

Fruit of the Spirit (Bible Study) - Peace

(If you did the Armor of God series some may be a repeat. That's ok. Remind everyone that we haven't quite mastered peace, and it's good to hear again.)

So far in this series we learned to be Fruit Inspectors for our own safety, God's love is our ground and also a fruit, and joy is the base of the remaining fruit or offshoots. This week, we're going to take a look at the fruit of peace and learn *exactly* how to produce peace in our lives. It's much easier than you think, no praying, asking, or begging required. If you did your homework, and practiced letting your joy out, then peace will follow.

On that note, I'm full of **joy** to ask about your **homework**!

- Did everyone take their medicine this week? (Proverbs 17:22)
- Did you party like it was 1000_{BC}?
- Anyone have a challenge and think themselves happy?
- Most importantly, did anyone do the **Nehemiah 8:10** celebration? *Please* don't say what it was over, just testify to the Lord's Work. The last day in this study will be for sharing spiritual growth, or you can write your testimony and bring it in with you.

This week is going to be exciting too, but in a more mellow way, because it's peace. **This is the one time if you fall asleep while I'm talking**, I will be happy and say, *"The Word is working for you!"* But if you *do* sleep, we haven't made it to kindness, so there may be jokes or pictures!

Let's look at our fruit scripture and then jump right into peace.

Galatians 5:22-23 NKJV.

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

What is peace exactly? **English dictionaries** define it as harmony in personal relations, freedom from civil disturbance, not being interrupted or annoyed by worry or problems, and other surface-worldly meanings. If you Google peace, you'll see most of the images related to peace are being out in nature, togetherness with different people, Buddhist mediating, and if you keep digging hippies passing herbs to the lefthand side. Why? Because this is the way people, who don't know Jesus, can get closer to God. Nature is the Work of God; taking in its beauty, cleaner air, good smells, and calmness is all a part of God. The togetherness representing peace is actually the world trying to work God's love in their own way, but by acceptance rather than using God's true love. Mediating, often this is depicted in nature or by some water, is people trying to find God, the wrong way, but they're searching. Finally, the hippies smoking herbs, it's a way the world tries to calm their thought life, have no worries, go with the flow, and accept everyone (instead of loving everyone). These are all just different ways to attempt having God's peace without going directly to the Lord.



In the **Old Testament**, peace is **shalom** and means **completeness, well-being, safety, and prosperity**. Yes, money! People who know both Hebrew and English agree a good Biblical definition of peace is **nothing missing, nothing broken; both physically and spiritually**. I think that's a great definition, so please write it down: Peace, shalom, means nothing missing, nothing broken; both physically and spiritually. Yes, this word includes money and physical healing. Really quick, we have to remember Abraham was wealthy, everyone left Egypt healthy, and their clothes lasted 40 years in the dessert; that's shalom, but still, that's another study! We're going to be studying peace in general, because we could camp out on peace for weeks.

2 Thessalonians 3:16 NKJV

Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all.

The Lord of Peace give you peace. The Lord is all about peace. Peace is written 397 times in the New King James Bible. Peace is a very important topic. So, let's jump right in how we get a steady flow of God's peace working in our lives.

Isaiah 26:3 NKJV

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.

One of the ways we can keep His flow of peace is to keep our mind on the Lord. This is a huge topic, because **whatever you're thinking on, you'll produce**. If you keep thinking about recipes and watching people cook, you'll end up cooking or ordering food that's been dancing in your thoughts. *Let's be honest, how many cake videos do you watch before you end up eating cake?* But being more serious, if someone stopped drinking alcohol, and all they think about are those college drinking days. They end up drinking again, and wonder how they got there. You'll produce whatever you allow to dance in your head. If you keep your mind on the things of the Lord, we are promised it will produce peace.

