not even need to steal the believer's position; he only needs to persuade him that his position disappeared during the night. But Romans 5:2 answers before the accusation finishes its sentence: "this grace wherein we stand." The believer's standing does not rise and fall with his blood pressure. God did not justify him yesterday and then wake up undecided this morning. Grace is not a hammock tied between two emotional trees. It is solid ground beneath the feet of the justified. The great task of Christian thinking is therefore not to make feelings disappear, but to teach feelings where they are standing.

1. Standing Is a Position, Not a Sensation

The Bible repeatedly uses positional language for the believer because God wants His people to know where they are. Romans says we "stand" in grace. Ephesians 2:6 says God "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Colossians 2:10 says, "ye are complete in him." First Corinthians 1:30 says Christ "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Those are not statements about emotional intensity. They describe what God has done for the believer in Christ. A man may feel incomplete and still be complete in Him. He may feel far away and still be seated in heavenly places in Christ. He may feel unworthy—and he is unworthy in himself—yet still be accepted because he is in the Beloved. Feelings describe the weather inside the house. Position describes the address. The weather changes. The address does not.

That is why spiritual maturity requires learning the difference between "I feel" and "God said." The phrase "I feel" has become one of the great little popes of modern life. It sits on a tiny throne and demands that every fact bow before it. "I feel abandoned." "I feel condemned." "I feel distant." "I feel like God is angry." The feelings may be intense, but

intensity does not turn them into Scripture. Elijah sat under a juniper tree and wanted to die, yet God had not resigned from heaven. David sometimes wrote from the depths of anguish, yet the covenant purposes of God had not collapsed. Paul spoke of being “troubled on every side” and yet “not distressed” (2 Corinthians 4:8). God’s people in Scripture often felt the storm without surrendering the doctrine.

A believer who confuses sensation with standing will live like a man checking the foundation every time the curtains move. One gust of wind and he is in the basement with a flashlight, convinced the concrete must have cracked. That is exhausting Christianity. God never designed the believer to re-litigate justification every time his emotions get noisy. The Christian should examine sin, confess disobedience, correct wrong thinking, and deal honestly with his walk, but he should not confuse a troubled state with a destroyed standing. Romans 5:2 says where he stands. Grace is not measured by how steady he feels while standing there. The feet may tremble, but the ground does not.

2. Access Comes Through Christ, Not Through Emotional Performance

Romans 5:2 begins with “By whom,” and those two words keep the entire doctrine straight. Access is through Jesus Christ. The believer does not walk into grace because he maintained the proper mood. He enters by Christ. Ephesians 2:18 says, “For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” Ephesians 3:12 adds, “In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.” The door is Christ. The ground is Christ. The confidence is in Christ. The believer does not approach God carrying an emotional passport stamped “PEACEFUL ENOUGH FOR ENTRY.” If access depended upon stable feelings, nobody would get past the front step. One hour of human life is enough to produce gratitude, frustration, hope, irritation, grief, hunger, joy, fear, and the sudden conviction that somebody moved your keys.

The religious mind always wants to attach access to something man can perform. If it cannot make salvation depend on works, it will make fellowship depend on emotional theater. You must feel broken enough, sincere enough, surrendered enough, peaceful enough, worshipful enough. Before long the believer is staring inward, measuring invisible temperatures, wondering whether his spiritual condition meets the entry requirements. But Hebrews 10:19 says believers have “boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.” Blood—not mood. Christ’s blood gives access where human worthiness never could. The throne of grace does not have a mood detector installed at the entrance. God is not waiting for the believer to produce the correct internal sensation before hearing prayer.

This does not mean attitude is irrelevant. A proud, stubborn, disobedient believer can grieve the Holy Spirit, hinder fellowship, and bring chastening upon himself. But even then

the solution is not to manufacture a feeling; it is to obey Scripture. Confess sin. Forsake what is wrong. Believe what God said. Draw near through Christ. The remedy for a cold heart is not to sit around inspecting the temperature until the thermometer apologizes. The remedy is biblical action. Feelings often follow truth and obedience, but they make terrible leaders. Put feelings in the locomotive and doctrine in the caboose, and sooner or later the whole train will leave the track.

3. Grace Does Not Evaporate on Difficult Days

There are days when the Christian wakes up feeling like he has been spiritually run over by a truck driven by yesterday's problems. Nothing has happened yet, but the mind is already tired. The body is weary. Responsibilities are waiting. A conversation from the previous day keeps replaying. There may be financial strain, family pressure, disappointment, illness, grief, or simply accumulated fatigue. Those realities can affect the mind profoundly, but none of them cancels Romans 5:2. The believer still stands in grace. Difficulty is not evidence of divine rejection. Paul had a thorn in the flesh and still heard Christ say, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Corinthians 12:9). Grace is not only for bright mornings when birds sing and everybody behaves. Grace still holds when the coffee spills, the phone rings, the answer does not come, and the day starts swinging before you put your shoes on.

A great deal of unnecessary spiritual panic comes from expecting the Christian life to feel consistently victorious. Scripture never promised such emotional uniformity. Paul wrote in Second Corinthians 7:5, "without were fightings, within were fears." That sentence would ruin a thousand glossy religious advertisements. Here is an apostle acknowledging inward fear while still walking in the will of God. In Second Corinthians 1:8 he says he was "pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life." Yet none of that meant Paul had fallen out of grace. The presence of pressure did not prove the absence of God. Sometimes grace is not demonstrated by removing the pressure; it is demonstrated by keeping the believer standing underneath it.

The devil loves to interpret trouble before the believer gets a chance to open his Bible. Something goes wrong and immediately comes the whisper: "God must be against you." A prayer remains unanswered: "God has forgotten you." The emotions flatten: "Something is wrong with your salvation." It is remarkable how quickly the accuser becomes a theologian when you are tired. But Scripture says, "this grace wherein we stand." The mature believer learns not to accept the enemy's commentary on his circumstances. A dark cloud is not a doctrinal statement. A hard week is not a new covenant. Trouble can shake the branches without uprooting the tree.

4. Feelings Make Poor Judges Because They Keep Changing the Verdict

Human emotions can reverse themselves with astonishing speed. A man can wake up cheerful, become irritated before breakfast, encouraged by noon, discouraged by an email at two, relieved by five, worried by seven, and ready to solve the world's problems by bedtime. Yet some Christians are willing to let that parade of changing sensations issue legal opinions about their standing before God. That is like hiring a weather vane to serve on the Supreme Court. Feelings have legitimate functions, but final judgment is not one of them. Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" The heart is not an infallible interpreter of divine reality. It must be instructed, corrected, governed, and sometimes flatly contradicted by Scripture.

This is especially important when guilt is involved. A believer may feel guilty because he has sinned, and in that case the feeling should drive him toward confession and correction. But he may also feel condemned after the sin has been confessed, simply because memory keeps replaying the offense. First John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." Notice who is faithful. God is. The verse does not say forgiveness becomes valid when the believer finally feels forgiven. If God has addressed the fellowship issue, the Christian must not keep digging up what God has dealt with simply because the emotions have not caught up. There is no virtue in reopening graves.

The same principle applies to fear. Fear may warn of genuine danger, but it can also exaggerate possibility into certainty. The mind sees one dark cloud and emotionally orders lumber for the ark. Scripture does not command the believer to pretend trouble cannot happen. It commands him to trust God when trouble does happen. Psalm 56:3 says, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." Notice that David did not say, "I never feel afraid." He said what he would do when fear came. Biblical faith does not require the absence of feeling; it requires the government of feeling by truth.

5. The Mind Must Stop Renegotiating Settled Truth

Many Christians spend enormous energy trying to renegotiate with God about things He has already settled. God says they are justified; they ask whether perhaps they are still condemned. God says they are accepted in Christ; they wonder whether He really wants them around. God says they have access; they approach as though the door might be locked today. God says they stand in grace; they imagine themselves balancing on a spiritual tightrope over hell. This is not humility. Humility agrees with God. If God says a believer stands in grace, the humble response is not, "I am too unworthy to believe that." Of course you are unworthy. Grace is for the unworthy. The question is whether Christ is worthy, and Scripture has already answered that.

The mind has to learn that assurance is not produced by constant internal inspection. Some believers treat their souls like suspicious luggage at an airport. Every few minutes they unzip another compartment to see whether salvation is still inside. Did I believe correctly? Was I sincere enough? Did I pray the right words? Why do I not feel like I did last week? What if this thought means something terrible? Endless inspection does not strengthen faith; it often feeds unbelief. Faith looks to Christ. Hebrews 12:2 says, “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.” The eyes are directed outward and upward, not permanently inward. A man cannot walk straight while staring continuously at his own shoes.

Settled doctrine gives the mind somewhere to rest. Romans 5:1 says the believer has peace with God. Romans 5:2 says he has access into grace and stands there. Romans 8:1 says there is “now no condemnation” to those in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 1:6 says believers are “accepted in the beloved.” These truths are not invitations to debate. They are statements to believe. The mind becomes quieter when it stops trying to reopen every case God closed. There is peace in letting God have the last word.

6. Conviction and Condemnation Are Not the Same Thing

A healthy Christian life requires a clear distinction between the Holy Spirit’s conviction and the enemy’s condemnation. The Holy Spirit deals with sin specifically. He puts His finger on what is wrong through the Word and leads the believer toward confession, repentance in the practical sense of turning from wrong, and restored fellowship. Condemnation, by contrast, throws a blanket of accusation over the entire person. It says, “You are finished. God is against you. Nothing has changed. Christ’s work cannot cover this.” One voice points to a sin that needs dealing with. The other attacks the standing Christ already established. The first produces correction. The second produces despair and confusion.

Romans 8:33–34 asks, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?” The answer is rooted in Christ’s death, resurrection, and intercession. This does not mean the believer is beyond rebuke. Paul rebuked believers sharply when necessary. The Lord chastens His children. Scripture exposes sin without apology. But chastening is family discipline, not courtroom condemnation. Hebrews 12:6 says, “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.” The rod proves relationship; it does not cancel it. A father correcting his son is not reenacting the trial of a criminal.

This distinction protects the believer from two opposite errors. On one side is carelessness: “I am under grace, so sin does not matter.” That is flesh wearing a theological hat. On the other side is bondage: “I sinned, so I must not be standing in grace anymore.”

That is unbelief wearing sackcloth. Grace rebukes both. Titus 2:11–12 says grace teaches believers to deny ungodliness and live soberly, righteously, and godly. Grace does not excuse sin, and grace does not abandon the saved sinner when he fails. It corrects him from the security of a settled relationship.

7. Experiential Peace Grows When Doctrine Governs the Mind

The peace of God is not achieved by staring harder at the problem. Philippians 4 gives a different pattern: prayer, supplication, thanksgiving, and disciplined thinking. The believer takes the burden to God because he already has access. He can pray because Romans 5:2 is true. He can come boldly because Hebrews 4:16 is true. He can cast his care upon God because First Peter 5:7 says, “for he careth for you.” Experiential peace grows when positional truth becomes practical thinking. The mind learns to operate from where the believer stands instead of from how the believer feels.

This requires deliberate resistance to mental disorder. Philippians 4:8 does not say, “Think about whatever barges through the door first.” It gives categories: things true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy. The mind must be governed. A man who feeds on fear all day should not be surprised when fear becomes fat. If he pours news, speculation, arguments, memories, worst-case scenarios, and human opinions into his head from sunrise to midnight, then sprinkles one verse on top before bed, he should not blame God when the stew tastes terrible. The peace of God does not grow well in soil continually fertilized with unbelief.

The answer is not to deny trouble but to place trouble under truth. A Christian may say, “This situation is painful, but I still stand in grace. I do not know what tomorrow holds, but I know who justified me. I do not like what I feel, but my feelings do not define my position. I may be afraid, but I can still trust. I may be weak, but His grace is sufficient. I may not understand, but I have access.” That is not pretending. That is biblical thinking. Faith does not erase reality; it puts reality in the right order.

Conclusion

Romans 5:2 gives the believer something stronger than an emotional high: a standing. “This grace wherein we stand.” The verse does not promise that every day will feel equally bright. It does not promise uninterrupted confidence, constant emotional calm, or a life untouched by weariness and trouble. It promises something better. The justified believer has access by faith through Jesus Christ into grace. His position is not built on sensation. The cross does not move when his emotions do. The throne of grace does not close because he had a difficult morning. His standing is not attached to his nervous system by a string.

That settled position becomes the cure for much unnecessary spiritual instability. The believer must stop letting feelings issue verdicts they were never authorized to give. A troubled heart can be comforted. A fearful mind can be instructed. A guilty conscience can be corrected by truth. A weary believer can rest. But none of those states should be permitted to rewrite the doctrine of grace. The Christian does not become more spiritual by doubting what God said about him in Christ. He becomes more stable by believing it. The storm may be real, but so is the foundation.

So when your feelings are falling apart, do not ask them where you stand. Ask the Book. When fear says you have been abandoned, ask Romans. When guilt says the door is closed, ask Hebrews. When weariness says grace has run out, ask Paul what Christ told him: “My grace is sufficient for thee.” You do not stand in grace because you feel steady. You stand in grace because Jesus Christ brought you there. **Your feelings may stagger, but your position does not. Your mind may shake, but grace does not. The believer’s feet are standing on ground his emotions did not build and cannot tear down.**

4 of 10 — Peace with God and the Peace of God — When a Saved Mind Runs Loose: God’s Answer to Anxiety

Key Passage: Philippians 4:6–7 — “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

Philippians 4 does not address a lost man trying to make peace with God. Paul is writing to saints who already belong to Jesus Christ. That distinction matters because a saved man can possess peace with God in Romans 5:1 and still fail miserably to enjoy the peace of God in Philippians 4:7. His standing may be settled while his thoughts are conducting a midnight riot. He can be justified, reconciled, accepted in Christ, sealed by the Holy Spirit, headed for heaven, and at the same time spend three hours mentally rehearsing disasters that have not happened. Salvation does not automatically put a padlock on every wandering thought. God settles the believer’s position instantly; the believer must learn to govern his mind daily. That is why Paul does not tell these Christians how to get saved again. He tells saved people what to do when care begins chewing through their thoughts like termites in a wooden floor.

The command is plain: “Be careful for nothing.” The old English word “careful” here does not mean responsible, thoughtful, or diligent. Scripture is not commanding Christians to become careless fools who forget appointments and ignore bills. The context deals with anxious care—the kind of burden that takes tomorrow’s possibility, drags it into today, and

makes the mind pay interest on a debt that has not even come due. Paul does not deny that serious problems exist. He wrote Philippians from confinement, not from a beach chair with somebody bringing him lemonade. Yet under circumstances that would have supplied a modern worrier with a lifetime subscription to panic, he writes about rejoicing, prayer, thanksgiving, right thinking, and the peace of God. Apparently, peace is not dependent upon getting the scenery arranged first.

Then comes one of Scripture's great exchanges: "but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." The burden goes one direction; peace comes the other. The believer brings the matter to God, and verse 7 says, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Notice what God promises to keep: the heart and the mind. The circumstance may remain. The answer may wait. The bill may still be on the desk tomorrow morning. The medical appointment may still be scheduled. The prodigal may still be away. The decision may still be unresolved. God does not promise an explanation for everything before bedtime. Sometimes heaven leaves the battlefield outside the walls and posts a guard inside them. Peace is not always God changing what surrounds you. Often it is God keeping what is within you while you wait.

1. Worry Is the Mind Trying to Live Tomorrow Before It Arrives

Anxiety has a remarkable talent for manufacturing tomorrow's trouble ahead of schedule. Jesus said, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself" (Matthew 6:34). He was not forbidding wise preparation. Scripture praises diligence, planning, labor, stewardship, and foresight. What Christ forbids is borrowing tomorrow's burden and stacking it on today's shoulders. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." In plain terms, today already brought enough luggage. Stop carrying bags for a trip you have not taken. Worry takes an event that may happen, adds details God never revealed, supplies dialogue nobody has spoken, predicts consequences nobody can know, and then punishes the body and mind as though the entire imaginary production were yesterday's history.

The mind can build a disaster faster than a carpenter can build a shed. One unanswered phone call becomes bad news. One unexpected expense becomes financial ruin. One symptom becomes a catastrophe. One strained conversation becomes the end of a relationship. One uncertain decision becomes a dozen ruined futures. By the time reality finally arrives, the worrier has already lived through eight versions of an event that never occurred. That is one expensive imagination. Proverbs 27:1 warns, "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Men usually apply that verse to overconfidence, but the same limitation exposes anxious prediction. You do not know what

tomorrow brings. That means pride cannot brag about it, and fear cannot write the script either.

