

## The Armor of God – Peace – Teaching

(Recap: If someone wasn't there, encourage them to ask someone for notes.)

**Really quickly:** Last week we talked about the breast plate of righteousness. Did anyone meditate on that this week and talk to the Lord about cleaner being closer? Did anyone approach God from a righteous position in Christ this past week and notice a difference? By “*anyone*” I mean we all should have...

What do we tell ourselves about our righteousness?

**I am innocent. I am not guilty. I am shameless. I am blameless. I do not deserve punishment.**

(If no one has anything to say, encourage them to expect when they communicate with God from a righteous position. If no one is open to share, or your church deals with gossip, you may share my story below.)

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Example: I'm going to share a testimony from someone in a different church, so please don't look around and say, “*I bet I know who that is...*” Unless you've been to Barefoot Redneckville in the deep south, just listen to the story.

I grew up in church, and I was taught that I had the righteousness of Christ, and because of Him I was made righteous. I could quote you several scriptures, but I never gave it much thought. One day I heard a teaching on how important it was to actually *believe* I am just as righteous as Christ and use my faith for it when I go before God. I broke down crying, because I realized that through His righteousness, He was trying to tell me that I am made perfect, I am right, I am acceptable, I am worthy to receive, and God putting me in that position made me free to receive all His love. It radically changed my life, especially because I came from a background of abuse. I was wrong when I was wrong. I was wrong when I was right. I was punished when I was wrong. I was punished when I was right. Right and wrong never mattered to me, because it was always a murky mess. I was even a bad person when I was right. Now I understand why our breastplate is attacked so badly. It's everything about being positioned over the enemy, who we've been made in Christ, and knowing God loves us so we can easily believe we have answers before we ask.

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This week...

### **Ephesians 6:15**

**and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;**

Really quick, just so we're all on the same page, we went over this in the introduction, **gospel** means “*good news*,” and your peace sandals aren't referring to sharing Jesus, although that's never a bad or wrong idea when it comes to spreading peace. This scripture says, “**preparation of the gospel of peace**,” which in Greek is also means **readiness, firm footing, or foundation**. This scripture isn't saying being ready to preach salvation will give you peace shoes, because our peace *doesn't* depend on actions, but having a **firm foundation in the good news of peace will produce effective prayer against the enemy**. Remember, sharing the gospel isn't prayer, and Paul is talking about a prayer suit.

Peace. **Shod** means to **bind to the bottom of your foot**, like a horseshoe on a horse. A Roman soldier's sandal was a high-top thick leather sandal. The bottom had metal nails with a nob at the end that possibly provided some type of grip into the ground, kind of like an ancient soccer spike. The heavy-metal bottom sandal was also believed to be used for **crushing an enemy underfoot** after the enemy was on the ground. A Roman army marching in unison with these sandals probably caused quite stir and struck fear in the enemy.

What I believe Paul is saying is that we need to bind peace to our feet. Why our feet? Because **the motion of the feet signifies that wherever we go, peace should be leading us, following us, and surrounding us**. It's very difficult for a person to take up a one-sided fight, and refusing to fight can immediately squash an enemy in his tracks. When your motives in life are peace and walking in love (which promotes peace), you certainly can stomp out the works of the enemy.

One of my favorite peace scriptures, and I believe it's key in strengthening your peace, is

**Psalm 119:165**

**Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.**

To me, this is one of the hardest sayings in the Bible. What does that mean, "love thy law?" The word law actually means teaching. This scripture can be read, "Great peace have they which love thy teachings: and nothing shall offend them." We are not under the law anymore, but grace! Before you shout woohoo, Jesus said in...

**John 13:34-35 34**

**<sup>34</sup>A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup>By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."**

Not only is love a characteristic of being a disciple of Jesus, we're under a commandment by God to love one another. When we get upset, we *feel* like we have a right to walk out of love, the worse the sin done against us the farther out of love we *feel* like we can walk. But we can never justify it. Let's see more how **love ties into peace**.

Jesus answered a lawyer's question about which is the greatest commandment in

**Matthew 22:36-40**

**<sup>36</sup>"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" <sup>37</sup>Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' <sup>38</sup>This is the first and great commandment. <sup>39</sup>And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' <sup>40</sup>On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."**

All the law and the prophets hang on the love commandments. Our peace most certainly hangs on love. While the law of Moses, or teachings of Moses, has been fulfilled by Jesus, love is still an ongoing commandment. Going back to...