We don't have time in this study to go into great detail, but if you allow it **your mind will act up like an unruly two-year-old that you cannot spank**. If you want peace in your life, you have to tell your mind, *"NO! I will not think on that."* Something bad happens at work, and your flesh wants to say, *"Now I'm going to get fired."* If you let that dance around your head, you'll think about it more and more on the negative side, won't sleep at night or you'll take something to sleep. You'll show up at work worried and half feeling crazy because you ran every scenario in your head and trying to figure out which one is likely to play out. Then your peace is leaning on the outcome of the situation, and you're left wondering where God is to help. **You have to stop it before it starts!!** If you ever went to the doctor and they said, *"Let's run this test again."* Some people's mind immediately goes nuts saying, *"It's cancer!"* How about those days when *"who did you wrong,"* starts dancing around and you feel like you have to replay the entire situation. Those thoughts never improve any situation, ever! **Stop it before it starts! Here's a quick true situation.** A deacon's two daughters, that grew up in church and attended Christian school, decided that the zombie apocalypse is *real* and *will actually happen*. Imagine that, a 19-year-old and 22-year-old (old enough to reason) born-again Holy Spirit filled Christian believers in fear about killer zombies walking the Earth. When questioning one of them, it came from watching a zombie show and getting involved in a fan club. They were mixing the Word (the Book of Revelations) with fantasy (that show). Allowing garbage in to produce will steal your peace, even if it's *just* a tv show. While fear of the zombie apocalypse is a little silly and most people around you would be happy if you produced cake from your thought life, people living in fear over cancer is not funny. **Stop it before it starts! Train your mind when it's easy.**

Everyone's mind is crazy, whether we want to admit it or not. Some people have it worse than others for what they have been through in life or feeding their mind. Just because thoughts against peace come doesn't mean you're sick, going to die, or you've sinned. **It just means you need to toss it out. Write this down: If a thought promotes life, it can stay. If a thought produces death, it has to leave.** (Death is separation and loss) There are no in-between thoughts! The mind takes persistence to master, but it's doable, with the help of the Word and Holy Spirit, but it has to be done in conjunction with producing fruit; love, then joy, and peace will follow. You can't treat people like they're beneath you (walking out of love), and expect to be joyful and filled with sweet peace.

Philippians 4:7-8 NKJV

⁷and the peace of God, which surpasses (exceeds or outdoes) all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Paul, once again, is expounding on the teaching of Jesus and fruit/Character of God. He also expounded on **Isaiah 26:3** that we just read. He told us exactly what to think on. Don't forget, Paul was one of the top Hebrew scholars of his day. He had to memorize the entire Torah (first 5 books of the Bible). Back in **Ephesians 3**, which we read the week before last, Paul taught us that acting out on the love of God in you gives us understanding, *but now he's saying peace surpasses the understanding*. **People misquote this scripture** here in Philippians and say, *"peace that passes all understanding."* They change the word

“surpasses.” The Greek word here for **surpasses** is **huperechó** and means to **surpass**, to **excel**, to **be superior**, to **rise above**.

Putting the two scriptures together, **love gives you the groundwork of understanding and peace from God builds on that foundation giving you exceedingly ALL understanding**. If that sounds confusing, think of the image and order of the fruits: 1. Love 2. Joy 3. Peace. That’s manifesting more of God’s Character which is why peace exceeds the understanding that results from love. **He’s saying peace is the over-the-top understanding! It’s going to guard your heart and mind from hurt and problems that come in this life**. I know this can be confusing, so I will give you a real-life example:

(Tell a story of peace that surpasses all understanding. If you need a real-life example, mine is below. It’s long but it has an excellent point about the results of judging.)

I am going to use a story from another minister, so please don’t blame anyone in our church. I like this story, because it’s a huge eye-opening story that can happen here in our church or anywhere else. It’s not just about peace and understanding but the severity of our actions.

She wrote:

