

Son of Peace

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Introduction

When the Lord Jesus Christ commissioned His apostles to go out and preach the good news of His Kingdom, He told them:

- ✠ “Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. And when you go into a household, greet it. If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you” (Matthew 10: 11-13)
- ✠ “But whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house’. And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you” (Luke 10: 5-6)

Don’t you think that these verses make us wonder who is worthy of peace and who is not? Who is a son of peace and who is not? If I am not worthy, and we should humbly accept that, how can I become a son of peace? Let us answer these inquiries and more through our answer to these ten questions:

1. What is peace?
2. Who is the source of peace?
3. When and how did peace start?
4. Why did we lose our peace?
5. How can we restore our lost peace?
6. What are the fruits of peacemaking?
7. What is the meaning of St. Paul’s commandment “live peaceably with all men”?
8. Did St. Paul and righteous people live peaceably with all men?
9. How can we then live peaceably with all men?
10. What are the ways of living peaceably with God and men?

1. What is peace?

Peace is inner contentment and joy regardless of our circumstances. Peace is tranquility. It is not worrying about the future, not regretting the past and not fretting over all the problems that occupy our minds every day. Peace is trust that our lives are not just a random series of events, but instead perfectly planned from beginning to end. True peace can only come from God and a personal relationship with Him. Material possessions and human relationships can be pleasant and bring us happiness, but they cannot give us true peace.

When everything is going our way, it is very easy to feel peaceful. If we are healthy and our family is healthy then we feel peace. If our finances are in order and we feel like we are not in want of anything then we feel peace. If a difficult problem is solved in our lives, we feel peace. **The truth is that the peace we “feel” when things are going our way is not really peace at all, it is happiness.** We feel happy when happy things happen to us, but peace is something on the inside that is not shaken by our external circumstances.

So, peace is something we should experience always, not just when we do not have any problems. It is the foundation of our daily life, in dealing with people, in treaties between countries, and in greeting one another like what St. Paul used to say in his epistles, e.g.:

✠ “To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 1:7)

✠ “To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:2-3)

Very often our lives are not so calm and ordered. We all face very difficult situations that we must deal with everyday. We can fail our tests, lose our health, lose our friends, lose our money, lose our jobs, and we can even lose our lives and the lives of those we love. In these situations, it is not so easy to have peace.

Also, many people leave God and go after their own desires and lusts to fulfill some ungodly and wicked dreams, fantasies and earthly fame. They later cry out saying ‘where is God’. The Lord answers these people saying:

✠ “‘There is no peace,’ says the Lord, ‘for the wicked’” (Isaiah 48:22)

They live in deception, illusion and imagination:

✠ “Saying, ‘Peace, peace!’ When there is no peace” (Jeremiah 6: 14)

I just wonder about why these people blame God for every mass murder, massacre, disasters, etc. They took God out of their lives, their schools, their judiciary systems, their financial systems, etc. and then ask ‘where is God’ when a disaster happens.

I really wonder:

1. How could there be peace if man separated himself from the source of his life?
2. How could there be peace if man is in enmity and strife with God who created him?
3. How could there be peace if man is enslaved in the hands of a strong adversary, which is Satan?
4. How could there be peace if man is destroyed by sin and he fears the future and is ignorant of his eternity?

You know, I found the answer in the following underlined verses:

✠ “Have You utterly rejected Judah? Has Your soul loathed Zion? Why have You stricken us so that there is no healing for us? We looked for peace, but there was no good; and for the time of healing, and there was trouble. We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness and the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against You” (Jeremiah 14:19-20)

So, sinning against God is the answer. Being away from God make us live in wickedness and iniquity forcing us to lose our peace because:

✠ “‘But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace,’ Says my God, ‘for the wicked’” (Isaiah 57:20-21)

Why would God make such a difficult statement? Simply because:

- † “There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit. The poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Romans 3:10-18)

So, there are many reasons for losing peace but there is also many ways of getting it back.