**Psalm 119:165**

**Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.**

We can read this scripture, **Great peace have they which love the Lord with all their heart, all their soul, all their mind, and love their neighbor as they do themselves; and nothing shall offend them.**

We should meditate on that until it sinks down into our heart. If you feel offended by someone or something, not walking in love by letting offense in your life will most certainly kick your peace sandals right off your feet. For that reason, we're going to campout on offense and let the Holy Spirit speak and work in some hearts. Just look straight ahead, smile, and say, "*Someone in here is going to be blessed.*"

Offense is sometimes a learned behavior. Some people have grown up without peace sandals, and never even had a pair on their feet. Of course I don't mean anyone in here! But some people were taught by family to fight back no matter what, "*Don't quit until you win! Let them walk away!*" Sometimes we take on other people's offense. Anyone ever hear a statement like this, "*You mess with me, you mess with my whole family.*" (A famous line from the movie *Twins*) How about women getting angry at their best friend's ex, "*You hurt her! I hate you for that!*" **When we're emotionally caught up in the moment, we react out of our flesh, and forget that we are supposed to be walking in love.** It's even *more* difficult for parents when it involves their children. "*You hurt my kids. I'll kill you!*" I'm not saying we shouldn't defend our children if someone is causing them harm, but we *still* are required by God to follow his law of love. If you need to contact the police, contact the police; but what I am saying is as Christians we are not to launch emotional hate wars, involve other people to get them on our side, and breathe out a bunch of threats; because that puts our hearts in a place where forgiveness becomes very difficult.

Learning to forgive, not holding the offense, and forgetting can be more difficult for some people; but that doesn't mean it's impossible. **God would never require something of us that we can't do, and He wasn't willing to do.** The Father, the Holy Spirit, and all of Heaven watched men brutally beat Jesus and hang Him on

the cross. Jesus forgave them. The Lord forgave them. The Holy Spirit forgave them. Matter of fact, Jesus appeared to Paul and used him greatly in the kingdom of Heaven. Let's just pause for a moment and think about someone putting a person we love on the cross, and how we would react. Would we try to get them saved, like Jesus did Paul, and give them gifts? Never, right? Exactly why we need the Lord's help.

If you struggle to forgive offense, write this down. Take your phone out and email yourself if you need to. Quoting **Psalm 119:165** over and over **in your own way** will help you **find your pair of peace sandals**. You may need to *constantly* remind yourself at first, but it will get easier.

*"Great peace have they which love... Great peace have they which love God's Word... Great peace have they which love Jesus... If I'm offended, I don't love God... If I'm offended, I don't really love Jesus... If I'm offended, I don't really love the Word..."*

While that may sound harsh to some people, **that's what the Holy Spirit is inspiring me to teach you**. We can't go easy on harboring offense in our lives. As we go on in this study, you'll see why it's dangerous! If you come from a family where forgiveness is a huge problem, ask the Holy Spirit what other scriptures you need to personalize to remind yourself.

When it comes to offense, there are three types of people:

- those that know they're offended
- those that don't know they're offended
- those that closely monitor their heart regularly to keep it out

Only the Holy Spirit can confirm with us which type of person we are. I'm sure we all remember what Peter asked Jesus in **Matthew 18:21**

**<sup>21</sup>Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" <sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.**

Jesus goes on to tell the **parable** of a man who had **a debt that wasn't ever possible to be repaid** by a servant. After he asks for mercy and receives it, he immediately goes to a fellow servant and wants him in jail for a small payable debt. Jesus is trying to explain to us that He paid our debt of sin that can never ever be repaid. When it comes to our turn to cancel a fellow servant's debt/sin, we are expected to show the same forgiveness as the Lord showed us. Which means we should never require love gifts in exchange for forgiveness, because your forgiveness isn't free but comes at a price. Even if it's ignoring someone for 3 days, that's still punishment and repayment. If we don't forgive like God, we won't be forgiven. **Jesus shared this parable so we can come up to a higher way of thinking**, His thoughts on the offense and forgiveness. We must remember that while we were still sinners, Christ loved us and died for us. He didn't wait until we loved Him, He showed us His love first. **Christ is our ultimate example, love and forgive while they are still in sin.**

There are three types of forgiveness (mentioned above):

#### **Never**

- *"I'll never forgive them! You don't know what they did to me."* This is a brother or sister offended, they know it, and often times happy to tell you about it in detail.