I went through a time of having dilated vein heart attacks every day from an autoimmune disorder. While that was going on, someone in my family had gotten a report of liver cancer and doctors said he would die. I didn’t tell anyone at church. I would just go up for prayer and ask for God’s healing in general. I would laugh a little and cry at the same time. It was quiet, and I never put on a show to disturb anyone. Yes, that can look a little silly, but God was cleaning me of the stress through tears and the laughing was restoring joy and hopefulness of healing and life. Having blood pressure drops, chest pains, and fighting to breathe every day does take a mental toll. While this was going on, a middle-aged woman kept coming up to me at church, and saying in an arrogant valley girl accent, “*Are youuu okkaaaayy?!?*” I knew in my spirit she was judging me based on what she saw. I had no intention on “*explaining myself*” to be judged by her differently, because then I’d be labeled as “*the sick girl to feel sorry for*.” I felt like she put me in a lose-lose situation. Shortly after she started doing this, I noticed her row of church friends started acting very strangely toward me. Some asked like her if I was ok, they would stare at me then avoid looking at me. I prayed about it, and didn’t let it bother me. I kept walking in love, not letting it steal my joy, and kept my peace not telling anyone else. About year and a half into her “*Are youuu okkaaaayy?!?*” Ministry an older lady came over to me and spilled the story. She did the same, make sure I was ok, and then the truth came rolling out of her mouth about the middle-aged woman. She thought she was more spiritual than me, and I was, according to her, faking crying and laughing for attention. It’s not like it happened every week but she was honed in on “*fixing me*.” She decided that God put it on her heart to fix my problems, even though she never got past asking if I was ok and saying how we needed to talk before running away. After this older lady openly judged me as being mentally well, while she was out of line, she did stop this lady from approaching me. But during this period of time, **the Lord healed me of the heart attacks, my family member is alive and well, and the Lord healed me of other ailments while I grew in the spirit and my giftings**. I kept focused on the important things in life, the Lord and His Work. I had the understanding that when she approached me “*to minister*,” the love of God on me and the Holy Spirit stopped her and protected me.

A couple months had passed, and this middle-aged woman went up front for prayer after service. I was at the front, and heard her cry how she found her son was using tarot cards. I minded my own business and just prayed for her on and off. A few months passed again, and while I was praying for someone else at my house, the Lord gave me the full understanding of what happened. When this woman looked at me, she accused me. As a result, she labeled me, judged me, and decided what action should be carried out. **She took the place of God!** We don’t look at situations this way, so it was shocking to me. Then the Lord brought to me that the spirit of divination went to her son instead of her. The spirit of divination isn’t just fortunate telling like we think, because of the situation with Paul in Acts. If you look up the definition in Greek or even English, it’s a god-like spirit and takes on all the rolls of God. Now her son is fortune telling and contacting demons, because of what she did. Funny, because I remember her up front in the church playing the victim, “*I did all the right things...*” I am well aware that I only know these things because of maturing in love and prayer.

I shared this story for a couple reasons. First the spirit of divination, we don't really think of it as taking on ALL the rolls of God. This story gives us a better insight into why Jesus taught us not to judge in **Matthew 7:1-6** NKJV.

Verses 1-2 say,

"¹Judge not, that you be not judged. ²For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

If we judge that way, we would be sitting in God's seat, and acting in place of God. It's like saying, "*Step aside God, I got this.*" That's why we *would* be judged, we'd be acting in place of God and like a divination demon. That's what satan wants; God to step aside so he can be the accuser, judge, and executioner. **Let's always be aware of this behavior in our lives and those around us.**

Back to the story, this person was walking in love and received the understanding of the gossip's story and motives. As they continued on in love and maturing, God gave them peace that surpassed just the understanding, a spiritual understanding that's valuable for life. Not just to this person, but to us as well. That's **the peace of God**, back to Philippians 4:7, **which surpasses (exceeds or outdoes) all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus**. How through Christ Jesus? Through accepting Jesus as Lord and operating out of His Love, God is love and Jesus is love, and then keeping His peace in your life. Do you think this person has a completely guarded heart and mind knowing all this information? YES! I would assume they wouldn't *feel* like a victim or even want anything to do with gossiping back or defending themselves knowing the mess she created in her own life.

Here is one more example of guarding hearts and minds. Did you ever see Christians that lost a child on the news and they start talking about forgiving the murderer and few even ask the judge to go easy on the murderer? Yes! That is the fruit of peace operating in their lives! **To get that level of peace that is guarding their mind and heart, they practice love and forgiveness, joy, and peace.** They have been truly practicing what the Word says! Other Christians forgive, but shout a message to the murderer, "*I hope you rot in hell.*" No fruit! Again, we're allowed to fruit inspect, not judge how they *should* react to a situation. But the difference that we can see is **peace that surpasses all understanding**. Not just love in operation, peace is a reflection of maturing in love and joy.

Does everyone understand the difference between understanding through love, and surpassed understanding with guarded heart and mind as a result of peace?