Faith lives where God placed the believer: today. Exodus 16 illustrates the principle when Israel received manna one day at a time, except where God specifically instructed otherwise. The man gathering Tuesday's grace for Wednesday discovered that God had not authorized the arrangement. In the Christian life, God often supplies grace as the need arrives. Second Corinthians 12:9 does not say, "My grace will allow thee to experience every possible future disaster in advance." It says, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Sufficient grace meets an actual need in the time God appoints. Worry demands next month's grace for this morning's imagination and then wonders why the account feels empty. **God never promised strength for the disasters you invented. He promised grace for the road He actually gives you.**

2. Prayer Gives the Burden an Address

Paul does not merely say, "Stop worrying." That would be like telling a man carrying a refrigerator to stop feeling heavy. He tells the believer what to do instead: "in every thing by prayer and supplication." Every thing means the large matter, the small matter, the embarrassing matter, the repeated matter, the matter you think you should have conquered by now, and the matter you cannot explain to anybody else without taking twenty minutes. Prayer gives the burden somewhere to go. First Peter 5:7 says, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." There is the transfer. You are not commanded to pretend the care weighs nothing. You are commanded to cast it somewhere stronger than yourself.

"Supplication" adds earnest, specific asking. There is a difference between vaguely saying, "Lord, bless everything," and bringing the actual matter before God. Hezekiah received a threatening letter from Sennacherib and "spread it before the LORD" (2 Kings 19:14). There is a picture worth remembering. He did not deny the letter existed. He did not frame it and stare at it for six hours. He spread it before God. The modern equivalent is simple: bring the thing itself. Name the concern. Tell God what you fear. Ask for wisdom. Ask for provision. Ask for protection. Ask for direction. Ask for strength. A worry kept circulating in the mind becomes a closed loop. Prayer opens the circuit and puts the matter before the One who can actually do something about it.

This is where worry exposes its strange arrogance. Worry keeps rehearsing the problem as though enough mental repetition might produce control. It is the mind's attempt to become providence. Of course nobody says, "I am trying to replace God today." That would sound terrible over breakfast. We use more respectable language: "I am just thinking through every possibility." Sometimes that is wisdom. Sometimes it is unbelief wearing reading

glasses. There comes a point where thought has ceased solving and started circling. Prayer breaks the circle. **If you have carried the same burden around your mind forty times, perhaps it is time to carry it once to the throne.** Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace.” God gave the believer access. Use it.

3. Thanksgiving Reminds Fear That God Has Been Here Before

Philippians 4 does not say prayer and supplication alone. It says, “with thanksgiving.” That phrase is not decorative religious trim. Thanksgiving is one of God’s great correctives to a mind obsessed with what might go wrong. Fear stares at what is missing; thanksgiving remembers what God has already supplied. Fear asks, “What if He fails me this time?” Thanksgiving answers by opening the record. The believer has been saved by grace, kept by grace, fed, corrected, instructed, protected, forgiven, strengthened, and carried through troubles that once looked impossible. The same mind that can remember an insult from eleven years ago ought to be capable of remembering a few answers to prayer.

Israel repeatedly forgot God’s works and then panicked at the next obstacle. Psalm 78:11 says, “And forgot his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them.” That forgetfulness turned every new difficulty into an apparent first encounter with trouble. The Red Sea opens, Egypt is defeated, manna falls, water comes from the rock—and then the next crisis arrives and everybody behaves as though God disappeared after lunch. Before laughing too loudly at Israel, check the mirror. Christians can keep twenty-year archives of disappointments and a three-minute memory of providence. Thanksgiving fixes the filing system. It reaches backward and says, “God was faithful there. God sustained me there. God answered there. God corrected me there. God carried me through there.”

Thanksgiving does not require calling evil good. Paul is not saying to thank God that tragedy is pleasant, sin is harmless, betrayal is enjoyable, or pain feels wonderful. Biblical thanksgiving recognizes God’s character and grace in the midst of circumstances that may still hurt. First Thessalonians 5:18 says, “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” In every thing—not necessarily for the moral evil of every thing. Thanksgiving refuses to let one dark circumstance erase the entire testimony of God’s faithfulness. **Fear writes God’s obituary every time a problem appears; thanksgiving walks over to the grave and reminds fear that God was never buried.**

4. The Peace of God Is a Guard, Not an Explanation

Philippians 4:7 promises “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding.” Men sometimes treat that phrase as though God promises to explain everything until the believer finally understands enough to calm down. The verse says almost the opposite. The peace “passeth” understanding. It can operate where complete explanation is absent.

There are questions God may not answer today. Why did this door close? Why did that prayer wait? Why did this person leave? Why did that opportunity disappear? Why was one burden removed quickly while another remained for years? Scripture gives many answers about God's nature and purposes, but it does not provide the individual Christian with a private encyclopedia explaining every detail of providence. God sometimes gives light. Sometimes He gives peace while the room is still dim.

The verse says this peace "shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." The word gives the picture of guarding, and the object under guard is the inner life. The enemy may be outside the gate, but he does not have to occupy the city. Problems can exist without being crowned. A financial burden can sit on the desk without sitting on the throne. An uncertain diagnosis can be real without becoming lord over every waking thought. A family problem can hurt deeply without receiving permission to dominate the mind from sunrise until midnight. Peace does not say, "Nothing is wrong." Peace says, "Something is wrong, but God is still God, Christ is still sufficient, my standing is still secure, and this burden does not get the keys to the whole house."

That peace is "through Christ Jesus," just as every other blessing in the Christian life rests in Him. The mind does not manufacture this peace by repeating slogans into a mirror. Biblical peace is not self-hypnosis with religious vocabulary. It grows from dependence upon God through Christ. John 14:27 records Christ saying, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." The world's peace ordinarily requires improved conditions. Remove the conflict, increase the money, settle the diagnosis, silence the critic, secure the future, and perhaps peace will appear. Christ can give peace before any of those things move an inch. **The world needs the storm to stop before it can rest; Christ can teach a man to rest while the rain is still hitting the roof.**

5. An Ungoverned Mind Will Invite Every Thought to Move In

Paul does not stop at verses 6–7. Verse 8 immediately addresses thinking: "Whatsoever things are true... honest... just... pure... lovely... of good report... if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." There is the governor. The mind is not supposed to throw open the front door and give every thought a bedroom. A thought can knock without being admitted. Fear can knock. Anger can knock. Suspicion can knock. Memory can knock. Imagination can knock. The fact that a thought appeared does not mean you signed a lease. Yet many believers treat every mental visitor like an honored guest and then complain that the house is crowded.

Notice Paul begins with "whatsoever things are true." Anxiety loves possibilities more than facts. It feeds on "what if." What if this happens? What if that fails? What if somebody

thinks this? What if tomorrow brings that? Some of those possibilities may deserve practical preparation, but possibility and truth are not identical. You can spend hours suffering from events that exist nowhere except in the theater of your imagination. Philippians 4:8 drags the mind back to truth. What has God actually said? What actually happened? What responsibility actually belongs to me today? What do I actually know? **A mind that refuses to distinguish facts from fears will eventually make fiction feel like prophecy.**

This requires discipline because flesh does not automatically think biblically. Romans 12:2 speaks of being “transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Second Corinthians 10:5 commands “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” Captivity is not a suggestion box. Some thoughts need handcuffs. A believer cannot stop every bird from flying overhead, but he does not have to let every one build a nest in his hair. The mind must be brought under Scripture. That means rejecting lies even when they arrive with strong feelings attached. It means refusing to rehearse accusations God has answered, disasters God has not announced, and resentments God commanded you to surrender. The mind left to itself becomes a vacant lot. Weeds never need invitations.

6. Anxiety Cannot Be Allowed to Rewrite Providence

Much worry grows from trying to understand providence before providence has finished the sentence. Joseph spent years between the pit and the palace. If he had judged God’s plan from one afternoon in the pit, the conclusion would have been disastrous. Later he could tell his brethren, “ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good” (Genesis 50:20). The evil was real. His brothers were guilty. Yet God’s hand was larger than their intentions. Providence often resembles the back side of a tapestry: knots, loose threads, crossings, and apparently meaningless colors. We look at three inches and demand to know why the picture makes no sense. God sees the finished side.

Romans 8:28 does not say all things are good. It says, “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” There is a world of difference. Betrayal is not good. Disease is not good. Death is an enemy. Sin is not good. But God is able to take things that are not good and work through them according to purposes the believer cannot always see at the moment. A cook can put ingredients into a recipe that would taste terrible by themselves. Try eating a spoonful of baking soda and then accusing the cake of bad theology. You are judging one ingredient before the oven has finished.

The anxious mind demands a finished explanation while standing in the middle of an unfinished chapter. Faith allows God to retain information. Deuteronomy 29:29 says, “The

secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us.” There are revealed things and secret things. The believer is responsible for the revealed portion. Obey what God said. Pray about what troubles you. Refuse sin. Walk by faith. Leave the hidden machinery of providence with God. **Peace begins to return when the Christian stops demanding omniscience as the price of trust.** You do not have to know everything God knows in order to trust the God who knows everything.

7. Peace Is Practiced Where Truth Becomes Obedience

Philippians 4:9 follows the command about thinking with another command: “Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do.” Then Paul says, “and the God of peace shall be with you.” Biblical peace is not separated from obedience. Some people want tranquility while keeping every door open to the very sins and habits that disturb the conscience. They want the peace of God without the government of God. That arrangement is not on the menu. Isaiah 48:22 says, “There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.” While that verse belongs to its own prophetic context concerning Israel and the wicked, the principle remains obvious throughout Scripture: rebellion and spiritual tranquility make poor roommates.

A Christian cannot knowingly feed bitterness, indulge lust, nourish envy, live dishonestly, neglect clear duty, and then wonder why the mind is not resting sweetly in God. First John 3:21 says, “Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.” Obedience does not purchase salvation, but disobedience can wreck fellowship and disturb the conscience. The same grace that secures the believer also teaches him “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts” to live “soberly, righteously, and godly” (Titus 2:12). Grace is not God supplying a pillow so sin can sleep comfortably. Sometimes the missing peace is not a mystery requiring six months of analysis. Sometimes there is a command in the Bible with muddy footprints all over it.

Then there are times when the believer has obeyed, prayed, confessed what needed confessing, and still faces a heavy circumstance. That is where perseverance enters. Galatians 6:9 says, “let us not be weary in well doing.” Peace is not always instant emotional relief after one prayer. Sometimes the Christian must keep bringing the burden back whenever it attempts to climb off the altar. The mind may need repeated correction. You cast the care upon God Monday morning and discover it back in your pocket Monday afternoon. Cast it again. This is not hypocrisy; it is warfare. **A burden surrendered once may knock again, but you are not required to reopen the door simply because it remembers your address.**

Conclusion

Philippians 4 gives no support to the notion that a saved man should never experience troubling thoughts, fear, pressure, uncertainty, or heavy burdens. Paul himself knew trouble. The chapter instead teaches what the believer must do when care begins taking control. “Be careful for nothing.” Bring everything to God by prayer and supplication. Mix the requests with thanksgiving. Then govern the mind according to what is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and worthy of praise. The answer is not denial. It is direction. God tells the believer where to carry the burden, what to remember, what to think about, and how to walk. The mind is not saved so it can run loose like a horse after somebody left the gate open. It belongs under the reins of Scripture.

And the promise is remarkable: “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” God may change the circumstance tomorrow, next month, or not in the way you expected at all. But His peace does not have to wait outside until every question receives an answer. The guard can arrive before the explanation. The sentry can take his post while the enemy is still visible beyond the wall. That is why biblical peace is stronger than favorable circumstances. Circumstances can turn overnight. Christ does not. The believer’s standing remains secure, access remains open, prayer remains available, Scripture remains true, and God remains on the throne when the calendar contains unanswered questions.

So when the saved mind begins running loose, do not let it drag you through every ditch it can imagine. Bring it back to the Book. Bring the burden to God. Thank Him for what He has already done. Refuse to turn possibility into prophecy. Think on what is true. Obey what is clear. Leave secret things with the Lord. Then allow the peace of God to stand guard where worry wanted to build headquarters. **You do not need tomorrow’s answers to have today’s peace. You need today’s God, today’s grace, today’s truth, and the faith to leave tomorrow where God put it.**

5 of 10 — Peace with God and the Peace of God — Let Peace Call the Play: When God’s Peace Rules the Heart

Key Passage: Colossians 3:15 — “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts...”

Colossians 3:15 does not present peace as a spiritual decoration to admire when life happens to be quiet. It presents peace in connection with government: “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.” There is authority in that sentence. Something is going to rule the inner life. If the peace of God does not rule, something else will volunteer before the chair gets cold. Fear will take it

Monday. Anger will occupy it Tuesday. Somebody's opinion will seize it Wednesday. Imagination will declare martial law Thursday. By Friday the news cycle will have moved into the palace, hung pictures on the walls, and started issuing decrees. The heart does not remain ungoverned for long. The question is not whether something will call the play. The question is whether what calls it agrees with the Word of God.

The word "let" places responsibility squarely upon the believer. God has not told the Christian to manufacture His peace from raw human emotion. He has already provided peace in Christ. The believer has peace with God through justification (Romans 5:1), access into grace through Christ (Romans 5:2), and the privilege of experiencing the peace of God as prayer and right thinking govern the inner life (Philippians 4:6–8). Now Colossians says, "let the peace of God rule." The Christian can resist what God intends to govern him. He can feed resentment, indulge fear, rehearse imaginary disasters, nourish suspicion, replay offenses, surrender to impulsiveness, and then wonder why peace has moved out like a tenant who got tired of living beside a marching band. God supplies truth; the believer must stop enthroning everything that contradicts it.

But this verse has also been badly abused by people who turn "peace" into a private revelation machine. "I prayed about it and I have peace" has become the religious equivalent of a diplomatic passport. Once somebody says it, apparently no Bible verse is allowed to inspect the luggage. A man can ignore plain Scripture, violate sound doctrine, disregard wise counsel, walk directly into foolishness, and then announce that he "has peace about it." That is not Colossians 3:15. Biblical peace never overrules biblical truth because the Spirit who gives peace inspired the Book that defines truth. God does not whisper permission in your feelings to disobey what He printed in black and white. **Peace is a terrible substitute for Scripture, but it is a wonderful result of Scripture ruling the heart.**

1. Something Is Always Sitting on the Throne

Colossians 3 deals extensively with what must be put off and what must be put on. Verse 5 says, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth," and names fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness. Verses 8–9 deal with anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication, and lying. Then verses 12–14 command the believer to put on mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, forgiveness, and charity. Verse 15 does not suddenly drop an unrelated feeling into the chapter. Peace rules properly where the old man's works are being denied and the new man's conduct is being put on. God is not offering tranquility as a cushion for unrepentant flesh. A man cannot invite wrath, malice, bitterness, lust, and

dishonesty to dinner every night and then wonder why peace stopped accepting invitations.

The heart is often pictured by men as though it were an innocent victim of incoming circumstances. Scripture treats it more seriously. Proverbs 4:23 says, “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” “Keep” indicates guard duty. The believer is responsible for what he permits to settle, feed, grow, and govern within. You cannot prevent every thought from arriving, every criticism from being spoken, every temptation from appearing, or every disturbing event from occurring. But you do have biblical responsibilities concerning what happens next. A bird may fly over your head; you do not have to hand it straw for a nest. A thought may knock; you do not have to give it a key, a bedroom, and voting rights.

When peace does not rule, the substitute rulers are usually poor governors. Fear sees danger everywhere. Anger sees insult everywhere. Pride sees disrespect everywhere. Envy sees unfairness everywhere. Suspicion sees conspiracy everywhere. Lust sees opportunity everywhere. Bitterness sees yesterday everywhere. Give any one of those permanent control and the heart becomes a dictatorship run by one blind official. Scripture restores proper government by putting truth over the entire administration. The Christian must not ask, “What is shouting loudest inside me?” He must ask, “What has God said?” **Volume does not establish authority. A screaming emotion is still only an emotion, and a quiet Bible verse is still the word of God.**

2. “Let” Means the Believer Cannot Blame Everybody Else

There is a sobering personal responsibility in the word “let.” Paul does not say, “Wait until every irritating person behaves correctly, then peace will rule.” He does not say, “Peace can rule after circumstances cooperate.” He does not say, “Once your family, church, workplace, government, neighbors, body, bank account, and weather all reach a satisfactory condition, God will begin the program.” He says, “let the peace of God rule in your hearts.” The command is addressed to believers living in a fallen world among imperfect people. If peace required universal cooperation, Colossians 3:15 would be postponed until the Millennium. Christian peace is designed to operate now, in a world where people say foolish things, plans fail, machines break, bodies hurt, bills arrive, and somebody will inevitably drive ten miles under the speed limit when you are already late.

This does not mean other people cannot wrong us. Scripture never calls evil imaginary. Colossians itself assumes offenses will happen, because verse 13 says, “forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any.” Notice the realism. There may actually be a quarrel. Somebody may actually have done wrong.

