

Living by the Spirit

The Virtue of Peace

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Text: Galatians 5:22-23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Introduction

The academic definition of peace is:

1 : a state of tranquillity or quiet: as **a** : freedom from civil disturbance **b** : a state of security or order within a community provided for by law or custom **2** : freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions **3** : harmony in personal relations

However, the peace of which we read is not your ordinary type of peace.

Probably most everyone is aware of the Hebrew word for peace-shalom (Heb. *šālôm*). This word is routinely used as a word of greeting or farewell (e.g., [2 Kings 10:13](#)). Its usual translation, however, is the English word peace. By peace is meant more than the absence of war or strife (e.g., [1 Kings 4:24](#)). Therefore, our English translations must sometimes use several other words to render the Hebrew such as: prosperity, safety, health, or completeness. Interestingly, this last rendering comes the closest to the meaning of the Hebrew root (*šālēm*, "whole/perfect") behind the word commonly translated peace. Thus to know true peace is both to attain personal fulfillment and to enjoy full and healthy relationships with others. Ultimately, the true peace is found in God ([Num. 6:26](#); [Judg. 6:24](#); [Pss. 29:11](#); [35:27](#); [Jer. 33:6](#)). - Richard D. Patterson - <https://bible.org/article/fruit-spirit>

Living in the Spirit is made possible by the “fruit of the Spirit” or by the result of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In the Greek, the term “fruit of the Spirit” could also be translated the “harvest of the Spirit.” It is an expression of what is produced by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as we allow Him to work and produce spiritual growth within us.

Note the *blessings* of living with the empowerment of peace through the Holy Spirit...

I. God’s Peace Is Produced by the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

A. This peace is a product of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

John 14:26-28 (NIV) 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. **27** Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

B. This peace comes with a relationship with God.

Romans 5:1, “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...” NIV

II. God’s Peace Is Not Exemption from Conflict, But Peace In The Midst Of Conflict.

A. Conflict is everywhere human beings exist.

The *Personnel Journal* reported this incredible statistic: since the beginning of recorded history, the entire world has been at peace less than eight percent of the time! In its study, the periodical discovered that of 3530 years of recorded history, only 286 years saw peace. Moreover, in excess of 8000 peace treaties were made--and broken.

Moody Bible Institute, *Today In The Word*, June, 1988, p.33.

B. The Holy Spirit produces a peace unrelated to and unstopped by interactions with others.

III. It Is Not Exemption from Adversity, But Peace During Adversity.

A. Peace of mind during adversity is greatly sought after.

Duke University did a study on "peace of mind." Factors found to contribute greatly to emotional and mental stability are:

- 1) the absence of suspicion and resentment. Nursing a grudge was a major factor in unhappiness.
- 2) Not living in the past. An unwholesome preoccupation with old mistakes and failures leads to depression.
- 3) Not wasting time and energy fighting conditions you cannot change. Cooperate with life, instead of trying to run away from it.
- 4) Force yourself to stay involved with the living world. Resist the temptation to withdraw and become reclusive during periods of emotional stress.
- 5) Refuse to indulge in self-pity when life hands you a raw deal. Accept the fact that nobody gets through life without some sorrow and misfortune.
- 6) Cultivate the old-fashioned virtues--love, humor, compassion and loyalty.
- 7) Do not expect too much of yourself. When there is too wide a gap between self-expectation and your ability to meet the goals you have set, feelings of inadequacy are inevitable.
- 8) Find something bigger than yourself to believe in. Self-centered egotistical people score lowest in any test for measuring happiness.

-Source Unknown.

B. The presence of the Holy Spirit is the one constant that makes peace possible.

Philippians 4:6-7 “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” NIV

Conclusion

According to *New Man Magazine*, writer, theologian, and one-time Harvard professor Henri Nouwen, once broke away from his busy schedule for a six-month period of rest and reflection. During this time, he wrote this in his journal:

“When I took a closer look...I realized that I was caught in a web of strange paradoxes. While complaining about too many demands, I felt uneasy when none were made. While speaking about the burden of letter writing, an empty mailbox made me sad. While fretting about tiring lecture tours, I felt disappointed when there were no invitations. While speaking nostalgically about an empty desk, I feared the day on which that would come true.

In short: while desiring to be alone, I was frightened of being left alone. The more I became aware of these paradoxes, the more I started to see how much I had indeed fallen in love with my own compulsions and illusions, and how much I needed to step back and wonder, “Is there a quiet stream underneath the fluctuating affirmations and rejections of my little world? Is there a still point where my life is anchored and from which I can reach out with hope and courage and confidence?”