Back to **Philippians 4:7-8**, Paul goes on to tell us **HOW to activate this peace. Meditate or think on good and blessed things only**. Don't meditate on the current state of the economy, the news, what the doctors said, gossip, evil done to you, how you don't like someone, or anything else contrary to this scripture. **As we talked about already, our minds act like an unruly two-year-old that we can't spank!** It's a process to change your mind completely, and tell your mind what it will and won't think on. But it's well worth it in the end to have complete peace, shalom, in your mind at all times.

James 3:7-8 NKJV

⁷For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. ⁸But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

Sounds like a preview of a horror documentary, "*No man can tame this wild beast full of deadly poison! Many brave men have tried, all have failed*" All joking aside, you'll never see this scripture the same again.

Luke 6:45 NKJV

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

We know the ground is the heart and the heart the ground, and James expounded that we can't tame what's in our heart. Jesus says in the previous **verse, Luke 6:44**, "**For every tree is known by its own fruit.**" Now we have a bigger picture. Producing the Fruit of the Spirit is what will cause the tongue to be tame. Better said, God's Character flowing through us will tame the tongue.

People sometimes miss understand the taming of the tongue and **think it's about holding the tongue**. I've heard it said through the years, *"I just tell people off in my head."* It's not about *"holding your tongue,"* it's about not thinking that thought to begin with because you're walking in love, keeping your joy, and protecting your peace. Yes, it's in the Old Testament to hold your tongue.

Psalms 34:12-14 NKJV

¹²**Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good? ¹³Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. ¹⁴Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.**

We have to remember they *didn't* have the Holy Spirit inside them, so they had to hold their tongue. They had things in the law, like eye for eye, because they couldn't love like we can. They couldn't handle forgiveness like we can. But still this scripture reveals the secret to long life, for us New Testament readers, keep your love ground from evil and growing deceit, depart from evil as in live a righteous lifestyle, **SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT. If you want to live long, that's the answer**; not constant prayer, constant hoping, or constant quoting scriptures. Back to the heart and what John said...

1 John 3:15 NKJV

Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

Please write this down, the New Testament version is great to teach children, especially young and old children, like us too!

Old Testament: If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all.

New Testament: If you can't think anything nice, don't think anything at all.

The reason why hate in someone's heart is equivalent to murder is another study. The really quick answer is, life and death are in the power of the tongue (Proverbs 18:21). Hate issues death curses against a person, that's why the Lord is trying to warn us through John. Your words are more powerful than what you realize. You have the power to bless and to curse. **If we want long life and peace, instead of sickness and early death** (as we just read in Psalms 34:12-14), **tame the poisonous beast by walking in the spirit**.

Colossians 3:14-15

¹⁴**But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. ¹⁵And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.**

Put on love, it will protect you from sickness. Again, we already have love inside us. Think of it this way, you can't put on a jacket that you don't own, right? Take it out of the closet and wear it. Then Paul tells us to ***"let the peace of God rule in your heart."*** The Word keeps making it clear, we have to choose to use it. Push your flesh back, let your spirit man make the call to choose peace. Remember what Jesus told the disciples in the garden? *"The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."* Yes, He said it after He talked about prayer but your spirit knows God. Your spirit contacts God, not your soul or your body. Your spirit gets excited, *"Wooohooo let's love everyone! Let's dance and sing joyfully. Let's not let a thing in the world trouble us."* Your flesh answers, *"Settle down. I'm mad at a few people. We follow along with songs, but we aren't dancing... maybe 20 years and 20 pounds ago! And besides I'm perfectly peaceful when I'm alone watching tv and no one is bothering me."*

How do we put peace into practice?

Proverbs 15:1-2 NKJV

¹**A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. ²The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.**

We tend to think of fools and foolishness as idiots, unwise is a better word. We all have been mistreated and called names. We have all gotten bad news. We have all been in some type of trouble. But like I keep saying, practice when it's easy, so when difficulty comes, you'll already be trained.

We're going to **do some training right now.**

(Tell some short real-life situations that are amusing to break up the seriousness and leave on a lighter note. There are situations below if you need mine.)

We're going to go over some REAL scenarios that happened to a man named Jimmy from New York City.