2. Who is the source of peace?

If we search all books, literatures, dictionaries, bound collections of all sorts of media nowadays; we will never find an answer to this question except in the Holy Bible for we see God as the God of peace:

- † “Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen” (Romans 15:33)
- † “And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen” (Romans 16:20)
- † “The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you” (Philippians 4:9)
- † “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:23)
- † “Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen” (Hebrews 13:20-21)

The Lord Jesus Christ was also called the Prince of Peace in Isaiah’s prophecy:

- † “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this” (Isaiah 9:6-7)

He was also called the Lord of peace:

- † “Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all” (2 Thessalonians 3:16)

And since our God is the God and Lord of peace, His peace will surpass our understanding:

- † “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7)

Why is that?

✠ “For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation” (Ephesians 2:14)

Therefore, God has offered us an unprecedented peace to stand against all tribulations; as He promised:

✠ “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” (John 14:27)

3. When and how did peace start?

When our Lord Jesus Christ was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary and became man, He reconciled us with the Father and peace came to the world as all the angelic host chanted saying:

✠ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men” (Luke 2:14)

St. Peter, while preaching Cornelius and his house, spoke of the incarnated Logos (the Word) as the message of peace to the whole world saying:

✠ “The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ -- He is Lord of all” (Acts 10:36)

And since our Lord Jesus Christ is the God of peace, He was able to reconcile us to the Father through the shedding of His blood; as St. Paul said:

✠ “And by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross” (Colossians 1:20)

Why did God do all of this? Because we, by our own free will, separated ourselves from God and started enmity with Him? Our good loving God took it onto Himself to reconcile us to Him through His only begotten Son:

✠ “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

✠ “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Romans 5:10)

✠ “And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled” (Colossians 1:21)

Also, St. Paul says about our Lord Jesus Christ:

✠ “For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near” (Ephesians 2:14-17)

We must understand that through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, we were reconciled with God and through our faith in Him, we always have peace with Him:

✠ “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1)

So, now after what the Lord have done for us, we must acknowledge the fact that there is no peace for anyone who does not accept the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior and as such we can bring forth the fruits the Holy Spirit:

✠ “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23)

4. Why did we lose our peace?

Sin created enmity between God and man because sin, in its real meaning, is an act against God’s Law and is defined as lawlessness by St. John:

✠ “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness” (1 John 3:4)

And since it is us, humans, who committed sin, it made us fear God and run away from Him:

✠ “And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ So he said, ‘I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself’” (Genesis 3:8-10)

Since then, we did not live in peace or even have the feeling of peace and security. However, God in His sovereign love kindness did not leave us in our humiliations and tribulations but embraced us with His love and grace to come back to Him and find peace and live peacefully; as He commanded us through St. Paul:

✠ “Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you” (2 Corinthians 13:11)

How can we be sure of this peace? Simply because,

✠ “He makes peace in His high places” (Job 25:2)

5. How can we restore our lost peace?

Having peace with God is the key to restoring our personal peace; which we can achieve through the following:

1. Knowing God

Yes, you read it right. To really know God and have relationship with Him as a Father and a companion is the way to having peace in our lives. It is written:

✠ “Now acquaint yourself with Him, and be at peace; thereby good will come to you” (Job 22:21)

2. Reconciling with God

We always feel awful when bad things happen to us and we bring it up on God. We forget something very important. Please think about this. We are like small children, not understanding

what is going on around us. And God is our loving Father who does what is best for us no matter how it makes us feel. For instance, a small child can see a lit candle and want to grab hold of it. The flame looks nice playing in the wind, so the child reaches for it. The boy's parents, however, know that the candle can burn the child so they take the candle away before he can reach it and the child begins to cry. Did the parents do a bad thing or a good thing? Of course we would all agree that the parents love their son, want the best for him, and did the right thing by taking the candle away. So if we then, as adults, can understand such a simple example, why do we cry when God takes away the candle we are trying to reach for?

