

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

“Peace”

We know from Galatians 5:22 that peace is a fruit of the Spirit. We typically think of peace as the absence of strife. But this is only one facet of it. The Old Testament word for peace is shalom. It means peace, completeness, welfare, health, prosperity, and wholeness. It is a holistic term encompassing all of our being.

In our culture, we typically ask, “How are you?” in greeting one another. The typical Hebrew greeting was “Peace to you” or “Shalom.” Jesus greeted the disciples in this fashion after the resurrection.

John 20:19-22

19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. NIV

It should be obvious from this passage what was needed for their peace, the Holy Spirit. The importance of maintaining and having peace is seen in the continuation of the greeting “Shalom” in most of the New Testament epistles, which typically start with “grace and peace be unto you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” Even the book of Revelation contains this type of greeting.

Rev 1:4-6

4 John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne,

5 and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood,

6 and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father-to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. NIV

The seven spirits before His throne is the Holy Spirit of God. Bringing peace is a redemptive quality of God. This is exemplified in His name Jehovah-Shalom, the Lord our Peace. This name was used of God by Gideon when he realized he had seen God face to face and did not die. This shows us that the essence of true peace is not being at war with God!

In the New Testament, our Heavenly Father is called the God of peace at least six times [Rom 15:33; 16:20; 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 4:9; 1 Thes 5:23; and Heb 13:20]. The Lord Jesus Christ is called the Lord of peace [2 Thes 3:16], the Prince of peace [Isa 9:6], and by typical association, the King of peace [Heb 7:2]. The Holy Spirit does not contradict this character of the Godhead, for He is the Spirit that brings us peace.

John 14:26-28

26 But the Counselor, 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.

28 "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. NIV

Jesus promised them the coming of the Holy Spirit and then said that He would leave them with His peace. This foreshadows for us the episode in chapter 20 when He told them to receive the Holy Spirit. He also told them to be glad because He was going away. Why?

John 16:5-11

5 "Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'

6 Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief.

7 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. **Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.**

8 When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:

9 in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me;

10 in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer;

11 and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. NIV

If He had not gone away, the Comforter would not have come to us and it would not have been possible for His peace to reside in us! Without the Holy Spirit's convicting peace, it would be impossible to know peace.

Rom 8:6-9

6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. NKJV

Without the Holy Spirit, we are doomed to be carnally minded. But since the Spirit of God dwells in us, our minds can be controlled by the Spirit, as the NIV puts it, and we can enjoy life and peace!

Eph 2:11-18

11 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)-

12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,
15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace,
16 and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.
17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.
18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. NIV

Hostility existed in two directions, vertically and horizontally. Horizontal peace is not possible without first having peace vertically. Because we both have peace with God, we can have peace with each other. What makes this possible? We have unity because we all access the Father by one Spirit! The Spirit of God is always at work to reconcile us to the purposes of God that we not die. The more we live and follow after God's ways, the more we become prone to live in peace with one another.

Rom 14:17-19

17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,
18 because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.
19 Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. NIV

Again we see the same order, pleasing to God and then approved my men. Why is the kingdom of God righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit?

- Righteousness in the Holy Spirit – because He convicts of sin
- Peace in the Holy Spirit – because He convicts of righteousness
- Joy in the Holy Spirit – because He convicts of judgment

The Holy Spirit continually convicts us to live righteously so that we might enjoy peace with God. Any unrighteous living is enmity with God and thus produces conflict, not peace.

I think we can gain a greater revelation of the importance of peace to our lives by examining its opposites.

A View of Peace from Its Opposites

Eccl 3:8b “a time for war and a time for peace.” NIV

Again, it would seem obvious that if we are at war, we cannot be at peace. But this deals with the paradox of peace, which we are going to discuss a little bit later.

Mark 5:22-34

22 Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet
23 and pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live."
24 So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him.

- 25 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years.
26 She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse.
27 When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak,
28 because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed."
29 Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.
30 At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"
31 "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"
32 But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it.
33 Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth.
34 He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." NIV

She came to the Lord trembling with fear. She had been sick for many years. He tells her to go in peace. This she can do because she had been freed from her suffering. When we are in fear of physical torment, we are not experiencing peace (or at least, not the full measure of it). One major aspect of being at peace is being healed.