#### **But Syndrome**

- *"I forgave them already, but..."* But you'll never speak to them again? But you're waiting for an apology? But you're waiting for them to return your money? But you're waiting for them to admit they've wronged you? But you can't forget? This is a brother or sister that is offended and doesn't realize it. They started the process, but they're waiting on some type of avengement to satisfy their emotions before it's fully settled in their heart.

#### **Heart Monitors**

- *"I forgave them a long time ago. I barely remember."* A brother or sister that can truly let an offense go has a strong understanding of God's love. These types of people practice love and forgiveness regularly, and understand it's done by faith with the help of the Holy Spirit.

The reason we carry offense is because we're hurt, and we have scars. **During the proof reading, the Holy Spirit impressed it upon me to take a side journey from offense and discuss hurt.** After we talk about hurt, and go back to offense, you'll completely forget we're actually talking about peace from the Armor of God. But we really are talking about peace, peace killers!

Hurt can mean a variety of things. We generally get the image of a person that's sad, crying, needing emotional support, and has to go through a healing process. Let's read scripture, and then discuss what hurt actually means.

**Psalm 147:3** NKJV

**He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.**

**Luke 4:18** NKJV

**“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed;**

The Bible was originally written in Hebrew, so we're just going to study the Hebrew word for brokenhearted, because the Greek word is just *“smashed,”* and there's more hidden in the Hebrew meaning than smashed.

The Hebrew word for **brokenhearted** is (labe) **leb**. Strong's defines this word as heart, but a word study offers a much deeper meaning. If this is one of the reasons that Jesus came to the Earth, then we should completely understand what the Bible is saying with this word. **Leb** (labe) primarily refers to the heart, not just as a physical organ but as the center of human emotion, thought, will, and moral character. It encompasses the inner life of a person, including feelings, desires, intellect, and decision-making processes. **In ancient Hebrew culture,** the heart was considered the core of a person's being. Unlike modern Western thought, which often separates emotion and intellect, the Hebrew concept of the heart integrates these aspects. The heart is where one discerns truth, makes decisions, and experiences emotions. The word **leb** also carries these meanings: soul, mind, knowledge, thinking, reflection, memory, inclination, resolution, determination (of will), conscience, heart (of moral character), emotions and passions, and courage.

What does all this information mean? This is so much more than someone's emotions need healing with a tissue in hand. **This includes healing from stress, that doesn't necessarily make you cry.** Some people need healing from bad decision making, that's also healing the brokenhearted in the Hebrew sense. We've all been lied to, some of us more than others, and therefore some people happily blurt out, *“I have trust issues.”* **Again, this doesn't have to be crying, but by Hebrew standards this is a “broken heart.”** For example, Jesus came so those scars left inside people from the liar can be healed, and they can trust others again. That might be a frightening concept to someone, but that's the red flag they need healing! A lot of us need healing from stress! According to the American Psychological Association, *“stress affects all systems of the body including the musculoskeletal, respiratory, cardiovascular, endocrine, gastrointestinal, nervous, and reproductive systems.”* The Mayo Clinic says, *“Stress that's not dealt with can lead to many health problems, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, obesity and diabetes.”* Cleveland Clinic lists everything from stress rashes, to weakened immune system, and all the way through to body pain. Do we need healing from stress? YES! If you're thinking, *“I'm not emotional, I can handle large amounts of stress,”* well, that's still paving the path to sickness from a broken heart.

Here's a true story for you: There is a pastor that his church well outgrew his building. He had 3 services on Sunday, one service Sunday night (always packed), and a Wednesday night service (also packed to overflow). The pastor's love for the people was great, so he wanted to be as involved in their many outreach programs in the community and in church programs; while they were looking for a new building that would end up needing renovated. Not long after they moved into the new building, the stress of being involved in everything took a toll and he became very sick. The pastor was diagnosed with an autoimmune disorder, known as POTS for short. It was very debilitating, and the pastor wasn't even able to leave the house. He repented for trying to oversee too much, made changes, in a few months was healed and able to preach. When he was telling the congregation what happened to him, another young woman who was very sick, and not able to leave the house was watching. As he described POTS, she realized she had the same exact symptoms and problems;