We too often reach for candles without knowing it. We see something that seems very pleasant and nice so we try to take hold of it, but God does not want us to have it. Instead, He takes it away and we cry and wonder how He could do such a thing. Remember, what the young boy thought. He too thought he was reaching for something good and he didn't understand that he was going to get hurt. We also do not understand. We don't have vision to see into our futures and know what is good for us and what is bad, but we don't need to! We've got God doing that for us already, all we have to do is reconcile with Him and trust Him and He will take care of our whole lives as it is written:

- ✠ “For You are my hope, O Lord God. You are my trust from my youth. By You I have been upheld from birth. You are He who took me out of my mother's womb. My praise shall be continually of You” (Psalm 71:5-6)
- ✠ “The Lord shall preserve you from all evil. He shall preserve your soul. The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore” (Psalm 121:7-8)

This is why we are to have peace.

The world also reaches for many candles, and God just lets them. So instead of being angry or disappointed with God for not giving us what we want, we should praise His name and thank Him for His unbreakable promise that all things that happen to us are for our good. All what we need to do is to follow St. Paul's commandment:

- ✠ “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20)

3. Perfect love and obedience to God's word

We might not understand God's plan, but we should still have faith that God is in control of all the circumstances of our lives, as it is written:

- ✠ “My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands. For length of days and long life and peace they will add to you. Let not mercy and truth forsake you, bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. And so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6)

We simply don't understand many of the things He does, but we should accept through faith and perfect love and obedience to His word that He is working all situations for our good:

- ✠ “Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble” (Psalm 119:165)
- ✠ “Oh, that you had heeded My commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea” (Isaiah 48:18)

4. Life of meekness and humility

We pursue peace by pursuing God, and when we find Him, He will give us not only peace, but also love, kindness, faith, hope, generosity, strength, comfort, discipline, humility, authority, and purpose. He is the source of all good things and humility is a key to our peace:

- ✠ “But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace” (Psalm 37:11)

5. Pleasing God in all our ways

The big step is denying our will and saying, “Let Your will be done.” It is one thing to concede to another that knows more than we do, but it is quite another thing to change the way we think so that we no longer have to concede to God, but that we desire His will above our own. The next step is not to deny our will any longer but to make our will and God’s will one and the same. St. Paul says,

- ✠ “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2)

So, as we grow and our mind is renewed we begin to desire the same things God desires. He wants to conform us to His likeness if we let Him. In doing so, He changes our ways from focusing on the things of the world to focusing on the things of God. The blessings of making our ways follow God’s ways are numerous; as the Bible tells us:

- ✠ “Depart from evil and do good. Seek peace and pursue it” (Psalm 34:14)

6. Unconditional trust in God

The most important step in acquiring peace is to trust God unconditionally that He is doing what is best for us regardless of how it makes us feel. We must place our focus and trust completely in Him as it is written:

- ✠ “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You” (Isaiah 26:3).

7. Doing good deeds

Again, the only way to have peace is to have a right relationship with God. Peace will come naturally as a result,

- ✠ “Let him turn away from evil and do good. Let him seek peace and pursue it” (1 Peter 3:11)

St. Peter saw the Lord Jesus Christ walking on the water and said,

- ✠ “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water” (Matthew 14:28)

St. Peter had great faith that he could do what no other human being has ever done...walk on water. He saw for himself the power of God as the Lord Jesus walked on the water. However,

when St. Peter began to look at the wind and the waves around him, he realized that no human can walk on water. He doubted and began to sink. When we focus on God, we too can walk on water. We can do things that we never dreamed possible, but when we doubt and begin to focus on our problems we sink into despair, worry, and even panic.