Christian peace does not require pretending the offender behaved beautifully. Forgiveness is not calling darkness light. It is refusing to let another person's wrong establish permanent government inside your heart. You can identify sin accurately without giving bitterness a lifetime appointment. The offender may have entered your day without permission; do not give him a furnished apartment in your mind for the next fifteen years.

The word "let" therefore destroys the excuse that peace is entirely outside our responsibility. A believer can actively sabotage his own tranquility. He can rehearse the insult, enlarge it, polish it, retell it, imagine better comebacks, conduct imaginary arguments in the shower, retry the case at midnight, and wake up surprised that he feels disturbed. He has been feeding the disturbance three meals a day. Then he asks God for peace while keeping resentment on intravenous nutrition. There comes a time when the Bible says stop feeding what you are asking God to remove. **You cannot continually crown the enemy of peace and then complain that peace lost the election.**

3. Peace Never Gets to Overrule the Book

One of the most dangerous misuses of Colossians 3:15 is the teaching that inward peace functions as an infallible decision-making signal. According to that method, if you feel peaceful about an action, God approves it; if you feel uneasy, God opposes it. That sounds spiritual until somebody feels peaceful about something Scripture condemns. Then what? Does the Holy Ghost revise His own Book because your stomach settled down? A believer can feel remarkably calm while doing something remarkably stupid. Jonah was fleeing from the command of God and managed to fall asleep in the sides of the ship (Jonah 1:5). If bodily relaxation proved divine approval, Jonah had more peace than the sailors. He was also going the wrong direction.

The Word of God outranks every internal impression. Psalm 119:105 says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Second Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God," and describes its work in doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. Scripture corrects the believer precisely because his instincts are not infallible. If inner feelings could guide flawlessly, God could have saved considerable paper. Instead He gave a Book. When Scripture speaks clearly, the Christian does not need an impression, a sign, a dream, a coincidence, a fleece, three red cars at an intersection, or a mysterious calm to confirm whether obedience is appropriate. God already went to the trouble of using words.

This matters because emotional peace can arise for many reasons unrelated to righteousness. A coward may feel relief after avoiding his duty. A dishonest man may feel calmer once his lie appears to have worked. A backslider may feel less internal tension

after he silences his conscience long enough. A false teacher can preach error with complete confidence. Feeling settled proves only that a person feels settled. It does not certify doctrine. First John 4:1 says, “believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.” The test is never personal tranquility. Biblical truth judges experience; experience does not judge biblical truth. **When your peace contradicts the Book, keep the Book and interrogate the peace.**

4. The Word Must Live There Before Peace Can Rule There

The verse immediately following Colossians 3:15 says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom” (Colossians 3:16). That is not an accidental neighborhood. Peace ruling and the Word dwelling belong close together. A heart empty of Scripture has little resistance when fear, anger, opinion, and imagination begin campaigning for office. The believer cannot expect biblical peace to govern a mind whose shelves are filled with everything except Bible. If the news gets two hours, social media gets ninety minutes, human opinions get another hour, private worry receives the night shift, and Scripture is allotted six sleepy minutes before the lights go out, do not act mystified when the wrong voice wins.

“Dwell in you richly” means the Word is not supposed to be an occasional visitor. It lives there. It furnishes the rooms. It becomes familiar enough to answer competing voices. Fear says, “You are alone,” and Scripture answers, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5). Condemnation says, “God is through with you,” and Scripture answers, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). Care says, “Carry everything yourself,” and Scripture answers, “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Peter 5:7). The mind cannot answer lies with verses it never bothered to learn.

There is also a practical difference between owning a Bible and allowing the Bible to own the conversation inside your head. Plenty of Christians possess several copies of Scripture while their thinking is governed by rumor, memory, fear, politics, entertainment, resentment, and the last loud person they heard. A Bible sitting closed on the table is no more governing your mind than a fire extinguisher hanging untouched on the wall is extinguishing a fire. The Word must be read, believed, remembered, applied, and obeyed. **Peace follows truth the way a shadow follows the object. Chase the shadow and you will never catch it; stand where truth stands, and peace has somewhere to fall.**

5. Peace Must Rule When People Get Under Your Skin

The immediate context of Colossians 3 is deeply relational. Verse 13 says, “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another,” and gives Christ’s forgiveness as the standard: “even as

Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” Then verse 14 places charity above these virtues as “the bond of perfectness,” and verse 15 commands the peace of God to rule. This is not theoretical peace practiced on a mountaintop where nobody interrupts you. It is peace tested among people. Anybody can feel peaceful in a silent room with the phone turned off and everybody else fifty miles away. Put three personalities in one house, twenty personalities in one church, or fifty personalities in one workplace and suddenly the theology gets field-tested.

“Forbearing” recognizes that not every irritation requires a war. Some Christians can turn a raised eyebrow into the Book of Revelation. Every slight receives a tribunal. Every careless sentence is catalogued. Every disagreement becomes evidence of betrayal. That is not spiritual discernment; sometimes it is simply flesh with excellent filing skills. Forbearance knows the difference between serious sin that must be addressed and ordinary human friction that should be endured with grace. Proverbs 19:11 says, “the discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.” Not every hill deserves your flag and a casualty report.

Forgiveness goes further when real wrong has occurred. The believer forgives “as Christ forgave you.” That standard kills self-righteous resentment at the root. Christ did not forgive us because we had been mildly annoying. We were guilty sinners. Ephesians 4:32 similarly commands believers to forgive “even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

Forgiveness does not excuse evil, eliminate proper consequences, or require foolish trust where trust has been shattered. It does prevent bitterness from taking permanent command. **The peace of God cannot rule a heart that keeps handing bitterness the gavel every morning and asking it to retry yesterday’s case.**

6. Thanksgiving Is Part of the Government of Peace

Colossians 3:15 ends with four easily neglected words: “and be ye thankful.” Paul connects thanksgiving with the rule of peace just as he connects thanksgiving with prayer in Philippians 4:6. That is not coincidence. Gratitude has a governing effect on the mind because it forces attention onto what God has already done rather than allowing every thought to revolve around what appears missing. An unthankful heart magnifies inconveniences until blessings disappear behind them. Israel could stand beside manna from heaven and complain about the menu. Fallen flesh has always possessed that remarkable ability: it can receive ninety-nine mercies, find one disappointment, and hold a press conference about the disappointment.

Thankfulness corrects perspective without denying trouble. The Christian can acknowledge a genuine burden while also recognizing grace. Paul himself endured imprisonment,

opposition, physical affliction, hardship, and betrayal, yet thanksgiving repeatedly appears in his epistles. He did not need artificial optimism because he had theology. He knew that God had saved him, justified him, placed him in Christ, given him eternal life, sealed him with the Spirit, promised resurrection, and prepared a future beyond present affliction. A temporary problem may still hurt, but it cannot erase those realities. **Thanksgiving does not pretend the table has no empty chair; it refuses to say the empty chair is the only thing on the table.**

An unthankful Christian becomes easy prey for restless thinking because nothing ever appears sufficient. What he has is overshadowed by what he lacks. What God did is forgotten because of what God has not yet done. What went right disappears beneath what went wrong. That mindset produces chronic internal rebellion against providence. Thanksgiving interrupts it by reminding the heart that God has not been absent. Psalm 103:2 says, “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” Evidently benefits can be forgotten, so the soul must sometimes be preached to by its owner. There are mornings when you need to stop listening to yourself and start addressing yourself from Scripture.

7. Peace Rules Best Under the Lordship of Christ

Colossians 3:17 brings the whole passage under one governing authority: “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” That is the atmosphere in which biblical peace rules. Peace is not the supreme authority; Christ is. Peace is the fruit of a life increasingly brought under His Word, His commands, His priorities, and His truth. The believer does not ask merely, “Does this make me feel calm?” He asks, “Can this be done in the name of the Lord Jesus? Does it agree with Scripture? Does it honor Christ? Is it righteous? Is it true?” Those questions keep peace from becoming an idol. There is no virtue in feeling calm about dishonoring the Lord.

This also explains why biblical peace can coexist with difficult obedience. Sometimes obeying God does not initially feel comfortable. Paul had conflict, persecution, imprisonment, and danger precisely because he obeyed Christ. The apostles did not judge God’s will by asking which road produced the lowest blood pressure. Acts 20:22–24 shows Paul going toward Jerusalem knowing that bonds and afflictions awaited him, yet determined to finish his course. Obedience may require confronting error, confessing sin, making restitution, ending an improper relationship, refusing compromise, or taking a stand that costs something. If “peace” always means personal comfort, the martyrs were terrible at guidance. Biblical peace is deeper than comfort because it rests upon settled confidence in God while doing what is right.

When Christ rules, competing voices lose their absolute authority. Fear may speak, but it does not command. Anger may arise, but it does not legislate. Other people may offer opinions, but they do not inspire Scripture. Circumstances may shift, but they do not redefine doctrine. The news may shout, but it does not occupy the throne of heaven. The believer learns to hear these signals without saluting every one of them. **A guarded heart is not a silent heart; it is a heart where the wrong voices have lost command authority.** That is the practical government behind “let the peace of God rule.”

Conclusion

Colossians 3:15 is therefore far stronger than the vague instruction to “follow your peace.” Paul is not handing the believer a mystical compass hidden somewhere behind the ribs. He is describing a Christian life governed by truth, forgiveness, charity, thanksgiving, the indwelling Word, and submission to the Lord Jesus Christ. In that setting, the peace of God rules. It settles disputes that flesh wants to inflame. It denies panic the deciding vote. It refuses bitterness permanent office. It keeps imagination from rewriting providence. It does not replace Scripture; it operates beneath Scripture. The believer does not obey peace instead of obeying God. He experiences peace as he brings his thinking and conduct beneath the authority God has already revealed.

That means the Christian must become serious about what he allows to rule. You cannot give the first hour of the morning to fear, the afternoon to resentment, the evening to outrage, the night to imagined disaster, and then wonder why peace never gets a turn at the controls. Something is always calling the play. Scripture says, “let the peace of God rule.” Put off what belongs to the old man. Put on what befits the new. Forgive where forgiveness is commanded. Forbear where forbearance is needed. Let the Word of Christ dwell richly. Be thankful. Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. God’s order is not complicated. The flesh merely objects to losing management.

So when the heart becomes noisy, do not automatically obey the loudest voice. Ask who gave it authority. Fear did not die for you. Anger did not justify you. Public opinion did not seal you. The news cycle did not write Scripture. Your imagination does not know tomorrow. Jesus Christ purchased you, the Holy Ghost indwells you, and the Word of God has been given to govern what you believe and how you walk. Let truth hold the throne, and let the peace produced under that government call the play. **Peace was never meant to replace the King’s orders. Peace is what settles over the kingdom when the King’s orders are believed.**

6 of 10 — Peace with God and the Peace of God — Peace Written in Black and White: When Scripture Silences the Noise

Key Passage: Psalm 119:165 — “Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.”

Psalm 119:165 does not say, “Great peace have they whose circumstances are pleasant.” It does not say great peace belongs to the man who has finally silenced every critic, paid every bill, solved every family problem, received every answer, removed every uncertainty, and arranged life until nothing unexpected can knock on the door. It says, “Great peace have they which love thy law.” The peace is connected to the words of God. That is where the modern mind gets the cart in front of the horse. Men want peace after the world becomes quiet. God gives peace by putting something inside the heart louder than the world. The psalmist lived in a world containing enemies, affliction, reproach, wicked men, persecution, lies, princes, and trouble; yet he speaks of “great peace.” Evidently great peace does not require small problems. It requires a great confidence in what God has said.

The doctrinal setting must remain straight. Psalm 119 belongs to the Old Testament Scriptures and repeatedly celebrates the law, statutes, judgments, testimonies, commandments, and precepts God gave in Israel’s setting. The Church is not Israel, and a Christian in the present dispensation is not justified by keeping the Mosaic law. Romans 3:28 says, “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” But the spiritual principle in Psalm 119 remains powerful because God’s people have always required God’s revealed truth to think straight in a crooked world. The Church possesses completed Scripture and is told, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16). We do not borrow Israel’s covenant position; we learn from the same God who gave His words for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction, warning, comfort, and wisdom.

God therefore did not leave His people dependent upon moods, impressions, personalities, headlines, rumors, dreams, guesses, or voices floating around inside the skull. He gave them words. Black letters on white pages have outlived kings, empires, philosophers, critics, revolutions, persecutions, fashions, and enough religious nonsense to fill a warehouse. Heaven did not entrust Christian stability to whatever happens to be trending before breakfast. The believer has a Book. Promises tell him who God is. Doctrine tells him where he stands. Prophecy tells him where history is going. Commands keep him from creating half his own misery. Examples show him where other men stepped into holes so he does not have to test the depth personally. **Peace does not come from emptying**

the mind. It comes from filling the mind with something stronger than the noise trying to occupy it.

1. Great Peace Begins With a Great View of God's Words

Psalm 119 does not merely say peace belongs to people who own the law. It says, "Great peace have they which love thy law." There is affection involved. The psalmist does not treat God's words like emergency equipment behind glass marked BREAK ONLY DURING DISASTER. He loves them. Again and again he says, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97), and, "Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold" (Psalm 119:127). He valued divine truth more than material treasure because he understood that money can furnish a room while truth furnishes the mind. Gold can buy a bed but cannot command sleep. It can hire guards but cannot give the conscience innocence. It can purchase information but cannot create wisdom. The man who loves God's words possesses riches the stock market cannot erase before lunch.

A low view of Scripture inevitably produces an unstable mind because the person has removed his fixed reference point. If the Bible is merely inspirational literature, then some other authority must settle the final question. Feelings volunteer immediately. Culture applies for the position. Experts line up. Social media brings references from everybody who learned theology from a thirty-second video. Religious tradition arrives with a large hat and an older résumé. But Jesus said, "thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Truth is not whatever leaves you least uncomfortable. Truth is what God said. Once that is settled, the mind finally has a measuring rod that does not stretch every time the age changes its clothes. **A crooked world hates a straight ruler because the ruler exposes the bend without needing permission.**

Loving Scripture also means loving it when it corrects you. Some people love Bible promises the way children love dessert and treat Bible reproof like somebody slipped broccoli onto the plate. But Second Timothy 3:16 gives doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction together. The same Book that comforts you will cross-examine you. It will tell you when fear has become unbelief, when anger has become sin, when desire has become lust, when ambition has become pride, and when "discernment" has become an excuse for bitterness. That correction contributes to peace because a mind at war with truth cannot remain peaceful for long. The Word does not merely soothe the troubled believer; sometimes it identifies the troublemaker, and occasionally the troublemaker is looking back from the mirror.

2. The World Screams, but Scripture Speaks

The modern believer has access to more noise before breakfast than previous generations encountered in a week. A device small enough to fit in a pocket can deliver wars, markets, murders, scandals, predictions, arguments, disasters, outrage, gossip, emergencies, rumors, opinions, and advertisements before the first cup of coffee is finished. Every headline is designed to demand attention immediately. Everything is breaking. Everything is urgent. Everything is historic. Everything is apparently the most important thing that has ever happened until the next notification arrives seven minutes later. A mind fed continuously on alarms will eventually start hearing sirens in a quiet room. Then people wonder why peace seems difficult. Perhaps because the world has been allowed to preach three hours while God was allotted a hurried paragraph.

Scripture does not require ignorance about the world. Christians should not cultivate foolishness and call it spirituality. But there is a difference between being informed and being mentally occupied. Philippians 4:8 commands believers concerning the content of thought: "Whatsoever things are true... honest... just... pure... lovely... of good report... if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." That is government. The believer does not have to swallow every piece of information simply because somebody pushed it onto a screen. Wisdom asks whether information serves responsibility or merely feeds agitation. **Knowing more facts does not automatically make a man wiser; sometimes it simply gives his worry a larger library.**

Jesus said in Matthew 24:6, in its prophetic setting concerning future events, "ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled." Notice the distinction between hearing and being ruled by what is heard. The believer may hear disturbing things without surrendering the throne of the mind to them. The Bible puts news in proportion because Scripture begins before the first kingdom rose and continues beyond the last kingdom falling. God is never surprised by the headline that surprised you. Isaiah 46:10 declares that He knows "the end from the beginning." The evening broadcast may call something unprecedented; heaven is not pacing the floor asking for an emergency meeting. **The world reports events one hour at a time. God wrote the end before the reporters arrived.**

3. Doctrine Gives the Mind a Floor

Doctrine is not dry material for men who collect theological terms the way other men collect stamps. Doctrine tells the believer what is actually true. When emotions start slipping, doctrine gives the feet somewhere to stand. Romans 5:1 says, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Ephesians 1:6 says believers are "accepted in the beloved." Colossians 2:10 says, "ye are complete in him." Those are not decorative statements. They are floorboards beneath the Christian mind.

When guilt, fear, accusation, and uncertainty start tearing through the house, doctrine keeps the believer from falling into the basement.