her doctors couldn't figure out what it was. She was later tested for POTS, her heart stopped during testing (which she said she cried out to Jesus until her heart re-started) and was immediately diagnosed with it. She said that she liked that pastor a lot, because he was very tough and not emotional. The pastor was an ex-body builder that owned a gym, and she was an ex-powerlifter and ex-body builder. Her life was loaded with high stress, and she was not one to back down or ever even cry. That's the point of this story!! **We cannot carry burdens and stress and think or boast about our own toughness to handle it.** We don't realize we're doing this sometimes, but when we determine we can handle a Hebrew broken heart, not letting God heal us, we just told God that we don't need Him. *We got this on our own,* glory in ourselves. We're a ticking bomb to stress sickness. Side note, going to the gym isn't how to de-stress. Both of these two ministers enjoyed the gym daily. If the gym, a movie, an alcoholic beverage, shopping, or eating was the answer to de-stressing, then we'd see it in Proverbs. When you're unappreciated at work day after day for years or passed over for a promotion, that's a Hebrew broken heart. When your spouse disrespects you regularly, that's a Hebrew broken heart. Suffering from bad decisions, Hebrew broken heart. Passions and creativity have been smashed, Hebrew broken heart. **Does everyone understand what this means?** In our modern language it's any hurt and/or stress. In Hebrew it's just broken heart.

So...back to offense. **How do we get heart healing from offense?** Offenses are stored in our soul, which is our mind, will, and emotions. It's not just stored in our brain inside our head. Christian brain scientist Doctor Caroline Leaf teaches that your brain can physically be rewired. You can physically change bad thoughts stored in your brain to good healthy thoughts. **It's our soul** (again that's mind, will, and emotions) **that's carrying the pain, trauma, hurt, and abuse.** We must ask God to heal the damage done to our soul, but at the same time we need to work with His healing power not against it. We're going to pray together, but I think these prayers are better done in your quiet place when you're alone to allow the Holy Spirit to work on you. You might cry, you might laugh, you may feel overwhelmingly peaceful and not want to move. You probably don't want to share deep-dark things the Lord is going to clean out of you, even things you forgot that you've been carrying around, like that broken heart from your love life when you were 8 years old. Let's look at scripture really quickly, and then we'll talk about **how to pray, how to work with the healing power of God, and how to maintain the healing.**

Broken hearts give us wounds according to Psalm 147. We need to remind ourselves that he doesn't just want to heal you, he wants to heal the wounds. The wound means that it's still open, and it's still happening. After a situation is over, such as a trust friend stole money and quit speaking to you, that requires healing. An open wound would be like a narcissistic parent who keeps repeatedly controlling you by emotional badgering. Psalm 147 is saying, He wants to stop that thing that keeps hurting you repeatedly. We see in Luke that one purpose Jesus was sent to the Earth was to heal the brokenhearted. Is it that important? Yes!

### **How to receive healing for a broken heart, binding up wounds, and letting go of the offense:**

The first thing we know we all need to do is forgive. Sometimes you have to forgive by faith, but as Christians we don't have a right to not forgive. If right now you need to pray, *"Lord I forgive so-and-so by faith,"* and that's the best you can do right now, that's ok, do it! Do it now! Part of forgiving is letting it go. If you forgave, but can't let it go, pray, *"Lord I'm letting such-and-such situation go by faith."* If that's the best you can do right now, that's ok, do it! Do it now! Do these things now as I'm speaking!

### **Prayer**

Repeat this in your heart or just agree with me as I pray. Let the Lord heal you.  
(give everyone this prayer or one like it to take home)

Lord, thank You for sending Jesus to heal every stressful situation that I have been through in my life. I thank You that today You're healing me and binding up my wounds. Right now, I loose from my heart every bad situation that has happened to me. I'm forgiven. I forgive them. I'm innocent. I am not guilty. I am shameless. I am blameless. I do not deserve to be punished for any reason. Whatever wrong decisions or choices that I made no longer matter because it's washed in the blood of Jesus. I will never accept condemnation again! I'm letting go of all works of enemies against me. I don't want to hold it any longer. It's now in Your hands to deal with. I'm also letting go of the trauma, anger, frustration, constant annoyance, and everything else bad that I

might be harboring. In exchange, for letting it go, I am asking for healing right now. Specific people that have intentionally caused me harm, I'm releasing them into Your hands to deal with. I ask You to please cut them out of my heart right now, so the thought of them never bothers me again. If my heart has been broken or smashed, even if I don't remember it from childhood, please put all the pieces of me back together again. Thank You Father for loving me, and please fill me with Your love to overflowing. I ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

**How do we maintain this healing?** As soon as stress comes, a co-worker runs to your boss with a lie about you to get ahead, refuse to take the offense. Immediately pray and tell the Lord, *"You see what they did. I'm going to leave this problem with You. I forgive them by faith. Help me see their good qualities and help me look forward to a better blessing than if they said good things about me."* Believe it or not, it's easier to refuse the offense early on (don't let the sun go down on your anger), than it is later when it grows roots inside you.