God is a problem solver, He allows problems in our lives to teach us His ways, and He also provides solutions to our problems once we have learned what He wants us to learn. All that we need then is to do good and He will solve our problems and reward us for enduring all tribulations and crowns us with peace, glory and honor:

✠ “Glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good” (Romans 2:10)

6. What are the fruits of peacemaking?

1. Joy

✠ “Counselors of peace have joy” (Proverbs 12:20)

2. Security

✠ “Better is a dry morsel with quietness, than a house full of feasting with strife” (Proverbs 17:1)

3. Assurance of sonship to God

✠ “Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9)

4. Blessings with peace

✠ “The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace” (Psalm 29:11)

5. Everlasting rewards

✠ “For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17)

6. Comfort to ill souls

The Lord who offers forgiveness and all spiritual blessings, can also offer peace to the weak and sinful soul. For example, He did not only say to the sinful woman:

✠ “Your sins are forgiven” (Luke 7:48)

But also comforted her saying:

✠ “Go in peace” (Luke 7:50)

Similarly, when the woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came behind the Lord Jesus in the crowd and touched His garment, He did not only heal her but also comforted her saying:

✠ “Go in peace” (Mark 5:34)

So, the Lord gave peace, still gives and will always give to those who trust in Him and let Him rule in their heart:

✠ “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful” (Colossians 3L15)

7. What is the meaning of St. Paul’s commandment “live peaceably with all men”?

Some people ask about the meaning of the following verse:

✠ “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18)

They ask: Is it possible to live in perfect peace with all people? Did St. Paul and all other righteous people live peaceably with all men?

First, we know that St. Paul suffered a lot in his ministry. He summarized his sufferings and tribulations saying:

✠ “From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren” (2 Corinthians 11:24-26)

Even worse when people vowed to kill him:

✠ “More than forty of them lie in wait for him, men who have bound themselves by an oath that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him; and now they are ready, waiting for the promise from you” (Acts 23:21)

Also, the Lord warned us about people misunderstanding our preaching of the good news to all mankind saying:

✠ “You will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved” (Matthew 10:22)

✠ “They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service” (John 16:2)

The Lord set up Himself an example for us who suffer and will keep suffering for His name:

✠ “For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry” (Luke 23:31)

8. So, now, did St. Paul and righteous people live peaceably with all men?

The answer is NO. Let me provide few examples.

A) The Lord Jesus Christ could not live peaceably with all men

The Lord Jesus faced an unbelievable resistance from the high priests, the scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Lawyers and many others; as the Bible tells us:

✠ “The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ But wisdom is justified by her children” (Matthew 11:19)

- † “Now when the Pharisees heard it they said: This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons” (Matthew 12:24)
- † “Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in His words” (Mark 12:13)
- † “Then one of the lawyers answered and said to Him: Teacher, by saying these things You reproach us also” (Luke 11:45)
- † “For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them: My Father has been working until now, and I have been working. Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God” (John 5:16-18)
- † “The people answered and said: You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You” (John 7:20)
- † “Then the Jews answered and said to Him: Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon... Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death... Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by” (John 8:48-59)
- † “Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him” (John 10:31)

And the Lord could not make peace with them because of their wickedness and their ferocious attack and hence He explained to them that:

- † “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him” (John 1:11)

And He started to rebuke them saying:

- † “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in ... Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.' Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? ... Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! ... Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. ...” (Matthew 23:13-36)
- † “Then one of the lawyers answered and said to Him: Teacher, by saying these things You reproach us also. And He said: Woe to you also, lawyers! For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them” (Luke 11:45-47)

These confrontations show how impossible it was to make peace with enemies of the Way, the Truth and the Life. No matter what the Lord said, they were still blind to the truth as the Lord

described them in the abovementioned verses. The Lord, out of His great love, went on to warn them with serious warnings:

- ✠ “Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He said to them: It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a den of thieves ... Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it” (Matthew 21:12-43)
- ✠ “Jesus answered and said to them: You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God” (Matthew 22:29)
- ✠ “Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers doing business. When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves: Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise! Then His disciples remembered that it was written: Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up” (John 2:13-17)

B) David the Prophet and King could not live peaceably with all men

David the humble and meek king whom God described saying:

- ✠ “I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will” (Acts 13:22)

