

"Peace Perfect Peace"

In a world filled with uncertainty, stress, and worry, wouldn't it be wonderful to find peace? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today, we're looking at the way to peace.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. God's ways are the right ways to find love, grace, and peace, the peace we all seek. God's wisdom has no limitations; He sees and knows all things. And He knows what's best for humanity in every aspect of life. When people follow His will, they find peace; but when they rebel against His morals and His ways, they find chaos, confusion, and misery. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

We live in a world searching for peace, for well-being, and for security. We don't know what the future holds; and if we put our trust in things that are perishing, we could end up in great peril. Ecclesiastes 4:6-8 says, "Better is a handful of quietness than two hands full of toil and a striving after wind. Again, I saw vanity under the sun: one person who has no other, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, 'For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?' This also is vanity and an unhappy business."

Others think they can find peace through gaining power over others or by withdrawing from everyone. But peace is an inward quality that cannot be escaped except through transforming our lives from the things that defile to the things that are pure and peaceable. Ephesians 2:17 to 19 says, "And He (that is Jesus) came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you're no longer strangers and aliens, but you're fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." My friend, you can have peace!

Now we offer this study on finding peace, free. And if you'd like a printed copy of our study and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org and on our channel on YouTube.

We will now worship in song, and read from Philippians 4:4 to 9, and then we'll explore the way to find peace.

Our reading today comes from Philippians chapter 4, verses 4 to 9, and Paul gives the way to Peace. "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ

Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you've learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you." That's a reading from God's holy word.

Let's pray together. "Father we're thankful that You show us the way to peace. Help us to put our trust in You, and to focus our minds on the things that are good and to practice Your will. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen."

The apostle Paul wished the Thessalonians peace in 2 Thessalonians 3 and verse 16, "Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all." Our God wishes us to have peace; and everyone wishes to find peace in his life, his home, and his community. Following the Lord Jesus does matter! Romans 2:9 to 11 says, "There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality."

Now if you want peace within, Philippians 4:4 to 9 that we read, presents seven steps to peace that are worth remembering. First, verse four says, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!" I tell you, counting your blessings in Christ Jesus and remembering all the good He's done for you gives us a great reason to rejoice. Knowing that Jesus has forgiven us and will one day take us home to heaven is a great reason to find joy in this confused world.

Second, "Let your forbearing (or gentle) spirit be known to all men." Don't let things rub you the wrong way. Some let the smallest matters control their spirits. Haman got unreasonably angry because Mordecai wouldn't bow down to him and decided to destroy all the Jewish people. Well, Haman ended up destroying himself and his ten sons. If you let disappointments, anger, and stress overwhelm you rather than letting things go, you'll rob yourself of peace.

Third, "the Lord is near (or the Lord is at hand)." Our God sees everything we do and everything that happens to us. Let the Lord deal with disappointments and troubles. Trust in the Lord; He's not far away. James 4 and verse 8 says, "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you."

Fourth, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." Prayer is the answer to the problems of life. Stop worrying about every little thing and take your requests to God. Be thankful for the answers that God has already given. And have confidence that He will be with you.

Fifth, look for God's protection. "The peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension (all understanding), will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." God protects His people. He sets a guard in Christ Jesus around their hearts and minds. And God will give you a peace that surpasses all understanding.

Sixth, control your thinking. "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there's any excellence and anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." Now you can fill your mind with every evil and negative thing or you can fill your mind with the pure and good. It's your choice. Take charge of what you think!

Seventh, "The things you've learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you." You have to put into practice the things that you've learned from God, if you want the peace of God. The apostle Paul was a teacher and an example of what is good and right. If you want the God of peace to live with you, then you must listen to Him and practice what you've learned.

If you wish to have peace with others, the Scriptures will give you the path. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5 and verse 9, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God." Now peacemakers love peace and love the Prince of Peace. Peacemakers don't pick fights; they quickly apologize when they've done wrong. Peacemakers try to get along with others and are forgiving. Paul reminded Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:24, "And the Lord's bondservant must not be quarrelsome but be kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil." You see, peacemakers are kind to all and willing to endure mistreatment in order to preserve peace.

We find peace with others by following the Lord. Colossians 3:13 to 15 says to Christians that we should be “bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, and whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.”