**Overcoming offense is a huge topic, and far too much for this peace sandal study.** I would like to encourage everyone to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to your heart if there is someone you feel offended with, or a situation where you are carrying an offense. Holding onto offense will gradually make your heart hard. When you let go of an offense, the offense will let go of you. **Forgiving others for offending you doesn't necessarily make their life right before the Lord, but it will most certainly unattached them from your soul (soul is your mind, will and emotions). It will tear down the wall built up in your heart that stands between you and the Lord.** But before we move on to a far more poisonous topic, *strife*, let's see how offense can not only keep you from peace, but allow the enemy to do what he wills with you.

**John 1:29** NKJV

**The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"**

We all know that John the Baptist prophesied and knew that his cousin, Jesus, was the Messiah. We all know how John the Baptist even expressed how he was unworthy to unlatch Jesus' sandals. We all know how John the Baptist said after Jesus began to minister,

**John 3:30** NKJV

**He (Jesus) must increase, but I (John) must decrease.**

Well, John the Baptist said that, but John the Baptist didn't do that! We all know the story how John the Baptist boldly rebukes Herod for marrying Herodias, his brother's Phillip's wife, and rebukes him for his other evil atrocities. That's not decreasing. Herod responds by putting him in prison (Luke 3:19-20). We have to remember that the Jews thought the Messiah was coming to wage physical war against Rome for them. Perhaps because of that common belief of the Jews, John thought it was ok to *boldly* rebuke Herod to his face. So... he's there in a dark prison with no fresh air, no bath, underfed with little prison food to survive, uncomfortable, and doesn't know what will become of him. **John is upset, and thoughts start coming to John...**

**Matthew 11:2-3** NKJV

**<sup>2</sup>And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples <sup>3</sup>and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"**

What did he just say?!?! "*Are you really the Christ?!?*" What did Jesus do to deserve such an accusation against the prophecy out of John the Baptist's own mouth?!? Nothing! Let's read how Jesus answers John's accusation.

**Matthew 11:4-6** NKJV

**<sup>4</sup>Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: <sup>5</sup>The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. <sup>6</sup>And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."**

John is straight up offended! His disciples were fasting and praying, living in harsh conditions, knew they could lose their lives, and now John is in prison hearing stories of Jesus healing people while Him and His disciples are chowing down on lamb chops, hummus with olives, fresh baked pitas, and tasty date cakes (**Luke 5:33**, John's disciples fasting). Can we agree John is listening to the enemy? The Bible calls Satan the accuser of the brethren, and John *did* accuse Jesus of not being the Messiah.

Write this down, again take your phone out, because this is important...

### **Do not lose your head over offense.**

While that might sound like a *corny saying*, it isn't. It's something serious to remember. When you tell yourself or minister to someone else with that statement; what you're saying is, "*Don't be offended. It will put you in the hands of the enemy.*" **John literally lost his head over offense.** If John wasn't offended and **kept peace in his heart**, he could have stomped out the offense and ended it there. Thinking about his offense over and over, he ended up accusing the Messiah. I believe if he stomped out the offense with peace, and repented for doing something he wasn't told, he would have been delivered from that prison. Let's read the last part of Jesus' answer again, "*And **blessed** is he who is not offended because of Me.*" **John lost his blessing because of offense.** Do you think we could lose our blessing and put ourselves in the hand of the enemy with offense? Yes! Jesus wasn't calling John's sin outright, because He was lovingly responding. I don't believe God ever called John to correct Herod, because Jesus never dealt with Rome's leadership during the time of His ministry.

**John 3:17** NKJV

**For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.**

**Offense is always a heavy topic to get through**, but the more you practice forgiveness the easier this will become for you. The next *peace killer* that will make you hand your peace sandals directly over to a devil is strife. We will very quickly go over strife. The definition of strife is angry or bitter disagreement over fundamental issues; conflict.

