

**HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM EXPERIENCING GOD'S PEACE?
The Peace that Only God can Provide.**

***27Peace I leave with you, 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.¹***

~ John 14:27

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Do you long for peace within? Do you regularly find yourself struggling for peace? You go from one hobby to another, one job to another, one relationship to another, one home to another, one religion to another, one philosophy to another? Has money, power, and popularity given you what you are longing for? Are you still searching and searching for the peace that you are longing for? Do you find yourself in deep angst, looking but never finding a remedy to end the chaos, discontentment, the hunger, or the emptiness within? Are you at your end? Have you given up?

By way of personal testimony I have personally found in my own life that the God of the Bible has filled the angst within in a way that nothing else has ever been able to do. Will you consider Jesus Christ?

But who is He? Scriptures point out that Jesus Christ is not only the Messiah, but that He is God. As God, He is the sum-total of infinite perfections. Because He is all-loving, all-good, all-knowing, all-powerful, and sovereign, I contend that He is able to take away your unrest, calm your existential troubles, and intimately comfort you with His infinite love and peace. Sin separates us from God. Thus, our souls are at unrest until it finds rest in intimacy with God.

Therefore, in order to experience God's peace, the Scriptures make it clear that you must first receive eternal life. By placing your trust in Jesus Christ, believing that He is God, who died on the cross for your sins and rose again, you will not only become God's child, but the alienation you feel being away God, the enmity you have with God, and the rebellion you carry out against God, will be exchanged for unity with Christ where peace, love, and hope is found (John 3:16; Romans 6:4-5).

Investigate the truths of the Bible. Look to historical evidence of Jesus Christ and I believe you will come to see that the evidence points to the fact that Jesus is God, that Jesus Christ, the Messiah predicted in the Hebrew Scriptures, died on the cross for your sins (Isaiah 52:13-53:12), and rose bodily from the dead (1 Corinthians 15).

Therefore, I invite you to receive the "love-gift" of salvation from God in the open arms of faith. In prayer, no matter where you are, explain your need for peace to God. Share with God your search for peace. Share with Him that you are trusting in Jesus Christ, who is God, who died on the cross for your sins and rose again.

¹The New King James Version. 1982 (Jn 14:26-27). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Once you place your trust in Jesus Christ, the love-gift of salvation will be unwrapped before you. For example, the alienation between you and God will be reconciled. You will be indwelt by the Holy Spirit. You will be united to Jesus Christ (Romans 6:4-5). You will in Christ and Christ will be in you (John 15). Thus, you will now be free from the burden of sin that weighed so heavily upon you.

Unfortunately, while we are eternally at peace with God by placing our trust in Him, destined to be in His presence for eternity, all too often we still find ourselves turning our attention away from God to what the world offers. In part, this is due to the diversions and temporal pleasures this world has to offer and the "*habitual*" fleshly appetites and sinful tendencies we cultivate. But once we turn from Him to the world, we are turning to those activities, promises, and resources that not only entangle us in ways we might be able to even imagine (e.g., addiction to internet pornography; drug abuse; extramarital affairs), but also rob the best from us. The payment the world demands can cost us everything such as a broken family, alienation from our children or parents, or a marring and scarring of sin that haunts every footstep we make.

Though some of us who do not find ourselves in gross sin, we still find ourselves turning to the resources, time and time again, for meaning, purpose, peace, and security even when the slightest obstacles finds expression in our lives. But when we do turn to those aspects of the world, whether it is our circumstances, resources, or even ourselves, we are turning to "*finite solutions*" that were never designed to continue to fill us with peace that God can only give. In fact, Scripture is clear that what the world (*cosmos*) offers is only hostility. Though the world's pleasures may be captivating, alluring, and promising, their attractiveness is only a disguise for entrapment, slavery, and death.

Therefore, once you place your faith in Christ for salvation, you must continue to trust Him no matter how difficult, painful, or precarious your circumstances become, no matter how persuasive or tantalizing one may be, and no matter how unlimited your resources appear to be. All too often Christians, who have experienced God's peace in salvation, fail to trust Him with all their anxieties, disappointments, fears, and the unknown, even though they know that God is both good and sovereign as the Bible declares and our experiences confirm.

Or we could put it this way. Why do you fail to trust Him with every aspect of your life? If we have trusted Him with our eternal destiny, then why can't we trust God with our present situation, our "*unseen*" future, our problems, the "*haunting(s)*" of our past, our losses, and our pain? Do we really walk in intimacy with the God we claim to know? Consider the "peace" Jesus offers.

The "peace" Jesus is speaking of in John 14:27? Consider the words of Merrill C. Tenney:

The peace he spoke of us the calmness of confidence in God. Jesus had this peace because he was sure of the Father's love and approval. The world can only give false peace, which mostly comes from ignorance of peril or self-reliance. Jesus, fully aware of the distressing suffering confronting him, had such confidence in the

purpose and power of the Father that he moved forward unhesitatingly to meet the crisis without fear. His peace would be the source of courage for the disciples.²

After examining this truth in John 14:27 I decided to inquire into how I know when I am experiencing God's peace, namely, this "calmness in God," as a believer in Jesus Christ in the moment-by-moment details of living. Therefore, I began my investigation with positive indicators or "road signs" that may point me to those moments when I am experiencing God's peace. Afterwards, I examined those moments when I am not experiencing God's peace. Perhaps these indicators, which are not absolute statements but simply indicators, will be helpful to you as you consider whether you are experiencing God's peace in the moment-by-moment Christian living. To be sure, some of the road signs are closely related to one another. But these "road signs" are meant to give us various ways of examining whether we are experiencing God's peace because all too often we focus on one area of truth to the neglect of other related areas.