Paul urged the church at Ephesus in Ephesians 4:1 to 3, “Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Now arrogance, impatience, and pride are stumbling blocks to getting along with anyone. Be humble, gentle, and patient with others. Preserve unity rather than pursuing selfish ends and divisive ways.

Hebrews 12 and verse 14 says, “Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.” Yes, it’s better to seek peace than to let conflicts arise that separate us from others and from God. Romans 12:17 to 18 says, “Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.” If everybody demands an eye for an eye, the whole world will be blind in one eye, they’ll be angry, and they’ll be at war with one another. I tell you, there’s a better way.

We all face offenses. People may be thoughtless, mean, and cruel. We can rarely control what thoughtless, selfish people do; but we can control how we react to their selfish ambition, their jealousy, and their hurtful ways. Ephesians 4:26 to 27 says, “Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.” Don’t let anger develop into grudges and the desire to get revenge. Your anger will never let you find peace.

James 3:13 to 18 describes how to act wisely with others, “Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” Wise people listen to God and put His words into practice.

Evil men are selfish and cause every kind of problem. They can’t find peace until they become pure. And so we need to look to God’s wisdom, not worldly ways. James 4 and verse 4 reminds us that Christians who want to hang on to the values and the morals of this ungodly world will not find peace with God: he said to them, “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” God is not someone you want to make an enemy of. Romans 8 and verse 6 simply says, “For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.” Now you’re choosing each day whether you’re following the path to death or the path to life and peace.

If you wish to have peace with God, then love and obey Him. Isaiah 26:3 to 4 says, that “God keeps him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on him, because he trusts in him. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock.” Because of Jesus, who gave Himself for us, we can find peace with God. Romans 5 and verse 1 says, “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Because of Jesus we can be reconciled to God, can be

children of God, and can find life forever with God. Because of Jesus, we're no longer fighting with God but are blessed with God.

Colossians 3:1 to 4 reminds those of us who are Christians, that "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."

Only God can give us peace; you can't find it by hoarding riches. 1 Timothy 6:6 to 10 says, "But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." If you get everything you want except a trusting relationship with God, you really have nothing that you can keep after this life is over.

Some people put their trust in a man-made religion, thinking they can be right with God by appearing righteous. And they foolishly think they can earn their way to heaven. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 23:25 to 26, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they're full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, and the outside also may be clean." People who fail to repent also fail to find peace with God and peace within.

I tell you it's so much better to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, who is a true moral and spiritual guide. Isaiah 9:6 to 7 prophesies about Him: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this."

When Jesus Christ was born, a multitude of heavenly hosts praised God and sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" (Luke 2 verse 14). Jesus came to this world and suffered on the cross to bring us to God (1 Peter 3 and verse 18). God wanted us to have a right relationship with Him. 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 21 says, that "He made Him (that is Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." I tell you, Jesus is our peace with God.

And so don't miss out on the peace that God gives, the peace of heart that comes from His love and from forgiveness. You may be at war in your heart with yourself over your sins, but God can forgive you and free you from that sin. You may be at war with someone, but God's forgiveness can open your heart to forgive those who sin against you.

Let's pray together. "Father, we're thankful that You give us the way to peace, help us to love You with a full heart, and to do Your will that we may find peace. In Jesus name we pray, Amen."

Romans 14:16 to 19 says, "Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another." God's way is the way of righteousness and peace and joy. When we live out our faith we become acceptable to God and

approved by men. And so we should pursue the things that make for peace with God and man. Christian friend, we should build others up by walking worthy of our faith.

A better world begins with each of us as individuals doing our part to live as God wills. You won't find peace through conflict, through anger, through hatred, or through lies. You find peace when you bring your life into conformity with the will of God. Romans 12 and verse 2 says, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Now you begin following the will of God by obeying the gospel. The gospel is the story of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. When you believe the gospel and in Jesus Christ, when you repent of your sins, confess Jesus Christ as God's Son, and are baptized into Christ, you're united with Christ in His death, His burial, and His resurrection (Romans 6 verses 3 to 7). God washes away your sins when you're baptized (Acts 22:16) and makes you His child (Galatians 3:26 to 27). So why not, why not obey the gospel today, be saved, and find peace with God?

We hope today's study about peace has stirred you to follow God. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area at www.searchtv.org. Now you can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." And be sure to like the programs you watch; this helps us spread the program. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

Focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. And there's probably a church of Christ near you. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us, tell a friend about the program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.