**Proverbs 6:17-19**

<sup>16</sup>**These six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him:** <sup>17</sup>**A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood,** <sup>18</sup>**A heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil,** <sup>19</sup>**A false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.**

**Discord** in Hebrew is **strife**, same word. Spreading strife, conflict or bitter disagreement, is an abomination to the Lord. He doesn't just hate it, He calls it an abomination, meaning extreme disgust and loathsome. When someone is in strife, joined someone that's in strife, and/or listening to someone that's in strife, they've given place to the demons. **Because if God hates it, and you're involved, even accidentally, you're giving place to demons.** By accidentally I mean, if someone comes over to you and starts spewing their strife and you listen, the Lord considers silent listening an agreement because you're letting that strife in your spirit. Worldly old ladies are notorious for this! You don't even know them, they come up to you and unload who is doing what to them, and you feel bad telling them to shut up, because they're old. Right? That's letting strife in. How do we shut that down? "*Ya know what? Let's pray about your 'mean' daughter-in-law right now, or let's pray your 'no-good' son-in-law has an encounter with Jesus! Have you had an encounter with Jesus?*" That's how we refuse the strife, because we must refuse giving place to demons. If you're in the workplace, you can simply say, "*Love conquers all.*" Start singing *Put a Little Love in Your Heat*. And the world (and the world) will be a better place, for you (for you), and me (and me), you just wait (just wait) and SEEEE... Do what you have to do to shut them down in love.

**Ephesians 4:27**

**nor give place to the devil.**

**Place** in Greek is **topos**. It's also defined by Strongs as **any portion of space marked off**. That means that **getting into strife means you're portioning off a space and marking it off for the devil**. If someone has areas roped off in their heart for the devil, how much peace do you think they have?

I'm going to read **James 3:16-17** from the **Hebrew** translation

**<sup>16</sup>For in whomsoever there is jealousy and hatred, in him there are many evil things. <sup>17</sup>But the wisdom from above is firstly pure; and afterwards shalom (peace), and with rest, and is able to reconcile, and quick to listen, full of mercy; and lastly it is to goodness (that which is good) and not to partiality or flattery (hypocrisy).**

Strife is hatred. When you pick up strife, you're opening yourself to many evil things. I like this about taking wisdom from above, it's **peace with rest**. We all could use more and more peace with rest. The rest of this verse goes on to tell us how to counteract the jealousy and hatred with wisdom from Heaven, be mature enough to reconcile, be quick to listen, full of mercy, and goodness. **Strife is not worth what it will cost you when you invite demons in to stay.**

*What does strife look like?* I'll use a real example of strife at an oil refinery company right after a hurricane. **We sometimes think, "I've never been in strife," and yet we all have been in strife or at least heavily tempted at one time or another.** A category 1 hurricane hit an oil refinery. The office workers stayed at home and came in later after it passed. The laymen were scheduled to drive in the hurricane winds, and possibly stay longer if there was flooding and problems. Some of the employees ended up working on equipment in the middle of the hurricane and one of the smaller women could barely stand up in the winds. Later that day, the company goes out into the community to pass out free \$100 grocery cards, and free \$100 gas cards to those that were affected by the storm. To the employees that weathered the storm and couldn't be home to help their families, many of them lost power, they gave them free cheap hotdogs for staying over. One of the employees became very offended. He said that the company didn't care about them, and they deserved better treatment. He was so upset, he started telling other people about his offense, that turned into strife. They became very upset too, and then he had a group of people unified in strife (angry disagreement) with the company. The man who spread his strife calls the main company, tells on the management and complains really bad. That's what strife looks like. As Christians, this man is a Christian, we're supposed to pray when we feel like we've been mistreated. We're supposed to leave it in His hands. That's what love is... takes no account of wrong.

We aren't supposed to go around announcing our strife and gathering people to our side. That *exactly* what Lucifer did with the angels. He got 1/3 of the angels to side in with *his* cause. If you do feel upset and you need help, it's ok to talk with someone to help you sort it out, but spreading strife because you're upset is an act of the devil.

### **How to keep the door closed on demons**

1. Renew your mind with the Word (Romans 12:2)
2. Guard your heart and mouth (Proverbs 4:23 and James 3:6-8)
3. Humble yourself before the Lord (Proverbs 13:10)
4. Avoid debates at all costs (Phil 1:15)

We don't have time to go through all of these, because we are talking about peace, but Proverbs tells us that pride brings strife. Proud people are always willing to argue how *they're not wrong* or that *you are wrong*. **Strife is also the same word as debate**. Philippians warns us against preaching Christ out of strife, a fight, and should be avoided at all costs. That including "*debating the Bible*," or better said, "*getting in strife over the Word*." Talking is ok, but as soon as anger arises, shut it down immediately, because it's strife.