David could not have peace with many people all his life starting from King Saul whom he served earnestly. Instead of being rewarded, the Bible tells us about how many times Saul searched for him and tried to kill him:

- ✠ “And he said: Why does my lord thus pursue his servant? For what have I done, or what evil is in my hand? Now therefore, please, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant: If the Lord has stirred you up against me, let Him accept an offering. But if it is the children of men, may they be cursed before the Lord, for they have driven me out this day from sharing in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, ‘Go, serve other gods.’ So now, do not let my blood fall to the earth before the face of the Lord. For the king of Israel has come out to seek a flea, as when one hunts a partridge in the mountains” (1 Samuel 26:18-20)

After this humble talk and describing himself as a flea, he still faced Saul's retaliation and said:

- ✠ “And David said in his heart: Now I shall perish someday by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape to the land of the Philistines; and Saul will despair of me, to seek me anymore in any part of Israel. So I shall escape out of his hand” (1 Samuel 27:1)

David also failed in making peace with his own son Absalom who followed the counsel of wicked people:

† “Then Absalom said to Ahithophel: Give counsel as to what we should do. And Ahithophel said to Absalom: Go in to your father’s concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; and all Israel will hear that you are abhorred by your father. Then the hands of all who are with you will be strong. So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the top of the house, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel” (2 Samuel 16:20-22)

And David expressed his failure to live peaceably with all men in one sad statement:

† “Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head. They are mighty who would destroy me, being my enemies wrongfully; though I have stolen nothing, I still must restore it” (Psalm 69:4)

C) Job the righteous could not live peaceably with all men

Job’s friends, who were supposed to comfort him, hurt him even more and accused him of sinning and wicked deeds, which led him to say:

† “Miserable comforters are you all” (Jobs 16:2)

Instead of feeling his physical and emotional pain, they continued the hurt to the extent that he said:

† “How long will you torment my soul, and break me in pieces with words? These ten times you have reproached me; You are not ashamed that you have wronged me” (Jobs 19:2-3)

Job couldn’t make peace with them until God rebuked them at the end in Job 42.

D) Many other righteous people could not live peaceably with all men

Many righteous people couldn’t make peace with all men like:

1. Noah the righteous who lived among wicked people and tried hard to persuade them to return from their evil way but they sadly didn’t listen to him till the time of the flood (Genesis 7).
2. Lot seemed to be joking to his sons-in-law when he told them about the angels who will burn Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19).
3. Joseph the righteous was sold by his brothers to the Ishmaelites as a slave (Genesis 37) and Potiphar’s wife accused him falsely of wanting to commit adultery with her (Genesis 39).
4. Naboth the Jezreelite (1 Kings 21) was killed by Jezebel and Ahab for wanting to keep his family’s vineyard.

9. How can we then live peaceably with all men?

St. Paul answers this question in Romans 12:18 by just two conditions: “If it is possible” and “as much as depends on you”. This means that making peace with people could be difficult; as we learn from the examples above. It could also be above our abilities. So, for example, what can a man do to someone who envies him for his righteousness or his wisdom or love of people to him or a special gift that God granted him? Should this man lose all of these great gifts and talents to make peace with that someone? This is impossible. To elaborate with a biblical

example: Could Joseph the righteous say ok; let me make peace with Potiphar's wife by committing adultery?

How did the church fathers deal with heresies and heretics? Did they say let us make peace with Arius, Eutyches, Nestorius, etc., and accept their heresies to avoid headache and confrontation. If they did, how would they answer God about their acceptance of false teachings?

Let us look at St. John the Beloved who spoke so much about the deep love of God and said:
✠ “And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:16)

When he was faced with people who wants to inject false doctrine into the church, he stood firm against these heresies and heretics and said:

✠ “If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds” (2 John 10-11)

Similarly, St. Paul who dedicated a full chapter about love in his first epistle to the Corinthians, Chapter 13, and said:

✠ “And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:2)

When he faced the heretics, he said:

✠ “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8-9)

Also, was it possible for our church saints like St. Athanasius, St. Cyril, St. Dioscorus, etc. to deceive the world with wrong doctrine for the sake of making peace with the heretics? Never! They could lose their eternity for such unacceptable excuse.