Situation: Grocery Incident

Jimmy was walking on a sidewalk with 3 big grocery bags, one bag containing eggs, under scaffolding. A man that didn't fit by Jimmy and his groceries was about to enter the scaffolding (narrow path) and force his way past Jimmy walking the opposite direction. Instead of waiting 5 seconds, he went for it. *"Don't do it, bro. Don't do it, bro. DON'T DO IT!"* *BAM!* The man slams into Jimmy and his groceries. Jimmy, mad about the eggs, drops the groceries, and pushes the man very hard to the ground. Jimmy being a construction worker, I'm sure it hurt. He steps over the man and continues walking off while complaining how he was warned.

What could he have they both done to keep the peace? ... Is that how you'd really behave, or is that love speaking but you know your flesh would do the same or at least want to?

Situation: Rude Bus Driver

The unwritten rule of riding busses in some bigger cities is that people getting on the bus wait for those who are getting off to exit first. The bus stops and Jimmy waits a couple seconds. No one is moving so Jimmy proceeds to get on. As he's stepping up, a lady gets up. The bus driver proceeds to yell at Jimmy. He yells back how she didn't move until he was half way in. The next stop, a similar incident happens, and the bus driver yells very loudly again. The third stop, a lady of the same race gets on before a person exiting. The bus driver says nothing. Jimmy asks why he doesn't yell at her. He shouts for him to shut up. The next stop, Jimmy gets off the bus. The bus driver tells him to never disrespect him on his bus ever again. Before Jimmy walks away, he tells the bus driver, *"Grow up, you're just racist!"* Jimmy crosses the street. The bus driver opens a tiny window and starts to yell at him. Jimmy turns back and yells, *"SOMEBODY CALL THE WAAAMMMBULANCE! WWWHHHAAAAAAYYA!"* Everybody on the bus starts laughing, and the bus driver shouts, *"Don't you talk to me like that. I'll kill you!"* Jimmy shouts, *"Look at that big head yelling through a tiny window,"* and then yells a few more times, *"WWWAAAAYA! WWWAAAYA! WWWAAAYA!"*

Why are you laughing? Is it because your flesh likes it? Where did Jimmy go wrong in this mess? What if you snapped back at the driver not yelling at the last person getting on, how would you turn the situation around to keep peace?

Situation: Lunch Meat Demands

Jimmy walked into his favorite shop for some *"cold cuts,"* deli meat. The new employee was a woman wearing a woman power shirt. He asks for spicy salami, and she pretends not to hear him. He was the only customer, so he asked the woman if she was ignoring him, to which she continued to ignore him. Angry at the lady, he starts asking her why she keeps *"fat ignoring him."* Refusing to acknowledge him, he told her to shave off her mustache, wear some deodorant, quit acting stupid, and maybe men will like her. She continued to ignore him. Like a kid, he kept asking for the spicy salami so he could leave. Two women walked in, and she spun around and asked him, *"What can I get for you?"* Unfortunately, he replies, *"Ohhhh now you want to wait on me when these two women walked in here, but not 5 mins ago when you was ignoring me. Before you was running around, spinning, and kicking your leg like Chris Farley as the fat Lunch Lady. You know what I want!"*



It's New York City, but I used this one because how should Jimmy have responded being completely ignored because he is a man? (Suggestion: Be polite and leave her with a good experience with men. Ma'am, I'm sorry you're having a bad day. No one is here, is there something I can pray with you about?)

Jesus said to turn the other cheek. If you can't keep your mouth shut in general, there's no way you'd be able to turn the other cheek. I know, we all want that to be figurative! Some of us would turn the other cheek just to throw a bigger one back. Just look straight ahead and shake your head in a not-me motion. Moving on...

Sometimes we have a tendency to blurt out what we're thinking. Not blurting things out is the 9th fruit, self-control, and the last one listed, but... we were looking at **Proverbs 15:1_{NKJV} A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.** Just going by that scripture alone, we can avoid many problems in life. Sure, our flesh hates, yes hates, to be disrespected, dishonored, corrected, and put down. But we have to realize, we're exchanging our peace, joy, and possibly even planting/watering bad seeds of offense when we engage in fights, especially senseless avoidable fights.