A Christian who neglects doctrine will eventually interpret God by circumstances instead of interpreting circumstances by God's revealed truth. Trouble comes, so he concludes God has abandoned him. Prayer waits, so he assumes God has stopped listening. He suffers loss, so he decides divine love must have weakened. That is theology written backward. Romans 8:35 asks, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" and then names tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword. Paul does not argue that these circumstances never happen. He argues that they cannot overturn the believer's relationship to Christ. Doctrine does not always remove the blow; it tells you what the blow cannot destroy. **A storm may tear shingles off the roof without moving the foundation one inch.**

This is why peace becomes fragile when Christianity becomes nothing but experiences. Experiences change. One service moves you; another does not. One prayer seems alive; another feels dry. One week you feel spiritually strong; the next you are dragging yourself through responsibilities. If experience becomes authority, the Christian must rewrite his theology every Monday. Scripture prevents that circus. Second Corinthians 5:7 says, "For we walk by faith, not by sight." Faith is not blind optimism. It rests upon what God has revealed. The Book tells the believer who he is in Christ when he cannot feel it, what God has promised when he cannot see it, and where he stands when everything around him is moving. **Doctrine is the ballast in the ship; nobody admires ballast during calm weather, but everybody appreciates it when the sea develops an opinion.**

4. Promises Anchor the Heart Without Lying About the Storm

Biblical promises do not function like inspirational slogans pasted over unpleasant reality. God never required His people to deny suffering in order to trust Him. Psalm 46:1 says, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." It does not say a very present help in the absence of trouble. Hebrews 13:5 gives the believer the Lord's assurance, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." The promise does not say everybody else will remain. People can leave. Health can change. Plans can collapse. Money can vanish. Doors can close. But the believer has a word from God concerning His presence. Faith takes that promise into the storm instead of waiting for the storm to verify it.

Promises also keep imagination from writing theology in God's name. Fear says, "What if God fails?" Scripture says, "God is faithful" (1 Corinthians 1:9). Fear says, "What if I am abandoned?" God says, "I will never leave thee." Fear says, "What if I cannot bear the trial?" First Corinthians 10:13 says God "will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that

ye may be able to bear it.” Fear says, “What if everything is meaningless?” Romans 8:28 declares that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” A promise does not answer every question, but it shuts several doors through which unbelief tries to enter.

The wise believer also learns to keep promises in their proper biblical setting. Not every promise spoken to Israel under covenant belongs doctrinally to the Church. God did not authorize Christians to raid every Old Testament verse, erase Israel’s name, and write themselves into the deed. Right division protects faith from false expectations. Yet Scripture contains abundant truth directly applicable to the Church, along with Old Testament examples and principles written “for our learning” (Romans 15:4). Properly handled promises strengthen rather than confuse. **A promise torn from its address can become presumption; a promise understood in its setting becomes an anchor.** God’s Word brings peace not through careless quotation but through believing exactly what God actually said.

5. Prophecy Keeps Headlines From Becoming Idols

Biblical prophecy performs a powerful service for the troubled mind: it reminds the believer that history is not wandering through the dark looking for an exit. God knows where everything is going. Human kingdoms rise, boast, sign documents, redraw borders, build monuments, threaten rivals, and eventually become material for history books. Daniel 2 saw successive world empires long before their entire course unfolded, and the image finally ended under the judgment of the stone “cut out without hands.” Revelation does not end with Antichrist triumphing, Babylon celebrating, and Satan issuing a press release. It ends with the Lord victorious, judgment completed, and God’s eternal purpose standing.

For the Church, prophecy also reminds believers that this present world is not their final inheritance. Titus 2:13 calls us to be “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” First Thessalonians 4:16–17 reveals the Lord descending, the dead in Christ rising, and living believers being caught up “to meet the Lord in the air.” That hope puts present events in proportion. The Christian can care deeply about what occurs in the world without imagining that the world’s present arrangement is permanent. **A man who knows the train has a destination does not panic every time the scenery changes outside the window.**

Prophecy also exposes the foolishness of making present political, economic, or cultural stability the foundation of peace. Nations are temporary. Markets fluctuate. Institutions decay. Civilizations rise and fall. Scripture never instructed the believer to anchor eternal peace to earthly machinery. Philippians 3:20 says, “For our conversation is in heaven; from

whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” The Christian should live responsibly in the present world, but his ultimate confidence is not in human permanence. **The Bible lets you read tomorrow without worshipping today.** Headlines become less tyrannical when Scripture has already shown that history answers to a King who does not need election returns, military alliances, or public approval to take His throne.

6. Commands Save Us From Manufacturing Unnecessary Misery

Not every storm in the Christian life comes from persecution, providence, or circumstances beyond control. Some storms are homemade. Scripture commands believers because disobedience carries consequences. A man ignores biblical wisdom about money, piles debt onto debt, and then wonders why his mind has no peace. Another feeds bitterness for years and complains that his heart is restless. Another keeps company with temptation, walks right up to the edge, falls in, and then asks why life is complicated. Proverbs is full of men who created their own disasters one foolish decision at a time. God’s commands are not prison bars around joy. Often they are guardrails keeping the car out of the ravine.

Psalms 119 repeatedly connects obedience with stability. Verse 105 says, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” A lamp does not merely comfort the traveler; it shows him where not to step. Ephesians 4 tells believers to put away lying, corrupt communication, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil speaking. Why? Because these sins destroy fellowship, corrupt relationships, grieve the Holy Spirit, and fill the inner life with unnecessary turmoil. The Christian who knowingly nourishes what Scripture condemns should not expect to enjoy undisturbed peace. **God will forgive confessed sin, but grace is not a divine warranty against the practical consequences of foolishness.**

Obedience therefore contributes to peace because it clears away self-inflicted noise. First John 3:21 says, “Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.” The believer walking honestly before the Lord does not need to spend half his prayer time hiding from the very thing he refuses to confess. That does not mean sinless perfection. It means openness, confession, correction, and obedience. A clean conscience is quieter than a defended rebellion. **Many people ask God to calm the storm while they are still drilling holes in the bottom of the boat.** Sometimes the first step toward peace is not another hour of analysis. It is obeying the verse you already know.

7. Scripture Must Dwell Richly, Not Visit Occasionally

Colossians 3:16 says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.” “Dwell” is stronger than visit. God’s Word is supposed to live there. It should have furniture in the mind. It should know where the cups are kept. A believer cannot expect Scripture to govern

his thoughts if Scripture only stops by briefly on Sunday morning. The world is aggressive about repetition. Advertisements repeat. Political messages repeat. Entertainment repeats. News repeats. Social media repeats. Temptation repeats. Yet Christians sometimes expect one hurried Bible reading to overpower sixteen hours of everything else. The arithmetic is not mysterious. Whatever repeatedly occupies the mind will eventually influence its reflexes.

Joshua 1:8, spoken in Israel's historical setting as Joshua prepared to lead the nation into the land, emphasizes meditation upon the Book of the law "day and night." Psalm 1 similarly describes the blessed man whose "delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." Again, the Church does not inherit Israel's national land promises, but the spiritual lesson about sustained attention to God's revelation is obvious. The mind becomes stable through repeated contact with truth. You cannot memorize what you never read, meditate on what you never learn, or answer lies with verses you cannot remember. **Three minutes of Scripture followed by three hours of panic is an unusual way to complain that Scripture is not working.**

Saturation changes reflexes. When Scripture dwells richly, truth begins answering before fear finishes speaking. A trial arises and Romans 8 comes to mind. A temptation appears and First Corinthians 10:13 answers. Care begins building and First Peter 5:7 speaks. Condemnation arrives and Romans 8:1 stands at the door. Uncertainty presses in and Proverbs 3:5–6 reminds the believer to trust the Lord rather than lean upon his own understanding. This does not happen through mystical downloading. It happens because the Book has been read, loved, believed, remembered, and used. **The Bible cannot silence noise from a shelf it never leaves. But once its words take residence in the mind, the world discovers it is no longer shouting into an empty room.**

Conclusion

Psalm 119:165 gives the principle plainly: "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." Great peace is connected to great attachment to God's words. The verse does not promise a life without provocation, trouble, persecution, uncertainty, or grief. Psalm 119 itself contains all of those. It promises stability in the midst of them. The person rooted in divine truth becomes harder to knock off course because every event does not require him to invent a new worldview. He already knows who God is. He already knows where truth is found. He already knows that feelings are not final authority, circumstances are not final authority, and human opinion is certainly not final authority. **A man with no fixed truth is knocked over by every wind; a man planted in Scripture may bend under the storm, but he has roots below what the storm can reach.**

For the Church Age believer, that stability rests ultimately in Jesus Christ and the complete revelation God has given. The Christian has peace with God through Christ, stands in grace, possesses access to the Father, and can experience the peace of God as his thoughts are brought under Scripture. The Book reminds him of his position, warns him against sin, corrects his thinking, interprets history, exposes counterfeit voices, and supplies promises strong enough to bear weight. Scripture does not answer every curiosity God has chosen not to reveal, but it answers everything necessary for faith and obedience. The believer does not need to know every secret in heaven before he can sleep tonight. He needs to know what God has actually said and believe it.

So when the world begins shouting, open the Book before opening another window for the noise. When fear writes predictions, make it read Scripture aloud. When circumstances move, stand on doctrine. When the future looks uncertain, remember prophecy. When temptation offers shortcuts, obey the commands. When the conscience becomes troubled, let the Word correct what needs correcting. Feed the mind truth until truth becomes more familiar than panic. **The Bible does not always stop the storm outside the ship, but it can drive an anchor through the floor of the soul. The waves may still hit, the wind may still howl, and the night may still be dark—but a heart fastened to what God has written does not have to drift with every sound in the dark.**

7 of 10 — Peace with God and the Peace of God — Peace Without Compromise: Staying Calm Without Surrendering the Truth

Key Passage: Romans 12:18 — “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”

Romans 12:18 is one of those verses people quote quickly and read slowly. “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” Every part of that sentence matters. Paul does not command the believer to manufacture harmony at any price. He does not say, “Keep everybody happy.” He does not say, “Never confront error.” He does not say, “Smile while somebody tramples truth into the carpet.” He says, “If it be possible,” because sometimes it is not possible. He says, “as much as lieth in you,” because the believer is accountable for his side of the street, not for somebody else’s rebellion. And he says, “live peaceably,” which deals with conduct, spirit, reaction, and restraint. Biblical peace is not surrender. It is spiritual self-government while standing exactly where truth requires.

The modern religious world often mistakes weakness for meekness and silence for peace. A Christian refuses to confront obvious falsehood, and somebody praises his gracious spirit. A church watches doctrine rot in the pulpit but congratulates itself because nobody raised his voice. A believer refuses to correct a destructive error because he does not want “division.” That is not peace. Sometimes it is cowardice with a Bible cover. Elijah did not preserve harmony with the prophets of Baal. John the Baptist did not protect Herod’s feelings. Paul did not tell Peter, “Let us agree to disagree” when the truth of the gospel was at stake. Jesus Christ Himself overturned tables, called hypocrites what they were, rebuked unbelief, exposed false religion, and still remained perfectly holy. **Peace that requires truth to keep its mouth shut is not biblical peace; it is a gag order issued by fear.**

Yet the opposite error is just as fleshly. Some men discover that compromise is wrong and then decide obnoxiousness must be a spiritual gift. They confuse courage with combativeness, discernment with suspicion, boldness with rudeness, and doctrinal conviction with the need to win every argument before supper. Romans 12 will not permit that either. The same chapter that tells believers not to conform to this world also says, “Recompense to no man evil for evil,” “avenge not yourselves,” and “if thine enemy hunger, feed him.” Truth does not need the flesh’s temper to defend it. A Christian can be firm without being filthy, direct without being malicious, and unyielding without letting bitterness poison the bloodstream. **The issue is not whether conflict ever surrounds you. The issue is whether conflict gets inside you and starts running the government.**

1. “If It Be Possible” Means Peace Has Biblical Limits

Those first four words—“If it be possible”—destroy the fantasy that peace is always obtainable between righteous truth and determined error. Sometimes another person has already decided that peace will require your surrender. A false teacher may tolerate you only if you stop calling false doctrine false. A rebellious relative may accept you only if you approve what God condemns. A hostile world may praise Christians only when Christians cease sounding Christian. Under those conditions, harmony becomes another word for capitulation. Acts 5:29 gives the line clearly: “We ought to obey God rather than men.” When obedience to man conflicts with obedience to God, the Christian does not need another committee meeting. God gets the final vote.

Jesus made the matter even plainer in Matthew 10:34: “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.” That does not contradict Christ as the Prince of Peace. It reveals the effect of truth in a rebellious world. His gospel reconciles sinners to God, but the same gospel divides belief from unbelief, righteousness from rebellion, and truth from error. A surgeon’s knife divides tissue in order to heal; truth divides because falsehood cannot survive beside it without protest. The same Christ who said,

“Peace I leave with you” also told His disciples that households could be divided over allegiance to Him. **The gospel brings peace with God, but it does not promise peace with everybody who hates God’s terms.**

This keeps the Christian from blaming himself for every conflict. Some believers carry unnecessary guilt because they think any disagreement proves spiritual failure. That is nonsense. Paul had conflicts everywhere he preached. In Acts 17, the gospel produced opposition in Thessalonica. In Acts 19, preaching against idolatry disturbed Ephesus so thoroughly that a riot followed. Paul did not conclude, “Perhaps I should preach less clearly so Demetrius can sleep better.” Sometimes truth irritates people precisely because it is truth. Proverbs 28:4 says, “They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them.” There is such a thing as righteous contention. **Not every disturbed room needs a softer preacher; sometimes it needs the truth that disturbed it.**

2. “As Much as Lieth in You” Puts Your Spirit on Trial

While the believer cannot control another man’s response, he is responsible for his own. “As much as lieth in you” means you do not get to blame somebody else for the flesh you chose to unleash. Another man may insult you, lie about you, misrepresent you, or speak with contempt. None of that gives you permission to sin in return. Romans 12:17 says, “Recompense to no man evil for evil.” First Peter 3:9 says, “Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing.” The Christian is not a spiritual vending machine where somebody inserts an insult and receives one back automatically. Grace breaks that machinery. You can stand against error without becoming another specimen of the error’s ugliness.

This requires brutal honesty about motive. It is possible to say something technically true with a thoroughly rotten spirit. A man can quote chapter and verse while secretly enjoying the opportunity to wound somebody. He can call it boldness when what he really wants is the last word. He can dress pride in doctrinal vocabulary and parade it through the church as conviction. God sees through the costume. Ephesians 4:15 says, “speaking the truth in love.” Truth without love becomes a club in the hand of the flesh. Love without truth becomes a pillow placed over the mouth of conviction. Scripture commands both. **God never told you to choose between a backbone and a heart. He expects the Christian to have both.**

This is especially important when opposition becomes personal. Once somebody attacks your character, the temptation is to stop defending truth and start defending ego. Suddenly the issue that began with doctrine ends with wounded pride, sarcastic exchanges, imagined comebacks, and a mental courtroom held at two in the morning. That is where

peace is lost. Proverbs 15:1 says, “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.” A soft answer is not a weak answer. It may be firm, clear, and final. Softness describes spirit, not surrender. **You do not prove strength by letting another man’s temper choose your tone.**

3. Christ Proved Peace and Confrontation Can Occupy the Same Life

Jesus Christ destroys the idea that holiness means avoiding confrontation. He was perfectly peaceful and perfectly willing to rebuke. Matthew 23 contains words modern religious diplomacy would have edited before publication: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” He called them “blind guides,” “whited sepulchres,” and “serpents.” Those words were not a tantrum. They were judicial truth spoken by the Son of God against religious corruption. Christ did not lose control. He exercised it perfectly. There is a world of difference between righteous rebuke and fleshly rage. One exposes evil under God’s authority; the other vents self under emotional pressure.

Christ also demonstrated extraordinary restraint when personally abused. First Peter 2:23 says, “Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not.” That verse ought to be nailed over the door of every Christian argument. Jesus could denounce hypocrisy without becoming petty when men insulted Him personally. He could cleanse the temple and still submit silently before Pilate when the Father’s purpose required it. The flesh does the reverse. It stays quiet when truth is attacked and becomes a lion when ego is scratched. Christ was fierce where righteousness required fierceness and restrained where personal retaliation would have served nothing. **Maturity is knowing which battle belongs to truth and which battle belongs to your pride.**

The cross itself shows this balance. Christ did not compromise one ounce of divine righteousness to make peace. Sin was judged. Blood was shed. Justice was satisfied. Peace with God came through sacrifice, not divine indifference. Colossians 1:20 says Christ made “peace through the blood of his cross.” Calvary is therefore the ultimate proof that real peace never requires God to pretend sin does not matter. God did not reconcile sinners by lowering His standard. He reconciled them by satisfying it in Christ. **If the greatest peace ever made required truth, righteousness, judgment, and blood, Christians should stop imagining that every lesser peace must be purchased by pretending nothing matters.**

4. Paul Preached Peace and Still Started Riots

Paul called the gospel “the gospel of peace” in Ephesians 6:15, yet Acts records city after city where preaching that gospel produced upheaval. That apparent contradiction disappears when we understand that peace with God and peace with rebellious men are

not the same thing. The gospel offers reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ, but men who love darkness often hate the message that exposes their condition. In Acts 17:5, unbelieving Jews in Thessalonica were “moved with envy” and stirred up trouble. The defect was not in Paul’s peace. It was in their hearts. Truth does not become unpeaceful merely because somebody throws a chair when he hears it.

