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PEACE

1. The environment of peace. Philemon 3 and Philippians 1:2 both tell us that **“peace”** comes **“from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”**
 - A. Peace begins at salvation. When faith is directed toward the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have **“peace with God.”** In Romans 5:1, Paul writes, **“Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**
 - B. Peace is a synonym for reconciliation. Jesus Christ came to provide peace with God through His work on the Cross.

Paul brings this out with a vivid illustration in Ephesians 2:14-18, where he says that, **“...He Himself [Jesus Christ] is our peace, who made both {groups [Jews and Gentiles] into} one [Church Universal], and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall [reference to / wall around / inner court of Herod’s Temple called / *Soregh* which separated Jews from Gentiles; it stood in / time of Christ and / apostles; Josephus recorded it’s warning, ‘No Gentile may enter the railing around the sanctuary and within the enclosure. Whosoever should be caught will render himself liable to the death penalty which will inevitably follow.’], by abolishing in His flesh [on / Cross] the enmity, {which is} the Law of commandments {contained} in ordinances [Mosaic Law], that in Himself He might make the two [Jew and Gentile] into one new man, {thus} establishing peace, and might reconcile them both [Jews and Gentiles] in one body to God through the cross [that ‘one Body’ is / Body of Christ], by it [/ Cross] having put to death the enmity [Mosaic Law]. And He came [1st Advent] and preached peace to you who were far away [Gentiles], and peace to those who were near [Jews]; for through Him we both [Jews and Gentiles] have our access in one Spirit [HS] to the Father.”**

2. The formula for peace.
 - A. This is found in Philippians 3:13-14, **“Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of {it} yet; but one thing {I do}: [1] forgetting what {lies} behind and [2] reaching forward to what {lies} ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”**
 - B. An unrelenting focus on the plan, the purpose and the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ keeps us from becoming distressed, distracted and distraught. Factors that, when we allow them to, will destroy our inner peace. We get distracted from the plan of God when we get our eyes off of Christ and get them [1] on self; [2] on others; and [3] on

conditions around us. Instead of looking to the Eternal Victor for the power and strength to conquer and overcome, we wallow in the mire of defeat.

3. The practice of peace.

Paul gives us the experiential practice of peace in Philippians 4:6-7, when he say's, "**Be anxious** [worried, fearful] **for nothing** [i.e., do not worry over *anything!*], **but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God** [what is to happen when we relinquish worry, when in every circumstance of life we thank God, letting our requests be made known to Him?-- Paul say's]. **And the peace of God** [different from 'peace *with* God; Paul is not talking about our position, but about our *practice*], **which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus** [remember what our Lord said in / Upper Room Discourse, John 14:27, 'Peace I leave with you; *My* peace I give to you; ...Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful']."

Paul goes on in v. 11 to illustrate the all-sufficient power of God's magnificent grace when he tells the Philippians that he had learned to be content in *any* and *every* situation in which he found himself, whether prosperous or adverse, it made no difference. Listen to vv. 12-13, "**I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret** [word 'secret' speaks of personal insight and privileged information granted to a select few; *mue/w* (*mueo*) was a technical term used in / Greek mystery religions, it means- *initiate into the mysteries*; Paul had learned this lesson through rigorous spiritual preparation that was too demanding for most because in arrogance they would have tried to face it in / energy of / flesh; / situation is no different in Christianity today than it was in / first century, believers say, 'The Spiritual Life is just too *demanding*. It demands too much time, too much faithfulness, too much honesty about self, too much orientation to reality, I prefer my dreamworld. Too much focus on Christ and not enough focus on self!;' but Paul had discovered the mystery] **of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need** [he then gives us / secret, that one *key* to contentment in / Christian life, it is to claim by faith / most magnificent statement of doctrine ever made]. **I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.**"

Seven Disciplines Producing Peace

First and foremost, we must recognize that the essential ingredient to the Spiritual Life is found in the words of 2 Corinthians 5:7, "**for we walk by faith, not by sight.**"

1. By faith learn to accept life unconditionally, as God's perfect plan for you. Consider Paul's words to the Romans and the Thessalonians.
 - A. In Romans 8:28 he said, "**And we know** [with / clarity and absolute knowledge that comes through faith in / Word] **that God causes all things** [pain, sorrow, rejection, loss] **to work together for the good** [divine and ultimate good-- / glorification of Jesus Christ through our spiritual growth, blessing in time, and reward in eternity] **to those who love God** [*keep on* loving God-- mature and / or maturing believers], **to those who are the called according to {His} purpose** [pre-determined plan]."