I wonder, what would you do when you have ungodly friends? Would you continue this friendship for the sake of making peace with your friends, or rather follow God's commandments that say:

✠ “Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits” (1 Corinthians 15:33)

✠ “But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner--not even to eat with such a person. For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore, put away from yourselves the evil person” (1 Corinthians 5:11-13)

10. What are the ways of living peaceably with God and man?

We must first understand that peace is “God-centered” through:

1. Inner contentment and joy regardless of our circumstances

2. Accepting what God has given you
3. Calm assurance and trust in God
4. Harmony with God and his plan for your life
5. Realizing that nothing “bad” happens to Christians except being separated from God.

We ought to learn that peace is not “Circumstance-centered”; meaning it is not:

1. Emotional happiness
2. Financial “security”
3. The end of a difficult problem

So, In order to have peace, we must seriously consider the following:

A) Trust in God

To have peace, we need to fully trust God. When faced with a situation that seems out of control we must realize that God is in control. He is in control of every circumstance of our lives no matter how dire or painful. It is this faith that gives us a calm assurance that He is working to solve our problems and bring us through them safely.

God who sacrificed His only begotten Son to reconcile us with Him and bring us peace (see Romans 5:1 and Philippians 4:7 above), has always been working and still works to bring us closer to Him and give us His perfect trust and assurance.

† “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:13)

To each of us God offers, with outstretched hand, everything we need. Love, hope, faith, peace...all the things we spend our lives trying to attain, He wants us to have from the time we are still children. The reason we so often do not have peace or love or faith is not because He does not offer us an infinite supply of each, but because we refuse to accept His offer. He sees us struggling and says, “Here...take my peace.” But we say, “No, I’d rather do it on my own.” He says, “Experience the love that only I can show you.” And we say, “No thanks, I already know how to love and be loved.”

And then when faced with tough times, we come to Him crying and saying, “My Lord, My Lord why have you forsaken me?” He has not forsaken us; it is we who have forsaken Him. Turned our backs on Him, neglected Him, He who gave us our very lives and our only hope for eternal life. But despite all we humans have done to Him, He still loves us. He still loves us even though we killed His Son. In fact, He turned His death into life for us so that we may live and be freed from sin’s grasp.

So, what are you afraid of? What are you waiting for? Trust in God and enjoy His peace in your life.

B) Peace with all; even enemies

The natural result of true inner peace in any believer is to attain peace with others including friends and enemies. It is basically a reflection of the inner peace that a believer is experiencing. Christianity has spread through peaceful preachers who were able to convert nations to

Christianity just by the word the Lord gave to them to testify.

So, trusting and pleasing God by following His commandments would definitely help us reach that inner peace; even to the extent that enemies would be at peace with us:

✠ “When a man’s ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him” (Proverbs 16:7)

We can live peaceably with all; as long as nothing conflicts with our doctrine; whether at home, work, street, etc., by following the Lord’s teaching:

✠ “But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away” (Matthew 5:39-42)

Don’t look at others but understand that God might allow one person to be healthy while another suffers from disease his whole life. Does God care for one more than another? Is God cold and unfeeling toward the sick person and warm and loving toward the healthy person only? No, God loves both the same. Sometimes we cannot understand why God allows certain things to happen, but if we believe that

✠ “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28)

So, how can we complain? His ways are not like our ways and His thoughts are not like our thoughts.

St. Paul says,

✠ “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen” (Romans 11:33-36)

So, God’s thinking is above our own.