Acts 19 gives another example. Paul’s preaching in Ephesus threatened an industry built around idolatry. Demetrius the silversmith understood immediately that if Paul’s doctrine spread, the market for idols would suffer. Soon the city was filled with confusion. Paul had touched a profitable lie, and profitable lies rarely surrender quietly. There is a lesson there. People often tolerate doctrine until doctrine threatens revenue, reputation, power, pleasure, or tradition. Then suddenly the preacher is accused of causing trouble. Ahab called Elijah the troubler of Israel in 1 Kings 18:17, although Ahab had filled the land with idolatry. **The man who sets the house on fire often complains that the alarm is too loud.**

Paul nevertheless refused to become bitter. Second Timothy 2:24–25 says, “the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.” There is the balance again. He must instruct opposition, not surrender to it. He must be gentle, not spineless. He must correct, not quarrel for sport. The goal is truth and repentance, not personal victory. The Christian who enjoys humiliating opponents has already lost something even if his doctrine is technically correct. **The point of biblical confrontation is not to leave the other man bleeding on the floor while you polish your sword. It is to uphold truth without becoming what truth condemns.**

5. Peace Does Not Mean Every Error Deserves Silence

Scripture repeatedly commands believers to address false doctrine. Titus 1:9 requires a bishop to hold fast the faithful word so that he may “by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.” Verse 11 speaks of false teachers “whose mouths must be stopped.” That is not language for passive spectators. Jude 3 says believers should “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Contending is not optional when essential truth is under assault. A church that refuses to defend doctrine in the name of peace eventually becomes peaceful in the same sense a cemetery is peaceful—nothing living enough remains to argue.

Yet every disagreement is not a first-class doctrinal emergency. Romans 14 deals with matters in which believers can differ without destroying fellowship. The mature Christian learns the difference between fundamentals and preferences, between doctrinal

corruption and personal taste, between heresy and somebody simply failing to arrange the furniture your way. Some men treat every minor issue as though the Nicene Council reconvened in the church parking lot. That is foolishness. Biblical discernment knows where Scripture draws hard lines and where charity allows room. **If everything becomes a hill to die on, eventually you will die on a molehill while the real battle passes somewhere else.**

The test is Scripture, not irritation. Does the issue corrupt the gospel? Deny the person or work of Christ? Undermine biblical authority? Promote sin? Distort salvation? Divide what God joined or join what God divided? Then truth matters enough to confront. But if the issue is merely style, personality, custom, or preference, humility may require letting it go. Proverbs 26:17 warns about meddling in quarrels that do not belong to us. Not every fire needs your bucket, and not every argument needs your name in the comments. **Wisdom knows when silence is cowardice and when silence is maturity.**

6. Defending Truth Without Letting Bitterness Rent the House

One of the great dangers in prolonged conflict is that the original issue can be replaced by bitterness. The believer begins by defending truth and ends by replaying the opponent's words every morning before breakfast. Hebrews 12:15 warns about "a root of bitterness" that springs up and troubles many. Roots operate below the surface before the fruit appears. Bitterness can hide beneath righteous language for a long time. A man keeps talking about doctrine, but everybody around him notices that his real fuel has become resentment. He no longer wants error corrected; he wants the offender punished in a way that satisfies his emotions.

Ephesians 4:26 says, "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath." There is anger that recognizes wrong, but there is also anger that becomes a residence. The verse refuses to let wrath move in permanently. Anger may knock because something genuinely unjust occurred, but it does not get a mortgage. Verse 31 continues: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you." Notice Paul does not say, "Keep these handy for doctrinal emergencies." The flesh loves emergency exemptions. God does not issue them. **If you defend truth long enough to become hateful, the enemy has managed to move the battle from the doctrine into your soul.**

Forgiveness protects the inner life without requiring foolishness about the outer situation. Ephesians 4:32 commands believers to be "kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Forgiveness does not mean declaring falsehood true, restoring broken trust instantly, removing every consequence, or

pretending serious evil was trivial. It means surrendering personal vengeance and refusing to keep feeding hatred. Romans 12:19 says, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” God has not retired from the justice department. **You can hand the case to God without handing the truth to the offender.**

7. A Peaceable Christian Can Still Have a Backbone

Biblical meekness is strength under control. Moses was called “very meek” in Numbers 12:3, yet he stood before Pharaoh, confronted Israel’s idolatry, broke the tables of stone in righteous anger, and governed a rebellious nation. Meekness did not turn Moses into a doormat. Likewise, Paul could write tenderly to believers and still tell Elymas, “O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil” (Acts 13:10). Scripture refuses our modern categories. It will not let us define strong men as necessarily harsh or gentle men as necessarily weak. The Spirit produces both courage and restraint.

A backbone is especially necessary when social pressure demands doctrinal compromise. Galatians 2 records Peter withdrawing from Gentile believers because of fear of the circumcision party. Paul says, “I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed” (Galatians 2:11). Why? “Because they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel” (Galatians 2:14). Paul did not preserve surface peace by sacrificing gospel truth. He confronted a respected apostle publicly because the error was public and doctrinally serious. **Peace bought with compromised truth is counterfeit currency; it may pass in polite company, but heaven will not honor it.**

Still, the Christian who stands must stand in peace. Ephesians 6 describes the believer’s feet as “shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” while the same passage describes armor, a shield, and a sword. There is no contradiction. A soldier can be prepared for battle without loving war. The Christian fights because truth requires it, not because his flesh enjoys combat. He can leave an argument without replaying it for three days. He can correct somebody without hating him. He can be misunderstood without becoming obsessed with clearing his name. **The strongest believer is not the one who wins every fight; it is the one who can stand in the fight without letting the fight take over his heart.**

Conclusion

Romans 12:18 gives the Christian a narrow and holy road between compromise and carnality: “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” There are limits to peace because truth has limits. Some people will not live peaceably unless you surrender conviction, approve sin, or silence Scripture. The answer is no. Yet the Christian must also examine his own spirit. He has no right to answer evil with evil, pride with pride,

or anger with uncontrolled anger. The believer's responsibility is to stand where Scripture stands while keeping his heart under the government of Christ. **Peace does not require retreat, and courage does not require rage.**

Jesus Christ remains the perfect example. He rebuked hypocrisy without sinning, exposed error without becoming corrupt, endured personal insult without retaliation, and made peace with God through a cross that satisfied righteousness rather than compromising it. Paul followed the same pattern imperfectly but faithfully: preach truth, endure opposition, correct error, refuse vengeance, forgive personally, and keep moving. That is mature Christian peace. It is not softness. It is not fear. It is not conflict avoidance. It is the ability to face conflict without allowing conflict to become your master.

So when truth must be defended, defend it. When error must be answered, answer it. When sin must be named, name it. When a brother can be forgiven, forgive him. When an argument is foolish, leave it alone. When peace is possible without disobedience, pursue it. When peace requires compromise, keep the truth and let the false peace go. And when somebody else loses control, do not hand him the keys to your spirit. **A Christian can stand with a Bible in one hand and peace in the other. He does not have to drop either one to prove he has the other.**

8 of 10 — Peace with God and the Peace of God — Quiet in the Furnace: The Peace God Gives Before the Trouble Leaves

Key Passage: John 16:33 — “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

John 16:33 contains enough truth to wreck several shelves of modern religious salesmanship. Jesus Christ does not tell His disciples that following Him will place them inside a glass case where trouble cannot touch them. He says, “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” There is no fine print under the verse promising that mature believers will eventually graduate beyond it. Christ speaks peace and tribulation in the same sentence: “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace.” There is the location of peace—“in me.” Then comes the location of trouble—“in the world.” The Christian gets into difficulty whenever he expects the world to supply what Christ said would be found in Him. The world produces tribulation with remarkable consistency. Christ supplies peace with greater consistency still. **Peace is not the absence of a furnace; it is knowing who owns you while the furnace is hot.**

The words were spoken on the eve of Calvary, with the disciples facing events they did not yet understand. Their Lord was going to be betrayed, arrested, rejected, crucified, buried, and raised again. They were about to watch circumstances collapse around promises they had not properly understood. Christ did not prepare them by promising that nothing painful would happen. He prepared them with truth before the pain arrived. “I have overcome the world.” Notice the confidence. The cross still stood immediately ahead in historical sequence, yet the Lord speaks with the certainty of complete victory. Men could arrest Him, mock Him, scourge Him, nail Him to a cross, and seal His tomb, but none of them could derail the purpose of God. **The darkest night in the disciples’ experience was not proof that Christ had lost control; it was the very night God’s redemptive purpose was moving toward its appointed hour.**

That distinction matters whenever suffering enters the believer’s life. A Christian can have peace with God according to Romans 5:1 while experiencing circumstances that severely test the peace of God. Salvation does not make grief painless, betrayal pleasant, sickness enjoyable, financial pressure imaginary, rejection harmless, or unanswered prayer easy. The Bible does not demand that the believer grin at tragedy and call it wonderful. Biblical peace is not pretending that pain does not hurt. It is confidence in God while the pain is real. Sometimes Christ rebukes the wind and gives a great calm. Sometimes the wind keeps blowing and He gives calm to the man standing in it. Sometimes the furnace door opens immediately. Sometimes God meets His servant in the middle of the fire. **The miracle is not always that the heat disappears. Sometimes the miracle is that the heat does not get the last word.**

1. Christ Promised Tribulation, Not a Trouble-Proof Christianity

The words “ye shall have tribulation” ought to cure the Christian of believing that every hardship is evidence that something has gone wrong with God’s plan. Jesus did not say, “You may experience occasional inconvenience if circumstances become unusual.” He told His own followers to expect trouble in the world. Paul later told believers, “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). Second Timothy 3:12 says, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” The Bible is painfully honest. It never has to bait people into Christianity with promises of constant comfort and then hide the suffering clause in small print. **God tells you there will be storms before you leave the harbor.**

This immediately exposes one of the great counterfeits of modern preaching: the idea that faith is a spiritual insurance policy against unpleasant circumstances. According to that system, if trouble arrives, somebody must have failed to confess correctly, believe strongly enough, sow enough money, stay positive enough, or pronounce the right words over the

situation. Job would have confused that congregation badly. So would Paul with his thorn, Timothy with his stomach, Epaphroditus “sick nigh unto death,” and Trophimus whom Paul left at Miletum sick. The Bible contains too many suffering saints to support a theology in which all hardship proves defective faith. **A doctrine that collapses when it meets the Book never deserved to survive the sermon.**

The believer therefore should not waste every trial asking, “Why is this happening to me?” as though Christianity came with diplomatic immunity from a fallen world. Some suffering comes because we inhabit mortal bodies. Some comes because other people sin. Some comes from our own foolishness. Some comes through persecution for righteousness. Some comes through providence that God does not fully explain. Scripture distinguishes these things, but it never promises universal exemption. The important question is often not, “How can I avoid every furnace?” but, “How do I honor God when one is unavoidable?” **Christian maturity is not learning how never to hurt. It is learning that pain does not have authority to rewrite what God has said.**

2. Peace With God Remains When Circumstances Turn Against You

Romans 5:1 is not suspended when suffering arrives: “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” That peace rests upon justification, not comfort. The believer’s relationship to God was settled through Christ before the hospital call came, before the income changed, before the betrayal occurred, before the funeral, before the rejection, and before the long unanswered season. Trouble can disturb the believer’s experience without reversing his standing. This is one of the great anchors of Christian suffering. **A storm can shake the house without changing the name on the deed.**

The devil loves to interpret suffering as proof of rejection. One hard blow comes and the accusation begins: “God must be angry with you. God has forgotten you. Something must be wrong between you and Him.” Sometimes chastening is involved in a believer’s life, and Hebrews 12 teaches that plainly. But even chastening proves sonship rather than enemy status. “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth” (Hebrews 12:6). A Father correcting His child is not a Judge sentencing His enemy. Those are different relationships. The Christian must not turn every painful circumstance into a courtroom where justification is retried.

Romans 8:35–37 names tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword, then asks whether any of them can separate believers from the love of Christ. The answer is not that believers will never encounter such things. Paul assumes the possibility and declares that none of them can sever the relationship. “Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.” Notice: “in all these things.” Not always

outside them. Not always rescued before they begin. Sometimes the victory is displayed inside what the flesh would prefer to avoid entirely. **Grace does not need easy circumstances to prove it is grace.**

3. God Does Not Owe Us an Explanation Before He Gives Us Peace

One of suffering's hardest features is unanswered "why." The believer can often endure more easily when he understands the reason, but providence does not always send an explanatory memorandum. Job never received, during his suffering, the heavenly conversation that opens the book bearing his name. He knew the pain; the reader knows more of the background than Job did. Yet God expected faith before full explanation. Deuteronomy 29:29 says, "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us." Some things God reveals. Some things He retains.

Modern man finds that arrangement offensive because he secretly believes omniscience should be included with salvation. He wants God to explain the entire machinery before he agrees to trust the Operator. But faith does not mean understanding everything God knows. Faith means trusting the God who knows everything you do not. Proverbs 3:5 says, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." That command would be unnecessary if understanding always arrived first. **You do not need God's entire blueprint to know the Architect has not lost the building.**

Philippians 4:7 promises "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding." That wording matters in suffering. Sometimes God gives understanding, and we thank Him for it. Sometimes He gives peace that operates where explanation has not yet arrived. The believer says, "I do not understand this, but I know God is faithful. I do not know why this door closed, but I know Christ has not changed. I cannot trace His hand here, but Scripture has already told me His character." That is not intellectual laziness. It is spiritual order. **Peace begins where the demand to know everything finally bows before the God who already does.**

4. Sometimes God Calms the Sea; Sometimes He Calms the Sailor

Mark 4 records Christ asleep in the hinder part of the ship while a storm fills the vessel. The disciples awaken Him with the accusation, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" That sentence contains the theology of panic: danger plus delay equals presumed indifference. Christ rises, rebukes the wind, and says to the sea, "Peace, be still." Then He addresses the deeper storm: "Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" The disciples wanted the sea corrected. Christ corrected the disciples too. A quiet sea is useful; a trusting heart is better.

There will be occasions when God removes the circumstance. The test result changes. The money arrives. The door opens. The persecutor leaves. The conflict resolves. The prayer is answered exactly as requested. Thank God when He says yes in that fashion. But Scripture gives no warrant for demanding that every prayer conclude with immediate circumstantial relief. Paul besought the Lord three times concerning his thorn in the flesh, and the thorn remained. What changed was Paul's understanding of grace: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). God did not remove the thorn; He changed what the thorn meant in Paul's walk.

That is a deeper peace than one dependent upon favorable outcomes. If your peace only survives when God answers exactly as requested, then the circumstance is still sitting on the throne. Biblical peace says, "I will pray specifically, trust fully, and leave God room to be God." The believer can desire deliverance without making deliverance the condition of faithfulness. **A faith that only sings after the prison door opens has not yet learned the midnight music of Acts 16.** Paul and Silas sang before the earthquake, before the doors opened, and before the chains fell off.

5. The Furnace Can Be Hot While God Is Present

Daniel 3 gives one of Scripture's most memorable pictures of faith under pressure. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were commanded to bow before Nebuchadnezzar's image or face the fiery furnace. Their answer in verses 17–18 is magnificent: "our God whom we serve is able to deliver us," followed immediately by, "But if not... we will not serve thy gods." They knew God could deliver them from the furnace, but their obedience did not depend upon His doing so. That is faith with a backbone. **They did not worship God because He guaranteed cool temperatures. They worshipped God because He was God.**

Nebuchadnezzar had the furnace heated seven times hotter, and the flames killed the men who threw the three Hebrews inside. Yet when the king looked in, he asked, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" Then he saw "four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt." The furnace remained a furnace. The miracle was not that Babylon suddenly discovered climate control. God preserved His servants in the place designed to destroy them. The ropes burned before the men did. **Sometimes the fire consumes the bonds before it consumes anything God intends to keep.**

That event belongs to Daniel's historical setting and should not be turned into a promise that every Christian will receive miraculous physical deliverance from every danger. Many faithful believers have suffered and died. Hebrews 11 deliberately lists both kinds: some "quenched the violence of fire," while others "were tortured, not accepting deliverance."