One more area where people get into strife very easily is **correction**. Learning to receive correction from those that are over you will keep the door closed on offense and strife (Proverbs 9:8, Proverbs 15:5, Hebrews 12:5-10). A good example of this, is when Jesus had to correct Peter for usurping his authority and speaking the words of Satan. Peter received his correction well, because he was able to go up the mountain with Jesus and see Him transfigured. If not, Peter probably would have had to remain at the bottom of the mountain, because he'd be toting Satan. (Matthew 17:1-2)

## Learning to take correction

1. Be open to receive correction
2. Don't be defensive
3. Be truthful and don't lie
4. Be willing to make adjustments
5. Keep a good attitude
6. Be ready to repent

Don't ever focus on how you were corrected, but the why. If you don't agree with the correction you're receiving, it's ok to say, "Thank you, I'll pray about this." But if it's your boss or someone that has authority over you, you must take it with peace and patience. Ask the Lord to lift you up, clear your name, or whatever you need to allow Him to correct the situation.

### Remember:

**Peace is the manifestation of God's presence**  
**Strife is the manifestation of demonic presence**

If the Holy Spirit brought something up in your heart, just be encouraged that once you put your peace sandals back on your feet, you won't want to allow anyone's sin to steal your peace again. That brings us to **upgrading our peace sandals** and increasing strength to your ancient spikes to firmly plant into the ground and crush the enemy underfoot.

### **James 3:17** NKJV

**<sup>17</sup>But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.**

Let's go back to translated from a **Hebrew manuscript**.

**But the wisdom from above is firstly (at the first) pure, and afterwards shalom (peace), and with rest, and is able to reconcile, and quick to listen full of mercy, and lastly it is to goodness (that which is good) and not to partiality or flattery (without partiality and flattery). But the righteous fruits are sown in shalom by those who establish (perform) the shalom.**

I really like the original Hebrew manuscript of James, or Ya'acob as his real name is in Hebrew. James teaches us something very interesting about peace. **Wisdom from the Lord brings peace, peace with rest.** Take a moment to think about **peace with rest**. Saying peace can give you the idea of being quiet or alone. Some people imagine a hippie flashing a peace sign after he passed one to the left (marijuana reference). If you search pictures of peace on the internet, it's normally depicted by scenes in nature and often features a human trying to contact the spiritual realm through mediation. When you think about *why*, you realize it's because it's the closest an unsaved person can get to the peace of the Lord, using drugs and/or hanging out in nature. You might think, drugs is close to God? Yes, when they quiet their mind from all the noise their life created, it's peace for them. While we can and should enjoy the peace that exists in nature (His creation), we can have so much more from the Lord! *True peace from the Lord is being completely unaffected by negative emotions no matter what the circumstance is surrounding you and still holding on to your joy.* This true peace can't come from you, but it has to be grown and cultivated by your spirit from the Word and the Holy Spirit. Because of God's good grace, we can ask for emergency doses of peace, but "having bound your feet with the training of the good news of peace," that's our Ephesians 6:15 armor scripture, you can live a lifestyle of peace.

The **Hebrew word for peace, shalom, means nothing missing nothing broken** (this includes your mind, health, and prosperity). Peace with rest means you don't need a massage for your tense muscles. Peace with rest means, when your head hits your pillow, you will sleep. James goes on to explain that the effects of wisdom from the Lord will teach us how to react in situations; **that's how we grow in peace**. Reacting with wisdom from the Lord will give us *morally right fruits* (as opposed to the evil ones in previous verses) sown in peace when we act on peace. And what are those fruits that James is probably speaking of, **Galatians 5:22-23**

<sup>22</sup>**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,**  
<sup>23</sup>**gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.**

These are the fruits Christians are *supposed* to be growing and cultivating. We can't pray and ask the Lord to give us these fruits, believe me many people have tried and failed. They learn they're supposed to pray and ask God to give them these fruits, ask, ask, and ask some more. Anyone here ever taught that approach? Doesn't work, does it? Ever hear someone say about longsuffering, "*Don't pray for patience! You'll be very miserable!*" These types of comments are always followed up with a list of frustrating stories. But *why?* **These fruits are a choice, growing pains.** Making decisions in favor of these fruits will cause us to grow. People taught to be given a pass on growing, cheating if you will, have their prayers actually being answered by the enemy. The Lord wasn't sending people to make them miserable or to teach them a lesson to grow, the enemy was behind it. There are no stories in the Bible where the Lord places a call on a man's life to act like the devil or cause someone to sin to "*expose your weaknesses to teach you a lesson.*" If that were true, sin would be the work of the Lord. **The Lord wouldn't be a just God using humans against each other.** In the end, it's a difficult way to produce fruit in your life from those prayers, because you're set up by the enemy to fail. It's trying to grow by failure instead of victory. Don't always end up being the failure in the funny-frustrating don't-do-it story. Paul said in