B. To the Thessalonians he writes two specific exhortations, one in 1 Thessalonians 3:2-3, where he tells them “...we sent Timothy, our brother and God’s fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith, so that no man may be disturbed by these afflictions [‘tribulations;’ / word *thlipsis* means- *pressure and oppression*, / natural result of / child of God living in / devil’s world, / Kosmos Diabolocus]; for you yourselves know that we have been *destined for this*.” The other is found in 5:18, where Paul commands the Thessalonian church, and every other member of the Body of Christ to keep on, day after day, *constantly* giving thanks “**in everything... for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.**”

2. By faith live in conscious fellowship and communion with God.

1 John 1:7 tells us that, “...if [3rd class condition-- maybe we will, maybe we won’t; subj. mood is / mood of *volition*] **we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light** [yieldedness to / Word of God, i.e., application in / power of / Spirit; two consequences result from this], [1] **we have fellowship** [a sharing, an active participation and involvement in / plan of God] **with one another** [we with God, and He with us (while ‘walking in the light which God is’ certainly brings fellowship with other believers, what John is referring to here is fellowship with God; context of vv. 5-10 brings this out); reciprocal pronoun *allelon* signifies a mutual fellowship and intimacy with each other; not only do we have fellowship with God, but He reciprocates in having fellowship with us, God condescends to have fellowship with sinners saved by grace, creatures of His glorious handiwork on / Cross; cf. prs. below], **and [2] the blood** [spiritual death] **of Jesus His Son cleanses** [pres. tense-- *keeps on cleansing*] **us from all sin** [in / singular, i.e., every manifestation of / OSN; what John’s talking about is *experiential sanctification*].”

Principle: Fellowship with God demands involvement in His will and His work.

Principle: Fellowship with believers demands involvement in a local church. The sense of belonging that we all crave, the feeling of being part of a team, only comes from being actively involved with other believers in God’s work.

3. By faith keep short accounts with God. We can see the profound importance of this principle of grace in 1 Corinthians 11:26-32 and (cf.) 1 John 1:9.

1 John 1:9 say’s, that “**If we** [believers] **confess** [o(mologe/w (homologe)- *name, cite, acknowledge*; also, bearing in mind its judicial nature, *confess a crime in court, make a legal statement*] **our sins** [personal sins], **He** [God / Father] **is faithful** [to do the same thing *every* single time, thereby fulfilling His immutable Word] **and righteous** [+R of God has been propitiated (satisfied) concerning sin through the sacrifice of Christ (1 Jn. 2:2)] **to forgive** [or *cancel*; from *afi/hmi* (aphiemi)- *the absolution or cancellation of debt*] **us our sins** [and forget them, the Lord told the nation of Israel in Isa. 43:25, that “I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins,” and Ps. 103:12 states, that “as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”] **and to cleanse** [kaqari/zw (katharizo)- *purify*; in the 51st Psalm, the Psalm of David’s confession of his adultery with Bathsheba and subsequent murder of her husband Uriah, David-- even in the midst of reversionism-- recognizes that his sin was against *God*, as a violation of *His* +R, and so in humility he prays in v. 4, “against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, and done what is evil in Thy sight, so that Thou art justified when Thou dost speak, and blameless when Thou dost judge”; he knows that *only God* can wash away his iniquity and cleanse him from his sin and so he say’s to God, “purify me with hyssop, and

I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow”] **us from all** [both known and unknown] **unrighteousness.**”

4. By faith seek the Word of God daily.
 - A. When the priorities of our Lord were tested in Matthew 4:4, He responded to the temptation of Satan with the principle that, “**...Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.**”
 - B. In 1 Peter 2:2, Peter exhorts each and every member of the Body of Christ to “**...long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.**”
 - C. In 3:18 of his second epistle, Peter lays down the foremost command for the Church Age believer, to “**...grow in the grace and knowledge of**” his “**Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**”
 - D. The word Peter uses for “**grow**” in both 1 Peter 2:2, and 2 Peter 3:18 is *auxano*. *Auxano* is a word that refers to the normal, healthy growth of a plant that brings it to the point of maturity, to the point of bearing fruit.
5. By faith trust in the power of prayer.
 - A. James 5:16 tells us unequivocally, that “**...The effective** [present participle of *energeo* means- *spiritually energized*] **prayer of a righteous man** [experientially righteous-- in a proper adjustment to, and influenced by, / indwelling HS] **can accomplish much.**”