Same faith chapter. Different earthly outcomes. The common denominator is not survival. It is faithfulness. The lesson is not “God always keeps His people from dying.” The lesson is that **God’s presence is not measured by whether He chooses deliverance before the furnace, inside the furnace, or beyond the furnace altogether.**

6. Pain Is Real, but It Does Not Get to Define God

Grief can hit the believer with a force that makes ordinary conversation seem strange. Loss changes rooms. Betrayal leaves echoes. Physical suffering wears a man down in places nobody else can see. Scripture never trivializes these realities. Jesus wept at Lazarus’s tomb even though He knew resurrection was minutes away (John 11:35). Paul described Epaphroditus’s possible death as something that would have brought him “sorrow upon sorrow” (Philippians 2:27). Biblical faith does not require emotional anesthesia. Tears are not apostasy.

The danger comes when pain begins writing doctrine. “I hurt, therefore God does not care.” “I cannot see an answer, therefore there is no purpose.” “This person rejected me, therefore God has abandoned me.” Those conclusions go beyond the evidence and contradict Scripture. Pain is a witness to suffering; it is not a qualified witness regarding the character of God. **A broken heart can testify that something hurts. It cannot subpoena heaven and rewrite Romans.**

Second Corinthians 4:8–9 gives the apostolic pattern: “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.” Notice the repeated contrast. Paul does not deny the first half. Troubled. Perplexed. Persecuted. Cast down. Those are real experiences. But they do not control the final clause. Not distressed. Not in despair. Not forsaken. Not destroyed. **Faith does not erase the first half of the sentence; it refuses to let the first half write the ending.**

7. Peace in Suffering Is Built on Victory Already Won

John 16:33 ends with the reason Christ can command good cheer: “I have overcome the world.” The believer’s peace is tied to Christ’s victory, not his own ability to master every circumstance. Jesus was rejected by the world, crucified by men, buried, and yet rose in triumph. The worst the world could do became the stage upon which its defeat was exposed. First Corinthians 15:57 says, “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” The Christian’s ultimate victory is not that he never enters suffering. It is that suffering cannot undo what Christ accomplished.

This also means every present furnace has an expiration date. The Church awaits the coming of Christ. First Thessalonians 4:17 says believers will be “caught up together... to

meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” Whatever burden a believer carries now, he does not carry it forever. Mortality is temporary. Separation is temporary. Persecution is temporary. This present evil world is temporary. The believer’s union with Christ is not. **Pain may occupy a chapter, but Christ owns the book.**

That future hope does not make present pain trivial; it places it in proportion. Paul writes in Romans 8:18, “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Comparison requires acknowledging both realities. There are sufferings now and glory later. The Christian is not commanded to call suffering pleasant; he is commanded to reckon correctly. A mountain looks enormous until a larger mountain appears behind it. Eternity does not deny today’s pain. It reveals its size against everlasting glory. **The furnace looks different when you know it is not the final room.**

Conclusion

John 16:33 gives no support to a Christianity that promises permanent sunshine in a world Christ explicitly described as a place of tribulation. The believer may face grief, rejection, sickness, betrayal, financial pressure, persecution, unanswered questions, delayed prayer, and seasons when heaven seems silent. None of those things proves that peace with God has vanished. Romans 5:1 remains true in the hospital, at the graveside, under financial strain, in loneliness, and in the long night when circumstances refuse to explain themselves. **Justification is not weather-dependent.**

The peace of God is experienced differently. It must be learned in the very conditions where peace appears least reasonable. Prayer carries the burden to God. Scripture governs interpretation. Thanksgiving remembers former faithfulness. Hope looks beyond the present hour. Faith refuses to judge God’s character by one painful chapter. Sometimes deliverance comes quickly. Sometimes strength comes instead. Sometimes God changes the storm. Sometimes He changes the believer while the storm continues. Sometimes the answer is a door opening. Sometimes the answer is sufficient grace behind a door that stays shut. **God has more than one way to prove He is faithful.**

So when the furnace is hot, do not conclude that God is absent merely because you can feel the heat. When the sea keeps pitching, do not assume Christ has lost the ship. When the prayer waits, do not rewrite the promises. When tears come, let them come without handing them the pen that writes your doctrine. Christ told you plainly, “In the world ye shall have tribulation,” and in the same breath He said, “be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” **Sometimes peace is not the furnace going cold. Sometimes peace is finding**

that, while the fire still burns, you are not walking through it alone—and the fire does not own the outcome.

9 of 10 — Peace with God and the Peace of God — “Peace, Peace” When There Is No Peace: The Counterfeit Calm That Sends Men to Judgment

Key Passage: Jeremiah 6:14 — “Peace, peace; when there is no peace.”

Jeremiah 6:14 is one of the most terrifying verses in the Bible because nobody in the verse is screaming. Nobody is running through the streets shouting that judgment is coming. Quite the opposite. The religious voices are reassuring everybody. Jeremiah says, “They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.” Judah was sick unto judgment, and the men who should have told the truth were handing out spiritual aspirin for a cancer that required repentance. God had warned, sin had multiplied, judgment was approaching, and the professional comforters were still telling the people everything was going to be fine. There is something more dangerous than fear in the presence of danger: calm produced by a lie. **A frightened man may still run to safety; a falsely peaceful man sits in the burning house because somebody told him the smoke was only atmosphere.**

The historical setting matters. Jeremiah is preaching to Judah under the law in the years surrounding the approach of Babylonian judgment. This is not a Church Age salvation verse to be lifted out of its setting and pasted onto every nervous Christian. The people had forsaken the Lord, corrupted worship, hardened themselves against His warnings, and listened to religious leaders who treated national apostasy as though it were a minor inconvenience. Jeremiah 6:13 says, “from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.” Then verse 14 shows the result: shallow healing and false peace. They were not merely wrong about their emotional condition; they were wrong about God’s disposition toward their rebellion. The prophets offered tranquility where God had announced judgment. **When God says judgment and the preacher says peace, the problem is not that the preacher needs a softer tone. The problem is that he has changed sides.**

The principle reaches far beyond Jeremiah’s day because human nature still prefers reassurance to truth. A lost man can feel perfectly peaceful while remaining unreconciled to God. He can have religion, money, education, moral respectability, church membership, family tradition, philosophical acceptance, a quiet conscience, and enough entertainment to keep eternity from interrupting dinner. None of it equals Romans 5:1: “Therefore being

justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Peace with God is not whatever calm happens to float through the chest. It is an objective relationship established through justification by faith in Jesus Christ. Everything else can be counterfeited. **The most dangerous peace on earth is the peace a man feels while God says he is still at war with Him.**

1. Jeremiah’s False Peace Was a Bandage Over Rebellion

Jeremiah says they “healed” the hurt “slightly.” That word exposes the method. The prophets recognized enough trouble to offer treatment, but they refused to diagnose the disease honestly. Judah’s problem was not poor morale. It was rebellion against God. Jeremiah 6:16 records the Lord calling them to “the old paths,” where the good way was, and their answer was, “We will not walk therein.” Verse 17 says God set watchmen over them, and they answered, “We will not hearken.” That is not confusion. That is refusal. Yet religious leaders came along and spoke peace over people who had openly rejected the words of God. **False religion specializes in reducing rebellion to a minor emotional bruise so nobody has to use the unpleasant word “sin.”**

The false prophets made people comfortable without making them right. That has always been profitable work. Tell a sinner that his chief problem is guilt rather than guiltiness, that he needs relief from shame rather than forgiveness of sin, that he needs affirmation rather than reconciliation, and he will probably thank you for the sermon. Jeremiah had the unpleasant assignment of telling men what God said, not what they wanted God to have said. The wound could not be healed “slightly” because the disease reached the heart of the nation’s covenant rebellion. Putting religious language over unrepented sin was like painting a condemned bridge and congratulating the engineers on the color.

The lesson is obvious without confusing Judah and the Church. God’s revealed truth must diagnose the condition before anyone has the right to announce peace. In the present age, the lost man’s condition is stated plainly: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). John 3:18 says the unbeliever “is condemned already.” Ephesians 2 describes men as “dead in trespasses and sins.” No amount of subjective calm alters those statements. **You cannot soothe a verdict out of existence.** If God says condemned, the sinner needs justification, not relaxation. If God says dead, he needs life, not inspiration. If God says enemy, he needs reconciliation, not a more positive view of the battlefield.

2. A Calm Conscience Is Not Always a Clean Conscience

One of the greatest mistakes a man can make is assuming that because his conscience is quiet, God must be satisfied. Conscience is valuable, but conscience is not Scripture. Romans 2 shows that conscience can accuse or excuse, but the conscience must operate

according to truth. A man can train his conscience badly. He can ignore warnings until the warnings grow faint. First Timothy 4:2 speaks of men “having their conscience seared with a hot iron.” A seared conscience may be very peaceful. So is dead skin. The absence of pain does not always indicate health; sometimes it indicates that the nerves have stopped working.

Sin repeated long enough can become emotionally ordinary. The first lie may disturb a man deeply. The fiftieth may roll off his tongue before breakfast. The first compromise may cost him sleep. Years later he can defend the same compromise with a smile and a Bible verse dragged in by the collar. Familiarity does not sanctify sin. Pharaoh repeatedly hardened himself until the warnings of Moses became background noise. Proverbs 30:20 gives a striking picture of the adulterous woman: “She eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness.” There is calm for you. There is also blindness.

This is why “I feel no conviction about it” is one of the weakest arguments a Christian can offer against a plain verse. The proper question is not whether the conscience currently objects, but whether the Book objects. Conscience should be educated by Scripture rather than promoted above it. Paul said in Acts 24:16, “herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.” He exercised himself. A clean conscience was connected with a life ordered before God, not merely with an ability to feel comfortable. **The conscience is a useful alarm, but an alarm with the wires cut can make a house wonderfully quiet while it burns.**

3. Religion Can Give a Man Confidence Without Giving Him Christ

Religious peace is especially dangerous because it comes dressed in respectable clothes. A man may say, “I was baptized.” Another says, “I have been a church member for forty years.” Another points to confirmation, sacraments, charitable works, family heritage, moral conduct, theological knowledge, or an experience at an altar decades ago. None of those things answers the question of whether he has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul had a religious résumé before salvation that would have made most men look spiritually unemployed. Philippians 3 lists his credentials, then he counts them loss that he might win Christ. **A religious résumé may impress the funeral home crowd, but it cannot cross-examine the blood of Christ.**

Jesus dealt directly with religious confidence in John 3 when Nicodemus came to Him. Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews and a teacher in Israel, yet Christ told him, “Ye must be born again” (John 3:7). He did not congratulate Nicodemus on his ecclesiastical accomplishments and suggest one additional seminar. Religious position did not equal spiritual life. Likewise, in Matthew 7:22 men will say, “Lord, Lord,” and point to impressive

religious works, yet Christ describes people He never knew. Their confidence does not rescue them. Sincerity does not convert falsehood into truth. **A man can be sincerely wrong all the way to judgment. Hell does not require hypocrisy; sincerity without Christ will arrive just as surely.**

The present gospel rests upon Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, not upon religious accumulation. First Corinthians 15:3–4 declares that "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." Romans 4:5 says God justifies "the ungodly" who believes. Salvation is not Christ plus ceremonies, Christ plus endurance, Christ plus denominational paperwork, or Christ plus whatever tradition somebody inherited from his grandmother. The sinner receives peace with God through Jesus Christ. **Religion can teach a man how to sit quietly in the waiting room; only Christ can change the verdict in the courtroom.**

4. "I Have Peace About It" Is Not a Bible Verse

Among Christians, one of the most abused sentences in decision-making is, "I prayed about it, and I have peace." Sometimes that statement simply means the believer has prayed, compared the matter with Scripture, exercised wisdom, and now rests in God. Fine. But too often the phrase functions as a spiritual shield protecting a decision from examination. Once somebody announces inner peace, apparently no verse is permitted to ask questions. The feeling becomes a private revelation with diplomatic immunity. Yet Colossians 3:15 telling believers to "let the peace of God rule" does not authorize peace to contradict the Word that God inspired.

Jonah ought to settle the issue permanently. He was fleeing the explicit command of the Lord and managed to sleep in the sides of the ship during the storm. The pagan sailors were terrified while the disobedient prophet enjoyed a nap. If inward calm proves divine approval, Jonah was the most spiritual man aboard. He was also headed exactly opposite the direction God gave him. Physical rest, emotional relief, or temporary inner calm may arise for many reasons. Sometimes disobedience feels relieving because the flesh finally got what it wanted. **The flesh can enjoy remarkable peace after winning an argument against the Spirit. That does not make the flesh inspired.**

Scripture is the test. Second Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction. Correction assumes we can be wrong while believing we are right. If a proposed decision violates a clear command, corrupts doctrine, requires dishonesty, embraces immorality, or contradicts revealed truth, the discussion is over. There is no need to wait for an inward flutter. **God will never lead**

you by peace to disobey the Book He gave you for correction. When feeling and Scripture disagree, feelings do not get an appeal court.

5. Prosperity Can Produce the Illusion That Judgment Is Far Away

Men naturally confuse comfortable circumstances with divine approval. If the money is coming in, the body feels strong, the family seems stable, and the calendar is full, eternity feels distant. Jesus addressed exactly that illusion in Luke 12 with the rich fool whose ground brought forth plentifully. The man expanded his barns and told his soul, “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.” He had financial peace, retirement peace, agricultural peace, and absolutely no peace with God. God answered, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.”

The man’s barns were full while his future was empty. That is the danger of circumstantial security. Prosperity can muffle questions that adversity would force into the open. A man with enough money can insulate himself from many ordinary discomforts and begin imagining that he has insulated himself from mortality. He has not. Psalm 49:6–7 speaks of those who “trust in their wealth” and says none can “by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.” Money purchases many services, but the resurrection department does not take checks. **You can buy a better mattress, but not one guaranteed against the summons of God.**

Scripture repeatedly warns against reading divine approval merely from temporal ease. Psalm 73 records Asaph troubled by the prosperity of the wicked until he “went into the sanctuary of God” and understood their end. Their present comfort had concealed future judgment. This does not mean prosperity itself is sinful. God may bless materially, and believers should receive provisions thankfully. The warning concerns interpretation. Ease is not absolution. **A smooth road can still be going the wrong direction.** The question is not how comfortable the ride feels, but where the road ends according to God’s Word.

6. Scripture Warns of “Peace” Immediately Before Judgment

Jeremiah is not the only place where false assurances of peace appear near judgment. First Thessalonians 5:3, in the prophetic context of the day of the Lord, says, “For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them.” The Church is not told to identify itself with the unbelieving “they” under that judgment; Paul immediately distinguishes believers as children of light. But the prophetic pattern is unmistakable. Human declarations of security do not veto divine judgment. Men can announce peace while destruction is already on the calendar.

The days of Noah demonstrate the same principle without the exact phrase. Jesus says in Matthew 24:38–39 that before the flood men were “eating and drinking, marrying and giving

in marriage” until the flood came. None of those ordinary activities was itself the crime being condemned. The point is that normal life continued while judgment approached. The sun rose, meals were prepared, weddings were scheduled, and Noah kept building the ark. Calm continued right up to catastrophe. **Judgment does not always send a trumpet blast to the unbeliever’s breakfast table the morning before it arrives.**

Second Peter 3 also warns about scoffers asking, “Where is the promise of his coming?” because the visible world appears to continue as before. Delay becomes their argument against judgment. But verse 9 explains that the Lord’s longsuffering is not slackness; it provides opportunity for repentance. Men mistake patience for permission. They interpret postponed judgment as canceled judgment. The clock keeps ticking, so they assume there is no appointed hour. **God’s patience is not evidence that He forgot the appointment. It is evidence that mercy left the door open longer than sinners deserved.**

7. Real Peace Has Blood Underneath It

The answer to counterfeit peace is not permanent fear. God does not expose false peace in order to leave the sinner trembling without hope. He exposes the counterfeit so the sinner will receive the real thing. Colossians 1:20 says Christ made “peace through the blood of his cross.” There is the foundation. Real peace with God has blood underneath it because sin had to be dealt with judicially. Jesus did not die to improve mankind’s mood. He died “for our sins” (1 Corinthians 15:3). First Peter 3:18 says, “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.”

That peace is objective before it becomes experiential. Romans 5:1 does not say, “Therefore feeling calm, we assume all is well with God.” It says, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Justification comes first. Peace follows. The believer can therefore know he has peace with God even on a day when he does not feel emotionally peaceful. Conversely, the lost man can feel emotionally peaceful while having no peace with God. **Feelings can get both cases backward. The saved man may feel condemned when he is justified, and the lost man may feel secure when he is condemned. That is why God gave a Book instead of asking the nervous system to write theology.**

Once the sinner has genuinely trusted Christ, he does not need to live in terror that every emotional disturbance means he has become God’s enemy again. That would simply replace false peace with false insecurity. The answer is doctrinal precision. Peace with God is positional and settled in Christ. The peace of God is experiential and may fluctuate according to prayer, obedience, thought life, and trust. Counterfeit peace occurs when experience is treated as proof of a position Scripture does not support. **Real assurance is**

not believing whatever makes you calm. Real assurance is being calm because you believe what God actually said.