I may be experiencing God's peace when...

1. He comforts me in the midst of hostility.
2. I have no anxiety in the midst of a storm.
2. I face my pain or loss with trust in God.
3. I "let go" of past wrongs done to me. Victimization mindset finds no rest in my soul.
4. I face the "unknown" in view of the character of God.
5. I face my troubles knowing God is always with me.
6. I trust God no matter how precarious the situation becomes.
7. I hand over my fears to God's tender providence and loving ways.
8. My emotions do not displace prudence.
9. I no longer try to control the situation.
10. I pause and relax in the midst of a storm.
11. I actively trust in God's promises.
12. I am enabled to stand alone with Christ-like confidence.
13. I act upon God's commands-no matter how difficult the task seems before me or how foolish it makes look before others.
14. I follow God's calling-even though His "calling" may be costly.
15. I do not give into temptation.
16. I abide in Jesus Christ.
17. Pray and believe and believe and pray.
18. I have a trusting disposition-even when no one sees me.
19. I am content.
20. I am controlled by the Holy Spirit.
21. I am yielded to the Holy Spirit.
22. I am not grieving the Holy Spirit.
23. I am not quenching the Holy Spirit.
24. I am authentic before others about my pain, problem, or situation. I am able to be real about my struggles because I am trusting God.
25. I am able to cry in pain while experiencing His comforting presence.
26. I do not complain about my circumstances.
27. Bitterness is foreign to me.

² "The Gospel of John" by Merrill C. Tenney in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 148.

28. I am not "*clingy*" to my possessions, people, or places.
29. Envy is displaced.
30. Revenge finds no residence.
31. Depression finds no expression.
32. I allow intellectual and emotional doubts pass through me.
33. I am vulnerable or transparent to both God and others.
34. Humility marks my disposition.
35. Serve even those who are against me.
36. I have no regret.
37. I learn and grow from my mistakes.
38. I am able to deal with mockery, embarrassment, and gossip.
39. I am able to pick myself up after the experience of personal failure and press on.
40. My disposition is marked by faithfulness.
41. When others acknowledge my disposition of trusting God in the midst of a terrible situation or chronic problem.
42. I do not manipulate the situation.
43. I do not manipulate people.
44. I am not duplicitous, that is, saying one thing but doing another.
45. I do not deceive others in view of a mistake or error I may have made.
46. I refuse to "*spin*" the situation or event.
47. I speak truth in love and love in truth.
48. I am not impulsive.
49. I walk in victory in the midst of personal failure because I am trusting God.
50. I acknowledge my failures with a trusting disposition to God.
51. I'm committed to following God's will no matter how costly it seems to me.

I am not experiencing God's peace when...

1. I dwell on the past to the neglect of fulfilling what God has for me in the present.
2. I reject God's will.
3. I "*moan*" in regret.
4. My conscience is not clear.
5. I resent God.
6. I am not trusting God by clinging to "*earthly*" objects, resources, or people.
7. I am prideful.
8. I am out of control; my soul is "*disordered.*"
9. I have a victimized mindset.
10. I give up even though He has called me to a certain task.
11. I quit even though I am commanded to press on.
12. I give into the enemies of God.
13. I compromise unto sin.
14. I allow my circumstances to control my spiritual life.
15. I am embittered toward God and others.
16. I manipulate, spin, or falsify the reality of the situation.
17. I give into the schemes of the world.
18. I feed my sinful habits and fleshly disposition.
19. I go against my God-given conscience.
20. I violate God's precepts.
21. I hurt others.
22. I defame the name of others.

23. I pursue my own interests above the needs of others.
24. I abuse my *"tongue."*
25. I am not bearing the fruit of the Spirit.
26. I allow fear to overtake me.
27. I refuse to follow God's calling on my life.
28. I allow anxieties to grow and influence my choices.
29. I search for peace in other places and people other than God.
30. I am determined to serve God but on my terms.
31. I do not pray.
32. I do not represent Christ with excellence.
33. I neglect the responsibilities that God has given me.
34. I allow my enemies to control me.
35. I am exhausted.
36. I am depressed.
37. I am avoiding or hiding from others.
38. I am not able to relax.
39. I have no contentment.
40. I complain.
41. I am envious.
42. I am seeking revenge.
43. I refuse to face my mistakes and learn from them.
44. I am embarrassed about my God
45. I am unfaithful.
46. I am not sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ
47. I am not able to let go of my fears.
48. I do not confess my sins to God.
49. I try to escape from my problems.
50. I blame others for my situation or problems rather than trust God.
51. I resent God's will for my life.

In conclusion, consider these words. On the eve of Jesus' trial, torture, and crucifixion, Jesus seeks to encourage His disciples by leaving "peace" with them. He explains to them that His departure is for their best. Though the disciples will have to confront a world that only offers hostility, they are not to be dismayed for they are able to place their trust in God. So, I say to each of us, follow hard after Jesus. Place your confidence in God no matter how difficult, painful, or turbulent your circumstances may be. Only in God will "calmness" reign supreme in your life.