Jer 33:6

Behold, I will bring it health and healing; I will heal them and reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth. NKJV

1 Cor 14:33

For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. NKJV

Confusion and disorganization work against peace. The Holy Spirit does not bring confusion into our lives. He brings peace. If a worship service is confused, it is not being led by the Spirit.

Luke 12:51-53

- 51 Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division.
52 From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three.
53 They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law." NIV

Here we see that division is not peace. Peace is unity and a oneness of spirit. But wait a minute, this is Jesus, the Prince of peace, saying that He came to bring division. What is this all about? This is the Paradox of Peace.

The Paradox of Peace-

Simply put, the paradox of peace is this: to be at peace, we must be at war. The people in Jesus' day were looking for a cultural, social, political peace. He had to dispossess them of their

dilution. Once their banner was tied to His, they would be at war with the world. This paradox would cause the division of families, cultures, and even nations.

You see, only one peace really matters: peace with God.

Rom 5:1

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, **we have peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ, NIV

If we don't have peace with God, any other peace treaty we make will ultimately not matter. And the problem is that we make peace treaties with the enemy all the time. Every time we indulge our flesh in something that God forbids (be it food, foolishness, or unforgiveness), we are trying to make a peace treaty with the devil. It will gain us no ground.

Isa 53:5

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. NIV

For there to be peace, justice has to be carried out. Sin had to be punished. His punishment for our sin brought us peace. God has not changed His manner of bringing peace.

Heb 12:7-11

7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?

8 If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.

9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!

10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.

11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. NIV

God's discipline in our lives yields peace for us because it teaches us to walk in holiness.

James 4:4

You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. NIV

Again, this is the paradox of peace. To be at peace, we must be at war. We can make a peace treaty with the world and find ourselves at war with God, or we can make peace with God and find ourselves at war with the world. It is in our best interest to pursue peace with God.

A Life without Peace-

Rom 3:9-18

- 9 What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin.
- 10 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;
- 11 there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.
- 12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."
- 13 "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips."
- 14 "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."
- 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;
- 16 ruin and misery mark their ways,
- 17 and the way of peace they do not know."
- 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes." NIV

This is the character of those who are at war with God. They remain under sin. They have no righteousness or understanding. They do not seek after God, indeed have turned away from Him. They are worthless and do no good. Through deceit, cursing, and bitter words, their tongues spread death. They are quick to do violence. The path of their lives is marked by ruin and misery. They have no fear of God whatsoever.

Our pursuit of the way of peace would be just the opposite. We need to be saved from sin and become righteous. We need to seek after God and be fruitful. We need to do good. We need to speak the truth and bless. We need to be forgiving and gentle. We need to fear God, which is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge.

How are we to be fruitful?

2 Peter 1:2-11

- 2 Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.
- 3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.
- 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.
- 5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge;
- 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness;
- 7 and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.
- 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, **they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**
- 9 But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.
- 10 Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. **For if you do these things, you will never fall,**

11 and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. NIV

We can know Jesus and be ineffective and unproductive if we don't grow in Him. Goodness must be added to faith, and knowledge to goodness, and self-control to knowledge, and perseverance to self-control, and godliness to perseverance, and brotherly kindness to godliness, and the love of God to brotherly kindness if we are going to bear fruit that remains.

How to Walk in Peace-

1. Identify with Christ

Gal 6:12-16

12 Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ.

13 Not even those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your flesh.

14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

15 Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; **what counts is a new creation.**

16 **Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule,** even to the Israel of God. NIV

2. Be United in Love

Eph 4:1-3

1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

2 **Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.**

3 **Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.** NIV

3. Pray

Phil 4:6-7

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, 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

4. Walk in the Wisdom of God

James 3:13-18

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

14 But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth.

15 Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil.

16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

18 Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness. NIV

The Result-

Rom 16:20

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. NIV

Ultimate peace will eventually mean the total victory over the enemy. This victory has been won, which is why we can exercise peace today. But when the total victory is absolutely imposed, then we shall live in absolute peace. Amen!