Conclusion

Jeremiah 6:14 stands as a warning against every voice that announces peace where God has not established it. In Jeremiah's day, prophets and priests treated Judah's wound lightly while Babylonian judgment approached. They told rebellious people what they wanted to hear, and their message was soothing precisely because it was false. The same danger remains wherever people replace reconciliation with religion, justification with morality, truth with sentiment, or Scripture with inward impressions. **False peace is anesthesia administered to a man who needs surgery. He may appreciate the numbness right up until the disease finishes its work.**

No man should therefore make inward tranquility his final test of spiritual reality. A quiet conscience may be seared. A comfortable religion may be false. Prosperity may disguise spiritual poverty. An easy decision may be disobedience. A confident preacher may be wrong. A peaceful feeling may have no more divine authority than a comfortable chair. Ask first: What did God say? Does the gospel say I am reconciled through Christ? Does Scripture approve this doctrine? Does Scripture permit this conduct? Does the Book confirm this hope? **Truth does not become false because it troubles you, and error does not become true because it helps you sleep.**

The gospel offers something infinitely better than counterfeit calm. Jesus Christ died for sins, was buried, and rose again. The sinner who believes is justified and has peace with God. That peace can survive bad feelings because it was never built on feelings in the first place. So do not settle for a peace that merely keeps the conscience quiet while eternity approaches. Do not let religion whisper "Peace, peace" over a condition God says must be reconciled. Do not ask first, "Does this make me feel peaceful?" Ask, "Is it true?" **A lie can rock a man to sleep, but only the truth can make him safe when he wakes before God.**

10 of 10 — Peace with God and the Peace of God — When the Prince of Peace Takes the Throne: The Day the Battlefield Finally Goes Silent

Key Passage: Isaiah 9:6–7 — "And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Isaiah 9 does not present Jesus Christ as a religious adviser sent to teach mankind better conflict-resolution techniques. It presents a King. "The government shall be upon his

shoulder,” and among His names stands this one: “The Prince of Peace.” That changes the entire subject. Peace is not finally a program, a treaty, a summit, a slogan, a political platform, or a human achievement. Peace has a Prince. Humanity has spent thousands of years trying to manufacture the product while rejecting the Person. Men sign agreements, draw borders, hold conferences, build alliances, exchange handshakes, issue declarations, and then start digging trenches again before the ink is dry. One generation writes “peace” on a monument while the next generation fills military cemeteries. The Bible explains the failure with brutal simplicity: the rightful King is rejected. **The world wants the peace Christ brings while reserving the right to refuse the rule Christ exercises. God never offered that arrangement.**

Isaiah goes beyond the name and tells us exactly where this peace is headed: “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David” (Isaiah 9:7). Government and peace appear together because biblical peace is not anarchy with everyone smiling. It is order under a righteous ruler. The passage belongs to Israel’s prophetic hope. Isaiah is not secretly describing the Church replacing Israel, nor is the throne of David a poetic name for a spiritual feeling in somebody’s heart. David had an earthly throne connected with an earthly nation, and God’s covenant promises concerning that throne will not evaporate because theologians discovered an allegory. The Messiah will reign. The promise will stand. Israel will not be erased from her own prophets and replaced by a committee of Gentile commentators with red pencils.

This brings the entire series to its proper conclusion. We began with Romans 5:1, where the justified believer has peace **with** God through Jesus Christ. We moved through the peace **of** God, which guards the heart and mind as the Christian prays, believes, obeys, thinks biblically, and refuses counterfeit calm. Now Scripture carries the subject beyond the individual believer and beyond the present Church Age. The same Christ who made peace through the blood of His cross will return as the Prince of Peace and impose righteous government upon a world that has demonstrated beyond argument that it cannot govern itself into peace. Calvary ended the believer’s war with God. The Second Advent will answer the world’s rebellion against its King. **The cross settled peace for the believing sinner; the throne will establish peace under the righteous Sovereign.**

1. The Prince of Peace Is a King, Not a Consultant

Isaiah 9:6 begins, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.” The child would be genuinely born into humanity, yet the Son is “given,” and the names that follow explode every attempt to reduce Him to a mere teacher. “Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” This is no ordinary descendant of David trying his hand at government. The promised ruler bears divine titles because the One coming to

sit upon David's throne is God manifest in the flesh. John 1:14 says, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." First Timothy 3:16 says, "God was manifest in the flesh." Peace therefore rests in a Person whose authority is not borrowed from voters, armies, parliaments, constitutions, polls, or public approval. He does not campaign for the throne. The throne is His by promise, lineage, right, conquest, and divine decree.

"The government shall be upon his shoulder." Modern rulers often discover that government is larger than their shoulders. Nations strain under debt, corruption, competing interests, fear, ambition, and the ordinary wickedness of fallen men trying to manage other fallen men. One administration inherits another administration's problems, adds a few of its own, hires experts to explain them, and then hands the box to the next group. Isaiah describes a King upon whose shoulder government can actually rest without crushing Him. Psalm 2 presents the nations raging and the Lord replying, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion" (Psalm 2:6). God is not searching heaven for a candidate with enough experience. The King has already been appointed.

That also means Christ's peace cannot be separated from Christ's authority. Men like the title "Prince of Peace" as long as they can detach it from "the government shall be upon his shoulder." They want a Messiah who comforts without commanding, forgives without judging, blesses without ruling, and brings harmony without requiring righteousness. That Messiah exists only in stained-glass imagination. Revelation 19 presents the returning Christ judging and making war in righteousness before His kingdom is established. The Prince of Peace is not weak. **Peace under Christ does not come because evil is negotiated into good behavior; it comes because the rightful King finally deals with evil as King.**

2. The World Cannot Build Lasting Peace While Rejecting Its Maker

Human history is a long demonstration that fallen man cannot manufacture permanent peace from fallen hearts. James 4:1 asks, "From whence come wars and fightings among you?" and answers, "come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" There is the battlefield beneath the battlefield. Wars may involve borders, resources, power, ideology, revenge, fear, and ambition, but Scripture drives the knife deeper. Fallen man has a fallen heart. Diplomacy can restrain conflict, laws can punish aggression, armies can deter invasion, and agreements can suspend hostilities, but none of those operations regenerates human nature. **You can move the furniture around in a house with a cracked foundation, but sooner or later the crack introduces itself to every room.**

The world's great error is believing that peace can be secured while God remains excluded from the settlement. Psalm 2 describes kings and rulers taking counsel "against the LORD, and against his anointed." Their ambition is independence: "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." Fallen man wants freedom from divine government and then acts astonished when human government produces instability. It is the old Eden program with newer furniture. Satan promised autonomy; man took the bait; the graveyard opened for business. Since then mankind has attempted every conceivable form of rule while carrying Adam's nature into every system. Change the constitution, the uniform, the economic structure, the flag, or the title of the ruler; the heart still comes from the same fallen factory.

This does not mean every earthly peace effort is worthless. Romans 13 recognizes civil authority, and believers are told in Romans 12:18, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." Restraining violence is good. Ending bloodshed is good. Keeping agreements is good. But temporary peace among nations is not the prophesied peace of Messiah's kingdom. Men can stop shooting without becoming righteous. They can shake hands while hatred remains loaded behind the eyes. **A ceasefire can silence rifles; only the King can establish the righteousness upon which lasting peace rests.**

3. Calvary Made Peace Before the Throne Enforces Peace

Before Christ reigns over the nations as Prince of Peace, Scripture presents Him making peace through His cross. Colossians 1:20 says, "having made peace through the blood of his cross." That is the foundation of the believer's present relationship to God. Romans 5:1 declares, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The Christian does not wait for the Millennium to become reconciled to God. Peace with God is already his possession through faith in Christ. The world may remain hostile, governments may remain unstable, and wars may continue around him, but the believer's judicial war with God has ended. **The world can still be fighting while the Christian has already laid down his arms at Calvary.**

The cross also reveals the moral character of divine peace. God did not establish peace by pretending sin was harmless. Christ bore judgment. Isaiah 53:5 says, "the chastisement of our peace was upon him." Peace had a price because righteousness could not simply wave guilt through the gate. This matters when we look ahead to the kingdom. The same God who refused to compromise righteousness at Calvary will not compromise it upon the throne. The coming kingdom is not a sentimental age in which God finally decides everyone meant well. Isaiah 11:4 says Messiah "shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." Peace rests upon righteous government, not moral indifference.

This distinction protects the Church from confusing present salvation with future kingdom prophecy. The believer today is justified by grace through faith, made a member of Christ's body, spiritually blessed in heavenly places, and awaiting the blessed hope. Israel's national promises concerning David's throne and Messiah's earthly reign remain Israel's promises. The Church does not steal David's throne because some preacher ran out of verses about heaven. **Right division lets Calvary remain Calvary, the Church remain the Church, Israel remain Israel, and the throne of David remain exactly where God promised to put it.**

4. The Throne of David Means God Has Not Finished With Israel

Isaiah 9:7 is stubbornly specific: "upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom." David's throne belongs to Israel's covenant history. God promised David in Second Samuel 7 that his house, kingdom, and throne would be established. The prophets repeatedly tie Messiah's future reign to that promise. Jeremiah 23:5 says God will "raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper." Luke 1:32 says of Jesus, "the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." Words mean something. Gabriel did not tell Mary that Jesus would receive a vague spiritual influence later renamed "David's throne" by somebody who preferred allegory to geography.

Christ's first coming did not exhaust that promise. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not (John 1:11). Israel's Messiah was rejected and crucified, and God's present work among Jew and Gentile in one body does not cancel His prophetic commitments to Israel. Romans 11:1 asks, "Hath God cast away his people?" and Paul answers, "God forbid." Later he says, "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Romans 11:29). God does not make covenants the way politicians make campaign promises—useful until the next audience arrives. **When God swears to David, He does not later discover that figurative language can get Him out of the contract.**

The Second Advent brings these prophetic lines together. The Lord Jesus Christ will return not merely as the rejected Nazarene remembered by history but as the rightful King of kings. Zechariah 14:4 places His feet upon the mount of Olives in connection with the day of the Lord and the deliverance surrounding Jerusalem. Revelation 19 presents the conquering Christ returning from heaven. Revelation 20 then speaks of the thousand-year reign. These are not descriptions of the Church gradually converting civilization into Eden by better programs. **The kingdom does not creep in through committee work; the King comes back.**

5. The Second Advent Ends the Delusion That Rebellion Can Win

Revelation 19 destroys every notion that Christ's return to rule the earth will be merely symbolic. Heaven opens. Christ appears on a white horse. He is called "Faithful and True," and "in righteousness he doth judge and make war." Verse 16 identifies Him plainly: "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." The nations that resist His authority discover that rebellion against God has always been a temporary arrangement. Men can postpone submission. They cannot cancel sovereignty. **The creature may shake his fist at the throne, but the throne does not shake back.**

This is the Second Advent, not the Rapture of the Church. The blessed hope of First Thessalonians 4 involves the Lord descending, the dead in Christ rising, and living believers being caught up "to meet the Lord in the air." The Second Advent concerns Christ's visible return in judgment and kingdom glory. Confusing those events produces confusion everywhere else. One concerns the Church's gathering to Christ; the other brings judgment upon rebellious powers and establishes the King's rule connected with Israel and the nations. God is perfectly capable of keeping His appointments straight even when prophecy charts are not.

When Christ returns, the question of who owns the earth will no longer be debated by men with microphones. Revelation 11:15 anticipates the declaration, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ." Human rulers have treated the planet like tenants arguing over furniture while refusing to acknowledge the landlord. The Second Advent ends the argument. **History is not moving toward mankind finally learning to rule without God. It is moving toward God publicly demonstrating that mankind never had the title deed in the first place.**

6. The Millennium Shows What Peace Looks Like Under Righteous Government

Isaiah's kingdom prophecies describe conditions dramatically different from the present age. Isaiah 2:4 says nations "shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks," and "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." That prophecy has been quoted on buildings and banners by men who often omit the first half of the verse: the Lord is judging among the nations and rebuking many people. The swords become farming equipment after divine authority is established. **Men love the plowshares and quietly misplace the Judge. Scripture keeps both in the same verse.**

Isaiah 11 connects peace in creation with the reign of Messiah. The wolf dwells with the lamb, the leopard lies down with the kid, and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9). This is not poetic permission to pretend wolves already behave like house cats. It points to a transformed kingdom order under the

Branch from Jesse. Creation itself has groaned under the curse, and the messianic reign displays the authority of the One through whom creation was made. The Prince of Peace does not merely adjust international relations; His government reaches into a world distorted by sin.

Yet the Millennium must not be confused with the eternal state. Revelation 20 plainly identifies a thousand-year reign and then records Satan's release and the final rebellion before the Great White Throne. That fact exposes fallen man one last time. Even after righteous government, visible glory, and prolonged peace, unregenerate hearts can still rebel when given opportunity. The final problem was never merely bad environment. **Give fallen man perfect government and he still needs a new heart. The Millennium proves that humanity's deepest problem is not the system over him but the sin within him.**

7. The Future King Should Govern the Believer's Present Walk

Knowing that Christ will reign tomorrow should affect how the Christian lives today. Colossians 3:1 tells believers to "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." The Church presently knows Christ in His heavenly position and awaits His coming. That hope should loosen our grip on a world whose present arrangements are temporary. Philippians 3:20 says, "our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." The believer can work, build, serve, vote, earn, teach, raise children, and fulfill earthly responsibilities without mistaking the present world for his final home. **A pilgrim uses the hotel room; he does not pour the foundation for eternity in the parking lot.**

The coming King also governs Christian conduct through His Word now. If Christ is the Prince of Peace, His people should not be ruled by bitterness, panic, wrath, envy, or endless agitation. That does not mean becoming passive in the face of error. This series has already shown that biblical peace and biblical truth never need to be enemies. The believer can contend for doctrine, oppose sin, expose deception, and still refuse to let the world's madness occupy his heart. Colossians 3:15 says, "let the peace of God rule in your hearts." The future public government of Christ should have a present moral echo in those who already belong to Him.

Finally, prophecy gives perspective. News can shake markets, armies can move, rulers can threaten, nations can rise, institutions can wobble, and societies can congratulate themselves on plans God never endorsed. None of that changes the destination Scripture has already revealed. **The Christian does not read prophecy so he can panic with better information. He reads prophecy so he knows who still holds the end of the rope when**

everybody else is pulling on the middle. Christ is coming. His promises stand. The throne is not vacant. The battlefield has an appointed end.