What James is saying is, that “**the spiritually energized prayer of a yielded believer has strong, prevailing power-- far-reaching results.**”
 - B. One of the ways in which we can secure inner strength and stability is to utilize the principle of prayer found in 1 Peter 5:7, “**casting** [e]pirri/ptw (epiripto), from *epi-* upon, and *ripto-* throw with a sudden motion, hurl down; thus- *throw or cast upon*] **all your anxiety** [*merimna*, plural- fears, worries] **upon Him** [signifies a definite act of the will, a volitional committing to God of the totality of our worries-- *all* that might cause us concern], **because He cares** [*melei-* means that something is an object of care, of forethought and interest, *rather* than of worry and anxiety] **for you** [lit., *it is a care for Him concerning you*, i.e., Peter is boldly stating the principle that your welfare is *always* His concern].”
6. By faith rest in the promises of God.
 - A. Hebrews 4:1 gives Church Age believers the only legitimate fear of the Spiritual Life, the fear that “**...while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it.**” “**His rest**” here is the tremendous tranquillity and contentment which comes from understanding God’s plan in the midst of the confusion and adversity of the Angelic Conflict.

For the Christian, God’s rest is entering into His joy. Your inner joy depends entirely upon what thoughts reside in the right lobe of your mentality.

Principle: True rest is what you have in your soul.

- B. In 2 Peter 1:4 we read Peter's words as he tells the believers of Asia Minor, that **"...by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them [through the claiming of them by faith] you might become partakers of {the} divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust."**

What are **"these"** in v. 4? **"These"** are the **"everything"** mentioned in v. 3, all the principles, promises, and doctrines pertaining to "abundant life (*zoe*)" and "piety." The term *eusebeia* was used in the Classical Greek for "reverence towards the gods." It speaks of a healthy, reverential fear of God that results in loyalty and devotion to Him and to His plan. The "piety," and **"godliness"** Peter refers to is true spirituality-- a Christ-like life lived in the power of the Spirit.

7. By faith understand that in all of life's trials there is an eternal purpose.

Paul address this very issue in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, where he writes, **"Therefore [reaches back to / conclusion of Paul in v. 14 for its inference, 'knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus'] we do not lose heart [become discouraged, weary, and despairing], but though our outer man is decaying [physical body with all of its temporal sufferings], yet our inner man [soul and spirit, / real you] is being renewed day by day [renovated; this is / verbal form of / noun Paul uses in Romans 12:2 for / 'renovation of our thinking' from / Word of God]. For momentary, light [elaphros means- 'light in weight, easy to bear'] affliction [same word Paul uses in 1 Thes. 2:3-- pressure, oppression, tribulation] is producing [katergazomai means- 'work within, in order to achieve or accomplish; bring about a result'] for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison."**

Imagine this, here is Paul who has just told the Corinthians in vv. 8-11, **"{we are} afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh."** Now what Paul does is he takes all of the pain, pressure and adversity that comes to the believer who is advancing on that path of spiritual growth that leads from the Cross to the Crown, and he say's that "it is *nothing*, a lightweight burden that is here but for a moment," a **"momentary, light affliction"** that is not even worthy to be compared with the **"eternal weight of glory"** that God is bringing about in and through our spiritual lives.

The **"life of Jesus"** which Paul mentioned in vv. 10-11 consists of basically 3 things--

- 1) **His character.** Which is brought out as clearly and succinctly in Galatians 5:22-23 as anywhere in the Word of God.
- 2) **His service.** Philippians 2:7 say's that He received to Himself the form of a slave. He was a slave to you and I, a slave to the human race. Paul was making the point that He who is truly the Master of all-- *Kurios*-- became the slave of all. Our Lord Himself said in Matthew 20:28, that **"...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."**
- 3) **His yieldedness to the will of the Father.** In a vivid picture of our Lord's 100% yieldedness to the will of the Father, Jesus said, in John 6:38, **"For I have come**

down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me;
and likewise in Hebrews 10:7, **“...Behold, I have come... to do Thy will, O God.”**

In v. 18 Paul is laying down for us the true spiritual perspective of life in the AC, with all its trials, its tribulations, its pain and adversity, with all of its suffering. He says, **“while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”** This *is* the divine viewpoint, a focus on the eternal-- the Person and Mind of the Lord Jesus Christ-- to the exclusion of the temporal details and distractions.

It seems only appropriate that we close this study of peace with the words of the prophet Isaiah, who said, **“The steadfast of mind Thou wilt keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in Thee,”** Isaiah 26:3.