

How Can I Have A Greater Peace? part 1

My last message, [Why Should I Be Worried?](#), evoked the greatest response to any prior messages. Was it because my writing skills have improved significantly? I think not. I think that the topic that God gave me struck a chord and it hit home with many of you. One of my close friends put it this way if I can paraphrase him: *"You discussed something that we all go through but no one ever seems to talk about."*

In light of this great response, I thought I would focus on how we can experience a greater peace and offer some practical ideas on discipleship.

In a practical sense, worry and fear are probably the worst emotions a believer can display. This terrible twosome can cause paralysis and can ruin our witness. If non-believers observe that we worry as much as they do (and they do observe)... *"Just how great is their god?, What does she have that I don't, she worries just as much as I do? He's worried about a job just as much as I am."*

Do you see where I am going with this? Do you see why it just might disturb our Lord a bit when He tells us time and time again in His Word not to be afraid and we're out there in amongst the mass population not any different than the atheist next door?

I think we might agree that there is a worry-peace continuum with worry and fear being on one end of it and peace and joy on the other end. Since last week we focused on "not worrying", I thought we'd approach it in a more positive way by focusing on having peace, one of the fruits of the spirit.

When it gets right down to our personal ministry, if we are overly preoccupied with our own circumstances, to what degree

will that hinder us when it comes to serving others with love and attention? We owe it to our loved ones and the people we serve to find His perfect peace and walk in that path. This is not easy and requires great care and patience, but it's worth it.

Galatians 5: ²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control.

The key words here are “the Holy Spirit produces”, that’s not “you will produce” or “your pastor will produce for you” or even “after much effort, you will produce”. Here are more promises:

Psalms 29: ¹¹ The LORD gives his people strength.

The LORD blesses them with peace.

Matthew 11: ²⁸ Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

John 14: ²⁶ But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

²⁷ I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.

How does that work? Does He just give peace to all and that's it? Do all believers receive it regardless? I don't believe so, re-read Galatians 5: 22 above.

It is fruit. How does any living thing yield fruit? By staying in fertile soil and getting fed.

Let's review that wonderful parable of the Sower:

Luke 8: ¹³ The seeds on the rocky soil represent those who hear the message and receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they believe for a while, then they fall away when they face temptation.

This verse probably doesn't describe you, someone, that yearns for a deeper relationship. It does, however, contain a most valuable message and one to share with our friends who are "living on the surface". It is easy to fall away when we are not deepening our faith (growing spiritually). This was me several times in my life when I just didn't take God seriously. *"I prayed the prayer, I know I'm saved. How can I live up to His standard anyway?"*

¹⁴ The seeds that fell among the thorns represent those who hear the message, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. And so they never grow into maturity.

Unfortunately, this used to describe me perfectly and I am afraid many believers are caught up in this today. Can you relate? *"What time is the game on? Oh, what did the pastor just say? I wonder where we will eat after church. I gotta get me some baby back ribs! Hold on, this pastor is way too fast for me, did he just use a Star Wars reference in church? I wonder when that new movie comes out..."* I'm sure this does not happen to you, does it?

¹⁵ And the seeds that fell on the good soil represent honest, good-hearted people who hear God's word, cling to it, and patiently produce a huge harvest.

Personally, I prefer to read the Word of God rather than listen to it. My mind wanders way too easily, as I've

illustrated above, and I miss things when I hear it. But when I read with the intent to understand, I take the time I need to devour the His Word as if it were a tender, juicy, medium rare Rib-eye steak, taking delight with every bite. I have friends who prefer to listen or even both. I know God's made us all different and I think whatever it takes to get His Book into your body(heart, mind, and soul), do it! And at all costs.

This is where we need to stay in order to produce fruit, compare with:

John 15: ⁷ But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! ⁸ When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

These two verses clearly spell it out for you: **Keeping a soft heart and receiving and meditating on scripture is required to produce fruit.** The list I put together in [my last post](#) as a lesson from Job is a good list for growth, by the way.

If you've been frustrated that you have no peace or joy and always felt that being a believer in Jesus should be a life of peace, perhaps now you know why.

We read our Bibles daily to grow in spiritual maturity and get to know God more, not just to say we do it or just a habit.

"But I've tried to read daily before, I just don't get it" Or "I want it to be from my heart, not an obligation, so I choose not to read because I don't have the right motives"

These are cunning tricks that Satan loves to employ to keep the child of God at arm's length of their Heavenly Daddy.

John 10: ¹⁰ The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying

life.

If the desire is not there, I understand (been there). But pray that God will soften your heart and read it anyway. If you continue to pray for God to work on your heart and read out of obligation in spite of your attitude, keep reading and the joy of His Words will come to you and the more you read the more you will enjoy it and the more you will get out of it. Then **keep reading**.

If you do not understand it, I get it (been there). Pray that God gives you understanding. In the meantime find a friend/elder/woman of faith that does understand and ask for assistance. But read anyway. I have a close friend that knew nothing of the Bible (was an unbeliever, but a seeker), started reading Genesis and read straight through the Old Testament which prepared his heart for the Good News of Jesus Christ. He did not understand much of what he read but he understood enough, talked with various people about it and **kept reading**. What excuse do you have? All believers should continue to be seekers.

Psalms 105: 4 Search for the Lord and for his strength; continually seek him.

**DO NOT LET ANYTHING, ANYONE, ANY SIN OR ANY REASON
stop you from getting to know the loving and
living God, the One who created you.**

This message has eternal implications and cannot be stressed enough. After all, what else is there in life worth excelling at, much less compares in importance?

The Kingdom of God is not like High School.

Matthew 13: 44 "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid

it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field.

With God we can't afford to squeak by in class, going through the motions hoping He'll give us a passing grade on judgment day. He'll either know us, or He won't. Do we really want to casually hope for the best? **The time you spend serving in ministry is meaningless if you're not spending the time to know Him.** Where does my passion to serve come from? The heart and mind of God, or from my filthy self-righteousness?

Matthew 7: ²¹ "Not everyone who calls out to me, 'Lord! Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. ²² On judgment day many will say to me, 'Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.' ²³ But I will reply, 'I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God's laws.'

This is the difference between participating in ministry because it was just a good idea and God calling you to ministry because you heard His voice and were obedient.

If we stay in good soil, as explained above and develop the disciplines of being in His presence daily with prayer, reading, and regular fellowship, we will continue to grow. We will experience His peace, joy, and eventually all the fruits I believe. Trees don't think about producing fruit when they keep growing, good fruit happens. Same with us, when we stay in good soil and diligently pursue Him, He will produce good fruit in us and it will just happen, right before our eyes.

I'll leave you with a couple more verses on peace and that'll wrap it up. Thank you for reading, I pray that you take this message to heart and seek Him with all you've got!

Isaiah 26:

³ You will keep in perfect peace
all who trust in you,
all whose thoughts are fixed on you!

Psalm 46: ^{10a} **Be still, and know that I am God!**

Psalm 34: ¹⁴ Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it.

Will you join me in seeking His peace?

“Dear Lord, thank you for this message. I pray that all who read this message take it to heart and set time for you each day so that they can get to know you a little better and understand you more. Please help me hang in there when the situation is tough and remain steadfast in my effort to pursue you. You are the only One worth pursuing and I thank you for getting my attention. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

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