Conclusion

This series began with the believer's personal peace with God and ends with the Prince of Peace taking His throne. Between those points lies the entire Christian distinction between position and experience. The justified believer already has peace with God through Jesus Christ. He may enjoy or fail to enjoy the peace of God depending upon prayer, obedience, right thinking, Scripture, thanksgiving, and the government of truth over his mind. Yet beyond the believer's private experience stands a larger prophetic horizon. **The Christ who reconciles sinners personally will one day rule nations publicly.**

Isaiah 9:6–7 therefore deserves to be read with more than Christmas sentiment. The Child born is the Son given. The Son given is the mighty God. The mighty God is the Prince of Peace. The Prince of Peace bears government upon His shoulder. His peace increases with His government. He sits upon David's throne. He orders that kingdom with judgment and justice. "The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." Not diplomacy. Not human evolution. Not religious cooperation. Not political genius. God will perform it. **Peace finally comes to the battlefield because the King finally comes to the battlefield.**

Until then, the Christian does not need to borrow the world's panic. Calvary has already settled his peace with God. Scripture already provides truth for the mind. Grace already gives access to the Father. The Holy Ghost already indwells the believer. The blessed hope already stands ahead, and the prophetic kingdom remains exactly where God placed it. Nations may continue rehearsing their ancient quarrels, and men may continue promising what fallen men have never permanently delivered. But the last word does not belong to a battlefield, a treaty table, a parliament, or a graveyard. **The last word belongs to the Prince of Peace—and when He takes the throne, the world will finally discover what peace looks like when righteousness wears the crown.**

Conclusion

Peace with God and the Peace of God — The Difference Between Position and Experience

We have come all the way from the courtroom of Romans 5 to the throne of Isaiah 9, and the distinction should now be nailed down so securely that no passing feeling, bad morning, difficult circumstance, religious tradition, or whisper from the accuser can pull it

loose. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). That is position. That is settled. That is judicial. That is what God says about the man who has trusted Jesus Christ. Then Philippians 4:7 speaks of “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding,” keeping the heart and mind through Christ Jesus. That is experience. It can be enjoyed, neglected, strengthened, disturbed, recovered, guarded, or forfeited in daily fellowship. One comes from justification. The other operates through trust, prayer, thanksgiving, obedience, Scripture, and a governed mind. **Peace with God is what Christ accomplished for you. The peace of God is what you learn to enjoy because of what Christ accomplished for you.**

That distinction rescues the believer from the miserable habit of putting salvation back on trial every time his emotions misbehave. Feelings make terrible judges because they change their verdict before lunch. A man can wake up discouraged and still be justified. He can feel afraid and still be reconciled. He can feel lonely and still be accepted in the Beloved. He can be confused and still be complete in Christ. He can be grieving and still have peace with God. The nervous system was never appointed to interpret Romans. God did not hang eternal security from a weather vane and tell the believer to check which direction his heart is blowing this morning. **If Christ settled your standing at Calvary, your emotions do not possess appellate jurisdiction over the cross.**

We began by seeing that the sinner’s problem was never merely internal discomfort. He was an enemy of God. Romans 5:10 says, “when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” That is much stronger than the modern religious diagnosis. The sinner did not need a better attitude toward himself. He needed reconciliation to a holy God. He did not need somebody to assure him that everything was fine. Everything was not fine. Sin had put him under condemnation, and no amount of religion, morality, ceremony, sincerity, philanthropy, baptism, church attendance, or family heritage could alter the verdict. The cross did not improve the rebel’s self-image. It dealt with the rebellion. **The gospel is not heaven teaching enemies how to feel peaceful while remaining enemies; it is God making peace through the blood of His Son.**

And that blood must remain at the center. Colossians 1:20 says Christ made “peace through the blood of his cross.” Biblical peace has blood underneath it. Take away the blood and all that remains is religious perfume sprayed over a corpse. The cross proves that sin is serious, God is holy, judgment is real, and grace is costly. God did not establish peace by lowering His righteousness. He established peace by satisfying it. The Just died for the unjust. The guiltless bore the guilt. The Son took the judgment so the believing sinner could receive righteousness. **God did not sweep sin under heaven’s carpet and**

call the room peaceful. He judged sin at Calvary and then invited the believer into peace on righteous ground.

From there we saw that the reconciled believer stands in grace. Romans 5:2 says we have “access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.” Stand means stand. It does not mean hang by a religious thread over condemnation until the next mistake. It does not mean remain accepted only while every thought, word, motive, and action maintains some imaginary performance quota. Grace is not probation with nicer vocabulary. The believer stands because Christ put him there. He has access because Christ opened it. He is accepted because Christ is the Beloved. He is complete because he is in Christ. **A Christian who spends his life trying to earn the position God already gave him is like a man standing inside his house while begging the bank to let him through the front door.**

But standing in grace does not mean the mind automatically behaves itself. That was one of the most practical truths in the entire series. A saved mind can run loose. It can worry about tomorrow, rehearse yesterday, manufacture disasters, retry old cases, imagine conversations that never happened, and spend three hours paying emotional interest on debts that do not exist. Philippians 4 gives God’s answer: “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” The command does not deny problems. It gives problems an address. **Worry carries the burden around the same mental block until the wheels come off; prayer carries it to the throne.**

And then comes the peace of God, “which passeth all understanding.” God does not promise that every mystery will be explained before peace arrives. Sometimes the explanation never comes on this side of glory. Sometimes the door stays shut. Sometimes the thorn remains. Sometimes the loved one does not return. Sometimes the answer looks nothing like the request. Sometimes providence gives no footnotes. Yet God can guard the heart and mind before the circumstance moves one inch. That is a peace the world cannot manufacture because the world’s peace usually depends upon favorable conditions. Remove the threat, increase the money, settle the conflict, secure the future, and then perhaps the world can relax. Christ can give peace while the storm still has a pulse. **The world needs calm seas before it can sleep; the believer can sleep because Christ is in the ship.**

Colossians 3:15 then taught us that peace must “rule” in the heart. Something will rule. Fear will volunteer. Anger will volunteer. Bitterness will volunteer. Public opinion will volunteer. The news will apply for permanent residence and bring three suitcases. Imagination will nominate itself king before breakfast. The heart must be governed. But the

rule of peace is never mystical lawlessness in which somebody says, “I have peace about it,” and thereby exempts himself from Scripture. Jonah had enough peace to sleep while going the wrong direction. A seared conscience can be quiet. Flesh can feel relief when it gets its way. **Never confuse calm with correctness. The safest peace is the peace that lives under the authority of a Book that cannot lie.**

That is why Scripture had to stand in the middle of this series like an iron post. Psalm 119:165 says, “Great peace have they which love thy law.” The believer who starves himself on Scripture and feasts on the world’s alarms should not be surprised when his mind sounds like the world. The Book gives the Christian something harder than fear and older than the latest emergency. Doctrine tells him where he stands. Promises tell him what God has pledged. Commands keep him from digging half the holes he falls into. Prophecy tells him that history has an Author. Examples warn him what sin costs. **A Bible left closed on the table cannot govern a mind left open to everything else.**

The Christian therefore must learn to preach truth to his own thoughts. When accusation says, “You are condemned,” Romans 8:1 answers, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” When fear says, “God has forgotten you,” Hebrews 13:5 answers, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” When anxiety says, “Carry everything yourself,” First Peter 5:7 says, “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” When failure says, “Grace is gone,” Romans 5:2 says you stand in it. **Faith is not believing your feelings will eventually say something nice. Faith is believing God when your feelings are still arguing.**

Then we had to draw another line: biblical peace is not compromise. Romans 12:18 says, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” “If it be possible” means sometimes it is not. “As much as lieth in you” means you are responsible for your spirit, not another man’s rebellion. The Christian is not called to purchase harmony by selling truth. Elijah did not shake hands with Baal to preserve religious unity. John the Baptist did not protect Herod’s feelings by adjusting the message. Paul did not smile politely while Peter compromised the truth of the gospel. Jesus Christ Himself rebuked hypocrites, cleansed the temple, exposed falsehood, and yet remained sinless. **Peace without truth is surrender; truth without a governed spirit becomes flesh. Scripture commands neither surrender nor flesh.**

The issue is whether the conflict outside gets inside and takes control. A believer can contend for doctrine without becoming bitter. He can answer error without becoming hateful. He can say no without spending three days composing imaginary rebuttals in the shower. He can withstand somebody to the face and still forgive personally. He can leave a battle with his convictions intact and his soul unpoisoned. **If another man can control**

your spirit merely by losing control of his own, you have handed him authority God never gave him. Biblical peace keeps the keys.

We also learned that suffering does not cancel peace with God. Jesus said, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Christ put tribulation and good cheer in the same verse because Christianity was never designed to function only under ideal conditions. A believer can grieve and still trust. He can hurt and still believe. He can weep without surrendering doctrine. He can sit beside unanswered prayer without accusing God of abandonment. **Pain is allowed to testify that something hurts; it is not allowed to rewrite the character of God.**

Sometimes God calms the sea. Sometimes He leaves the sea rough and teaches His servant how to stand. Sometimes the furnace cools. Sometimes the fourth Man meets His servants in the middle of it. Daniel’s three Hebrews said, “our God whom we serve is able to deliver us,” but they also said, “But if not.” There is faith with bones in it. Their obedience was not for sale at the price of deliverance. Paul asked for the thorn to be removed, and Christ answered, “My grace is sufficient for thee.” Paul and Silas sang before the prison doors opened. **A faith that only praises after relief is still learning. Mature faith can sing while the chains are still locked.**

Then came the warning against counterfeit peace. Jeremiah 6:14 says, “Peace, peace; when there is no peace.” That should terrify any man who has made inward calm the supreme test of spiritual reality. A lost man can feel perfectly secure while standing under condemnation. A rich man can tell his soul, “Take thine ease,” while God says, “Thou fool.” A religious man can point to baptism, church membership, morality, ceremonies, accomplishments, and still never have trusted Christ. A seared conscience can sleep soundly. **The absence of an alarm does not prove there is no fire; sometimes it proves somebody disconnected the alarm.**

That is why a man should never ask first, “Do I feel peaceful?” He should ask, “What did God say?” Is the gospel true? Have I trusted Jesus Christ? Does Scripture support this doctrine? Does Scripture permit this conduct? Does Scripture authorize this hope? Feelings may follow truth, but they must never replace it. A lie can make a man comfortable. Truth may disturb him before it delivers him. The false prophets in Jeremiah gave people emotional relief while judgment was marching toward them. **The most dangerous pillow in the world is the one false religion places beneath the head of a condemned man.**

And so the series finally looked beyond the believer’s heart to the earth itself. Isaiah 9 calls Jesus Christ “The Prince of Peace” and says, “Of the increase of his government and peace

there shall be no end.” Notice again the connection between government and peace. The world wants the peace but not the government. It wants the Prince to provide tranquility while remaining politely outside the palace. That program has failed from Babel onward. Men hold summits, sign treaties, establish alliances, reorganize borders, build institutions, write charters, and promise that this time mankind has finally learned enough to stop behaving like mankind. Then the artillery starts again. **Human history is one long demonstration that fallen hearts do not become righteous because somebody printed a treaty on expensive paper.**

The Prince of Peace will return. The Church will not replace Israel’s promises, David’s throne will not dissolve into religious metaphor, and God will not forget what He swore because men grew impatient waiting. The Rapture and the Second Advent remain distinct. The Church has a heavenly calling. Israel retains her national prophetic promises. Christ will sit upon David’s throne and rule. Revelation 19 presents Him as “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.” Isaiah 11 describes His righteous government. Revelation 20 gives the thousand-year reign. **The world’s final peace plan does not arrive in a briefcase. It arrives with the King.**

And that brings us back to where we began. Peace with God is settled at Calvary for the believing sinner. The peace of God is experienced as that believer brings his mind under truth. The future peace of Christ’s kingdom arrives when the Prince of Peace reigns publicly over the earth. Past accomplishment, present experience, future government—the Bible keeps the distinctions clear when men will leave the words alone. Calvary reconciles. Scripture governs. Prayer steadies. Grace sustains. Prophecy points forward. Christ reigns. **The whole subject of peace begins, continues, and ends in Jesus Christ.**

So stop asking your feelings to certify what God has already declared. Stop reopening court cases the blood closed. Stop feeding fears God never wrote into tomorrow. Stop calling compromise peace and panic discernment. Stop allowing the world to preach louder to your mind than the Book. Stop demanding an explanation for every providence before you agree to trust the God who sees the end from the beginning. Stop treating temporary storms like permanent theology. **Your peace is not safest when circumstances are quiet. Your peace is safest when truth has the final word.**

The believer’s standing is settled. “We have peace with God.” His mind can be guarded. “The peace of God... shall keep your hearts and minds.” His heart can be governed. “Let the peace of God rule.” His thinking can be anchored. “Great peace have they which love thy law.” His conduct can remain peaceable without surrendering truth. His suffering can be endured under the words, “I have overcome the world.” His discernment can reject the counterfeit cry of “Peace, peace; when there is no peace.” And his future can look toward

the throne of the Prince of Peace. That is not sentimental religion. That is peace built from Genesis to Revelation on the character, blood, Word, promises, victory, and coming reign of Jesus Christ.

The battlefield in the believer's standing is already silent. Calvary saw to that. The battlefield in the believer's mind must be brought under truth day by day. Scripture, prayer, thanksgiving, obedience, right thinking, and faith see to that. The battlefield in the world still rages, but prophecy has already shown its end. The King is coming. Until then, stand in grace, walk by faith, keep the Book open, keep the heart guarded, keep the mind governed, refuse counterfeit calm, and refuse unnecessary panic. **Peace with God beneath you. The peace of God within you. The Word of God before you. And the Prince of Peace ahead of you. That is how a Christian walks through a noisy world without letting the noise become his master.**

PEACE WITH GOD AND THE PEACE OF GOD

— THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN POSITION AND EXPERIENCE —

JUSTIFIED BY FAITH • GUARDED BY TRUTH • LOOKING FORWARD TO THE PRINCE OF PEACE

Romans 5:1
"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Philippians 4:7
"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

1 THE SINNER'S WAR AGAINST GOD No Peace Without the Gospel - Man is a sinner and an enemy of God. Rom. 5:10; Isa. 59:2 - Religion, morality, and good works cannot produce peace with God. Titus 3:5; Eph. 2:8-9 - The natural man is spiritually dead. Eph. 2:1; Rom. 8:7 - The gospel is God's solution, not man's improvement plan. Rom. 1:16 ENMITY ENDS AT THE CROSS	2 PEACE WITH GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST A Settled Position - Justified by faith apart from works. Rom. 5:1; Rom. 3:24-26 - Reconciled to God by the death of His Son. Rom. 5:10 - Saved by grace through faith. Eph. 2:8-9 - We have access into this grace wherein we stand. Rom. 5:2 THE CROSS SETTLES OUR STANDING	3 STANDING IN GRACE Secure in Christ - We stand by faith, not feelings. Rom. 5:2; Col. 1:22 - No condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. Rom. 8:1 - Accepted in the Beloved. Eph. 1:5-6 - Complete in Him, not in self. Col. 2:10 A BELIEVER STANDS	4 ANXIOUS CARE OR PRAYERFUL TRUST Two Different Roads - Be careful for nothing. Phil. 4:6 - In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. Phil. 4:6 - Casting all your care upon Him. 1 Pet. 5:7 - Trust in the Lord with all thine heart. Prov. 3:5-6 PRAYER CHANGES PERSPECTIVE	5 LET PEACE CALL THE PLAY When God's Peace Rules the Heart - Let the peace of God rule in your hearts. Col. 3:15 - Something will rule: peace or fear, bitterness or faith, panic or Scripture. - Biblical peace never contradicts biblical truth. Isa. 8:20 - Renew your mind. Rom. 12:2 THE RIGHT VOICE ON THE THRONE
6 PEACE WRITTEN IN BLACK AND WHITE When Scripture Silences the Noise - Great peace have they which love thy law. Ps. 119:165 - All scripture is given by inspiration of God. 2 Tim. 3:16 - Thy word have I hid in mine heart. Ps. 119:11 - The Bible gives the mind something solid to stand on. Ps. 18:30 GOD'S WORD ANCHORS THE MIND	7 PEACE WITHOUT COMPROMISE Staying Calm Without Surrendering Truth - If it be possible, live peaceably with all men. Rom. 12:18 - Speak the truth in love. Eph. 4:15 - Contend earnestly for the faith. Jude 3 - A Christian can stand firmly without becoming fleshly. 2 Tim. 2:24-26 TRUTH STANDS, PEACE REMAINS.	8 QUIET IN THE FURNACE The Peace God Gives Before the Trouble Leaves - In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer. John 16:33 - We glory in tribulations. Rom. 5:3-4 - My grace is sufficient for thee. 2 Cor. 12:9 - Paul and Silas sang in prison. Acts 16:25 CHRIST IS IN THE FURNACE	9 "PEACE, PEACE" WHEN THERE IS NO PEACE The Counterfeit Calm - Peace, peace; when there is no peace. Jer. 6:14 - A seared conscience can be quiet. 1 Tim. 4:2 - Not every feeling comes from God. Prov. 14:12 - The safest peace is the peace that agrees with Scripture. Isa. 8:20 FEELINGS ARE NOT A SAFE COMPASS	10 WHEN THE PRINCE OF PEACE TAKES THE THRONE The Day the Battlefield Finally Goes Silent - His name shall be called... The Prince of Peace. Isa. 9:6-7 - Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. - He shall reign upon the throne of David. Isa. 9:7; Luke 1:32 - The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord. Rev. 11:15 THE PRINCE OF PEACE SHALL REIGN

POSITION vs. EXPERIENCE

	PEACE WITH GOD (Position)	PEACE OF GOD (Experience)
Based on	Justification (Rom. 5:1)	Prayer, faith, obedience (Phil. 4:7)
Secured by	The blood of Christ	The word of God
Changes?	Never (Rom. 8:1)	Can be disturbed (Col. 3:15)
Who has it?	All believers	Believers who walk in truth
Purpose	Reconciles to God	Guards the heart and mind

CENTRAL TRUTH

The believer has peace with God through the finished work of Christ, and he experiences the peace of God as he lets God's truth rule his heart and mind, until the Prince of Peace establishes His everlasting kingdom.

A LIFETIME OF PEACE

1. Trust Christ for salvation.
2. Stand in grace.
3. Pray instead of worry.
4. Let peace rule.
5. Feed on Scripture.
6. Defend truth without compromise.
7. Walk through suffering with faith.
8. Reject counterfeit peace.
9. Look for the Prince of Peace.

MEMORABLE BOTTOM LINE

Peace with God today.
The peace of God today.
The Prince of Peace tomorrow.

VQ VERQUEST MINISTRIES

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." Isaiah 26:3