C) Peace within ourselves

We have the power of an infinite and loving God working in our lives. He wants to help us, He wants to comfort us, He wants to give us peace that surpasses all understanding, and He has the power to do so. Why do we continually worry? Do we feel that God is too busy for us? Do we feel that He doesn’t care enough about us? Do we get too caught up in the details and the pain and all the obstacles that are in our way that we lose sight of the one who can remove all those obstacles in a blink of an eye? Don’t we realize that He allows pain in our lives to help us grow and mature? And as we grow and become stronger we become more resilient to Satan’s attacks. We stop worrying so much about the future and start enjoying life more. Our future is secure in God’s tender hands.

St. Paul also understood the power of trials and difficulties in life saying,

✠ “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:10)

God strengthened St. Paul and gave him peace throughout his life that was full of persecutions and ultimately death in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. St. Paul who endured so much hardship for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ said:

✠ “Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:11-13).

If he enjoyed peace even as he wrote letters to all the churches from prison, what excuse do we have? God is the source of our peace. We cannot pursue it apart from Him.

D) Peace about life

The world desires peace too, but they do not look to God for it. They look to philosophy, Yoga, entertainment, and other remedies to fill the gap in their lives that only God can fill. As a result, they have no assurance, hope, or peace.

We must learn to be content as St. Paul did, not just for our own sake but so that we can spread the message of the Gospel to the world. Not just through our words, but also through our actions. If others see that we are peaceful despite hardships, then they will want the same thing for themselves and as a result start becoming more interested in learning about God.

The Lord Jesus Christ said:

✠ “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ... Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble” (**Matthew 6:25-34**).

Peace is not something we create for ourselves. If we rely on ourselves, it is very easy to look at the problems around us, get discouraged and fall into despair. So how do we attain peace? St. Paul answers the question saying,

✠ “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7)

So here we are told that we should not be anxious, but instead with thanksgiving ask God for help, and then His incomprehensible peace will dwell in us. So who here is making the bigger effort, God or us? God says that we are not to worry or be anxious, but to simply trust Him and bring our requests to Him. If we feel anxious about a situation, we are to simply ask for His help

and have faith that He will indeed help us. In turn, He will give us peace despite the uncertainty we face. This is true regardless of the magnitude of our problems. To God all our problems, no matter how gigantic they seem to us, are infinitesimal compared to His power and glory. He not only has the absolute power to solve our deepest problems, but also promises to give us peace our entire life.

So our part is to ask His help and to “be anxious for nothing.” Asking is easy...we ask God for things every day. But in addition to asking for help, He tells us to not be anxious or worried. The only way we can do this is if we have faith and believe what He tells us. The strongest prayer is one that we know will be answered. We must know as we say the words, “Lord help me with this” that he will certainly help us. God’s will is perfect, so we cannot ask for specifics and then hope God fulfills them. We do not know what is best for us; only He knows that. So instead, we should ask Him to increase our faith, to help us to trust Him, to allow us to be patient while He works in our lives, and to help us accept what He has done and will do for us because we know that no other love in the Universe can compare to the love He has for us.

He tells us to pray with thanksgiving. When we praise God for what He has given us, it takes our mind off of what it is we are seeking and focuses our attention on all the good things we already have. God wants us to see that He has already provided so much for us. He will continue to provide if we are patient and trust in Him.

E. Peace during hardships and bad times

The dictionary defines the word “bad” as “not achieving an adequate standard; poor.” Do we believe that God is inadequate? Does He not make the grade? Is His love for us sub-par? Certainly not! So then how, when faced with a difficult problem in our lives, can we say that this circumstance is “bad”? Painful things certainly do happen to Christians as well as to the rest of the world, but bad things only happen to non-believers. The only bad thing that can happen to a believer is to be separated from God. This is usually through sin or rebellious attitude against God. Similar to what happen with Adam and Eve when they fall to sin and broke the commandment of God.

Also, it is very important that at all times, whether happy or sad, we maintain a very close personal relationship with God. It is easy when things are going our way to pray a little less, read the Bible a little less, and go to church a little less all because we begin to feel satisfied with our lives. But at any moment, our lives can change and we can find ourselves needing God more than ever. At that time, we will need the closeness to God that we were neglecting before and it will be that much harder to have peace.