**Romans 5:3** NKJV

**And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;**

**Webster's Bible Translation**

**And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience;**

Do you see it now? People don't realize they're praying, "*God give me tribulation!*" Of course God won't do that, so who is behind the answer to that prayer? Exactly.

When you make the choice in everyday life to not allow an angry person to affect your happy day, the next time you're faced with that choice it will be easier. It's as simple as that. It works the same way with all the fruit, including peace. **We have to choose peace at all times, especially when it's easy.** What does that mean? It's easy not to get upset because they didn't put cheese on your burger that you paid extra for. It's easy to get upset and leave a review about it. Both choices are easy! It's easy to say, "*I didn't need the cheese anyway.*" If you can't let it go yet, it's still easy to go back and speak the truth in love, "*I paid extra and didn't get my cheese.*" **When the day comes where we're thrust into a difficult situation, if we haven't been practicing peace and pursuing it when it's easy, we won't be ready to walk through the storm having peace with rest but be barefoot, feeling alone, and possibly angry at God.** Peter found pursuing peace to be so important, he quoted Psalm 34:13-14 in his writing in 1 Peter 3:11 "**seek peace and pursue it.**"

Our peace is *so very important* to the Lord, Jesus said in **John 14:27**, "**Peace 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.**"

Not only do we have a *fruit of peace with rest* available to choose and cultivate, but *Jesus* also left us with *His peace from the Holy Spirit*, and then to top it all off, we have *peace as a prayer weapon*. There is no reason Christians should be without peace.

**Romans 14:17** NKJV

**"for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."**

Peace coming from the Holy Spirit again here in **Romans 15:13** NKJV

**"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."**

I truly believe when we do our part in the natural, and believe the Lord is faithful to perform His Word and fill us with His peace, that is when we will see miraculous results manifested in our lives. That's exactly the testimony

Paul is talking about us having as Christians, *“having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.”* More simply said *bind peace to yourself wherever you go, be ready with good news of peace.* Not just good news to yourself, but those around you. Our world today is filled with fear. People are always searching for peace, or as we most often hear, *“de-stressing.”* **A Christian with a solid foundation of peace is a true testimony of the gospel.**

I hope you enjoyed searching the scriptures with me. Next week we'll study the shield of faith. I think by now you know you *need* a notebook, because we're taking a deep dive into places you didn't expect.

Let the peace of God be upon you. Next week is the shield of faith, and we will be going to some unexpected places.

## Homework this week!

1. Listen for the Holy Spirit to bring people up in your heart that you must forgive. If you want forgiven, you must forgive.
2. Look for the Holy Spirit to shine a revelational light in your heart if you have strife in your life against people, places, or things (Yes, some people are mad at entire cities because of sports! It's crazy! Other people are in strife with casino machines, McDonald's ice cream machine, fax machine from 20 years ago, or the neighbor's dog that is leaving presents in their yard. No one said it had to answer back!)
3. Seek healing for a broken heart (stress, any abuse... even at work, under appreciation, shyness, and anything else that doesn't support you feeling confident, and important in a Godly way!!)
4. Actively look at how you can pursue peace in your life this week

Might sound like a long list, but we're coming up to a higher place in life where there is a greater peace, greater health, sound mind, long life, and answered prayer.

(Prayer points:

- Father, we thank You. Jesus, we give You praise. Holy Spirit, we are so thankful You're here with us.
  - Holy Spirit, we give You permission to invade our soul (mind, will, emotions)
  - Please shine Your light on areas of our soul that need work, whether it be unforgiveness, anger, strife, hate, or racisms from 30 years ago we forgot about. Please reveal it to us so we can sort it out.
  - Unmask every enemy of Your peace in our life.
  - Thank you, Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit for leaving us multiple ways to receive Your peace. Thank You for bringing us from glory to glory so that we can bring greater honor to You.
- In Jesus' name, Amen)