

## Peace or Chaos

We've all likely seen the bumper sticker that reads, "Know God, Know Peace. No God, No Peace." As simple as this sounds, there is much (biblical) truth in it. Ask yourself this question, and be fair in your assessment, "Which better characterizes my life: stress, chaos, and a seemingly continuous exercise in crisis management; or, peace, tranquility, and contentment?"

If your answer wasn't "peace, tranquility, and contentment," why wasn't it? After we finish listing all the *external* "factors" we assume to be the source of our lack of peace, two biblical answers push forward: 1) We haven't made peace (and tranquility and contentment) our *ambition*, cf. 1Thess.4:11; or, 2) We're not in control of our own lives since our lives don't match our stated goals/ambitions in these regards, cf. Jas. 3:13-18.

We'll use "peace" as a *blanket term* to also include "tranquility" and "contentment" for our purposes in this lesson.

**Jesus fully intended for us** (as Christians) **to have peace.** This certainly includes peace *with God* through salvation and the removal of the *tension of sin's consequences*, but also that we should lead *peace-filled* lives... rather than those filled with chaos and stress.

Note some rapid-fire passages with me.... (in sequential order)

John 14:27,1 He intended His disciples to have *peace* rather than *fear*

Rom.2:4-11, *glory, honor, and peace* to those who *do good*

Rom.8:5-8, the mind *set on the Spirit is life and peace*

Rom.14:19, *pursue peace*

2Cor.13:11, *live in peace*- does God expect or require the impossible

Gal.5:22, *peace* is the fruit of a *Spirit-filled* life

Phil.4:4-7, *rejoice, be forbearing, not anxious, and prayerful*. Then, *relax!*

2Tim.2:22, *pursue peace* with a *pure heart, calling* (and depending!) *on the Lord*.

1Pet.3:11, *seek and pursue...* in the *right places* and in the *right ways*

2Pet.3:14, be *diligent* to be *found in peace, spotless and blameless*.

So to summarize thus far, *Peace* is:

- 1) The Divine *expectation* and *legacy* for us;
- 2) Inseparably tied to *doing the right things* and eliminating the *wrong things* from our lives (as determined by God through His Word); and,
- 3) Achieved by having our *minds right*, which means that we must *desire, seek, and pursue* it in order to obtain it.

In addition to these, may I also suggest:

- 1) Learn to say "No" and mean it...

- a. To as many of the people as possible that destroy peace in our lives- starting with “self” and working outward from there!
  - b. To as many as necessary organizations, activities, events, “extra” work, and anything else that fills our schedules to the hilt. Peace takes time. Let time and the judiciously wise use of it allow you peace, Eph.5:13-21.
  - c. To news and social media that promotes conflict, trades on unrest, and constantly vies for more of our time, attention, and “concern” (aka, “worry”). I’m not suggesting that we stick our heads in the sand and become “blissfully ignorant” of the world around us and its problems. Nor am I suggesting that we move to a monastery somewhere. But I am suggesting that to have peace around us, we must first have peace **within** ourselves. To achieve this, we must take control of what fills our hearts, minds, and souls, Phil.4:8.
- 2) Learn to deal with stress- it’s going to happen. There will be stressful situations due to circumstances that we can’t completely control or eliminate. What are we to do?
- a. Do the best you can to do the *right thing(s)*, and move on, Acts 4:18-20,21-31; 5:29.
  - b. Don’t dwell on the *past*, or how badly you have it, or how badly you have been treated. Don’t constantly sing your *Elijah song*, 1Kings 19:4-18. Get up; get going; and do the best you can to carry out the Lord’s commands.
  - c. Don’t *binge and purge* to deal with stress (living incredibly stressful lives until you can’t take anymore, then *escaping* for a week or two only to come back and do the same things over and over). This isn’t anymore *spiritually* healthy than its *physical* cousin! Instead, eliminate *daily* stresses and allow yourself (and your children!) time each day to distress with *fellowship with God* in prayer, Bible reading, and downtime, cp. Matt.14:13,22-23.

## Conclusions?

Certainly there are more suggestions (biblical and otherwise) that would/could be helpful- perhaps these will get you started in the right direction. But the main points are these:

- 1) Take Control of Your Life.
- 2) Determine to Put God, His Kingdom, and His Righteousness First.
- 3) Learn to say, “No” and eliminate the “stuff” that robs you of the peace God intended you to have.