If, on the other hand, we seek out a personal relationship with God and make Him our highest priority everyday, regardless of our circumstances, then when problems come, we will be ready to face them through His strength. He wants to carry our burdens if we let Him.

St. Paul says,

✠ “Finally, 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. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you” (Philippians 4:8-9)

If we focus on these good virtues, meditate on the things of God and place Him first in our lives, then His peace will live inside each of us and will protect us from the despair we face when we wallow in our own problems and feel that God is so far away. Instead we will feel God so close to us, even through pain and hardship.

F) Peace even in death

If we truly believe Romans 8:28, then we know that ALL things God does are for our good. Not just the happy things that put smiles on our faces, but all things. This includes death, suffering, and persecution. “All things” means everything under the sun that can possibly happen to us past, present, and future is for our own good! He even transforms the negative consequences of other peoples’ sins into our own good. This is the truth that sets us free. It sets us free from worry about the future and regret about the past. Everything God does for us He does out of love.

When the Lord ended His talk with Abraham, He told him about what will happen to his future children, the Israelites. Most importantly, God said something amazing to Abraham about his death:

✠ “Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age” (Genesis 15:15)

Imagine this: dying in peace. What else would anyone want?

David the prophet spoke about death like walking peacefully in a valley with no fear:

✠ “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me” (Psalm 23:4)

The Bible also described how peaceful the righteous will be in his death:

✠ “The righteous perishes, and no man takes it to heart; Merciful men are taken away, while no one considers that the righteous is taken away from evil. He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness” (Isaiah 57:1-2)

Also, Simeon the Elder, after carrying the Lord Jesus in his hands, said:

✠ “He took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples” (Luke 2:28-31)

G) Peace about our eternity

Just like all things in our lives, we cannot succeed without God’s help. We need His help to have peace,

✠ “Lord, You will establish peace for us, for You have also done all our works in us” (Isaiah 26:12)

God desires that each one of us experience His perfect peace in our lives every day here on earth and forever in heaven. But we so often neglect Him and go our own way. We try to endure suffering alone, succeed on our own, and make decisions on our own...we so often fall into the pattern of the world. We often neglect the greatest resource we have, and that is God Himself. We struggle to love our enemies, struggle to suppress feelings of hatred or anger, struggle to raise our children, even struggle to seek God's will and pursue it. But our God, the God of infinite love and kindness, the God that created us from the dust of the earth understands all our worries and sorrows and He wants so much to help us. All what He wants is that we endure all of these to receive the everlasting peace, joy and happiness.

God so much desires a relationship with us, and if only we take one step toward Him, He will take one thousand steps toward us. Just as when the father of the lost son saw him a long way off, and ran out to meet him with open arms, so too does God desire that we turn from our ways and return to Him. And He will not rebuke us, but accept us as His children and rain down upon us all the blessings of His glorious kingdom. A relationship with God is not only the beginning of peace, but also of wisdom, knowledge, faith, and love,

✠ “But as it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9)

We must be satisfied with what we have. It is very easy to look at our neighbor and desire or even envy what they have, but we must understand that God provides for each of us in His own way and what is good for one person might be harmful to another. God has a purpose and a plan for each of us that fit who we are and what He wants us to do.

God might make one person wealthy to allow him to glorify God through his wealth, giving generously to the poor and having the extra free time to serve. God might similarly choose another person to glorify God through his poverty, being an example to others of how to be content despite his circumstances. The poor man is poor for the glory of God and the rich man is rich for the glory of God, so how can the poor man say to God, “Make me rich” when it is God's perfect will that he be poor. We should therefore always accept the gifts and talents that God gave us, and if we are responsible with small matters then He will place us in charge of larger ones; as it is written:

✠ “Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities” (Luke 19:17)

And finally remember the greatness of heaven where we will be with Him forever:

✠ “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:1-3)