

# Lecture #5: Attaining Perfect Peace

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Though unjustly imprisoned and in danger of execution, St. Paul talks continuously about his contentment, joy, and peace. How could anyone experience peace under these circumstances?

So what is this peace like? St. Paul calls it the “peace which surpasses all understanding”. It simply cannot be explained in terms of human logic. This divine serenity is deeply satisfying and far beyond neither human understanding nor deciphering.

In Philippians 4, St. Paul describes how to attain this Peace. The Peace he talks about is very real and practical. He tells us that contentment is a learned quality (Philippians 4:11), and the key to experiencing it is refusing anxiety, choosing, instead, to entrust God with life’s trials. Therefore, peace does not mean the absence of hardship, but, rather, a sense of tranquility and serenity, even in the midst of difficult situations.

There are four essentials to experiencing the Peace of God:

- 1. Depend on God.** This means we must be willing to let go of our control, whether over a specific situation or over our whole life (Psalm 55:22 and 68:19). When we trust the Lord Jesus Christ, we will have the true Peace; because we will have Him. In Ephesians 2:14 St. Paul teaches that “...He Himself is our peace...”
- 2. Pray.** Prayer is an essential part in achieving God’s peace. God already knows when we struggle with temptations, but praying to Him is important.
  - It creates humility in our hearts.
  - It teaches us to trust His guidance.
  - It helps us acknowledge that we cannot face temptations on our own.
  - It opens our hearts to the Word of God.
  - It allows us to hear His voice and guidance.

So, how do we pray? In discussing that Peace which surpasses all understanding, in Philippians 4:6-7, St. Paul uses 4 different terms for prayer.

- **Prayer** –Conversing with God daily. This includes general prayers, reading the Bible, and meditating on the Word of God.
  - **Supplication** – crying out in intense prayer when a situation causes feelings of desperation or deep burden. Despite the adversity, we should not lose peace as long as we want God’s Will to be done more so than our own desires.
  - **Prayer with thanksgiving** – expressing gratitude gets our minds off of what is challenging to us and helps us refocus our thoughts on God. This will help us attain Peace.
  - **Request** – asking God specifically for what we desire as 1 John 5:14 says “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him; that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”
- 3. Let our faith be simple and pure.** Trusting God always. Let us not complicate nor be confused with the subject of faith. The Lord Christ instructs us to trust Him with the faith of a child. Let us stretch our hand out to God and let Him hold it.
  - 4. Focus on God.** Making a habit to begin every day with prayers to God; and think about Him throughout the day even when we are rushed, asking Him often to help us keep our hearts focused on Him.

If we apply these principles, we will not be shaken by the storms of life. Instead, we will experience the encouragement present in our Lord Jesus Christ’s Words, “Peace I leave with you, and My Peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (John 14:27).

**Note:** There is a difference between legitimate concerns over family, health, or work, and anxieties that torment our thoughts and steal our peace. These anxieties stem from worries due to fear of losing control over circumstances, and cause a great deal of harm emotionally, spiritually, and physically. Being anxious can lead to a defeated attitude, disbelief, doubt, and many diseases including depression.

Of course there are times in our life when we are thrown off balance for sometime. However, as Christians, we need not remain in such a condition for a prolonged period. Often, we think we have lost peace because people or circumstances seem to have stolen it from us. In reality, losing it is a decision we make – We choose to think and feel in a certain way – it is a choice we deliberately make.

There are tests we can apply to determine when justifiable caring has become anxiety subsequently stealing our inner peace.

- Are we concerned more about our desires than about the will of God? If we think about manipulating our circumstances, then this could become an issue.
- Do we find ourselves being hurried into making unwise decisions?
- Do we constantly feel agitated about something?

Any of these could be symptoms of trouble, because anxiety is not God's plan, will, nor purpose...His is Perfect Peace...

So, when we are struck with a difficult situation, let us not allow ourselves to be anxious about it – Rather, remember that, while concern is a godly reaction, anxiety is not an appropriate Christian response.

Give your concern to God immediately, telling Him, “Father, I bring forth to you this trial of mine. It is beyond my control, and I feel helpless in this situation. I am resting in You and trusting that however You choose to handle it, it will be an expression of Your love and Your desire to do the best for me.” As a result, the Peace of God will safeguard your heart and mind from being swept away by anxiety.