The amount of peace we have operating in our lives depends on us. Yes, you can pray for peace for yourself and others in time of need or emergency; but having the fruit of peace is what we're talking about for this study. **You're not going to be able to rely on living a peaceful life as a result of "God give me, give me, give me..."** It's not that I believe, or see in scripture, God has a limited supply of peace to give you. The truth is that you will never be able to hold down peace in your life without love and joy. **God will give someone peace, but 5 mins later when a person is replaying how someone treated them or what scary situation they face, that peace is gone.** Ten mins later, they're asking God for peace again, and lose it 5 mins later again. Those cycles just continue. They ask for prayer and think God isn't giving it to them, when in reality they aren't holding it. We all have to fight that battle to tell our mind, *"NO! I will not think about that again."* The next best course of action is to pray over the person that wronged you or the bad situation you face. *"Lord, please send laborers into their path to share Your love with them, and the truth of Jesus. Whatever hurt that they have inside that's causing them to be this way, please heal them. Thank You."* If it's a job you need, pray for that. If it's healing you need, read healing scriptures and pray. After that, claim a blessing! Whatever you're believing God for, *"Lord, I want to claim a blessing for..."* and then tell the Lord what you want. **What are you believing God for, so you never enter into that storm again?** Better health, better job, move to a new place (if you're in a big city with crime/fighting)? Keep your focus on scripture and the blessing, not the problem to move forward and grow, so you never go backward or to that bad place again. Let's look at scripture concerning this...

Matthew 5:9-10_{NKJV}

⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

When you're a peacemaker, and persecuted for just existing, you're blessed. Blessed means happy and favored. If you're being persecuted for being a woman or a man, then you're being persecuted for righteousness' sake. If you're being kind and persecuted for nothing wrong, it's still for righteousness' sake. According to Jesus, you're favored. Favored people get favors and gifts, right? Step up in your higher place that you have earned through producing fruit. When those thoughts come back, *"My boss disrespected me in front of everyone..."* Swing the Sword, the Word, *"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, and so I'm being favored for a promotion."*

John 14:27 _{NKJV}

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.

The same peace that Jesus had, He left it with us. It wasn't just for the disciples. We see a great example of this in Paul and everything he went through. Can you imagine having peace after a poisonous snake bites you immediately after a shipwreck and swimming to shore for your life? Think about it. How many people would flip out at that point and scream, *"I had it! I can't take it anymore!"* Some Christians would cuss and throw things. Truthfully, we would *all* meltdown without peace fruit. Jesus tells us how to keep this peace that has been given to us, ***"LET NOT your heart be troubled.... (or) afraid."*** That means refusing to be afraid or worried about

problems including stress will keep your heart/ground at peace. You might think, that's not easy! It is if you practice. Hitting a fast-flying curve ball with a stick isn't easy, unless you practice. Running 3 miles isn't considered long to those that practice running. Reading a good 800-page book is exciting to those that practice reading. Cooking new recipes for a big holiday meal is exciting for those that practice cooking. Keep practicing peace!

Learning what we can change is never an exciting topic, but when you're in a bad storm of life **there is nothing like having sweet peace from Heaven with a quiet mind and being able to sleep.** I've been through storms with and without peace. No one's behavior against me or troubles of this world is worth losing my peace and my sound mind. Anyone who knows what I am talking about can agree.

Homework!

- Pay attention to your thought life. What's running through your head all day?
- If you can't think anything nice, don't think anything at all.
- Meditate (think on): Psalm 34:12-14 NKJV ¹²Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good? ¹³Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. ¹⁴Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.
- Go back through past situations, where you were persecuted for being righteousness' sake, and didn't claim a blessing; claim that blessing!

Prayer Points:

- Lord, please remind us that as we go through the week to choose and cultivate peace
 - Please remind us to keep a check on our mind and what thoughts we've been thinking on throughout the day
 - We want to be so filled with peace, that You must expand our ability to hold peace, and we're doing nothing but overflowing peace into other people's lives.
 - Please give us the revelational knowledge of *"peace that surpasses all understanding"*
 - We love You, we want to manifest Your Character, and experience all the peace Jesus left us, not just a small portion.
 - Thank You for giving us these studies, and helping us grow.
- In Jesus Name, Amen.