

The Power of Peace

Having an attitude of peace and calm is priceless. It's an attitude that says, "I'm trusting God," and it speaks powerfully to people. But it takes time, focus and the grace of God to be consistently peaceful.

One way to develop consistent peace is to learn to live "in the now." We can spend a lot of time thinking about the past or wondering what the future holds...but we can't accomplish anything unless our mind is focused on today.

The Bible tells us that God gives us grace for each day that we live. I believe that grace is the power or energy to do what we need to do—and He gives it generously, as we need it.

The Real Source of Stress

Too often our stress level is tied up in our circumstances. You could be stressed because you're always busy or you're struggling financially or because you're not getting along with someone you love.

It could be a number of things, but what's interesting is that these situations are not the cause of your stress. Stress is really caused by your reaction to each situation. See, we're always trying to get rid of everything that bothers us. But the Bible says that in the world there will be tribulation. That's why Jesus said, "Cheer up, I have overcome the world."

We don't have to work at trying to get rid of every stressful situation. We need to learn how to embrace peace.

7 Ways to Practice Peace

I believe that one of the keys to maintaining peace in your life is to take small steps toward peace every day. Here are a few tips for having a more peaceful lifestyle.

1. Be selective with how you spend your time. You may be trying to do too many things and end up doing none of them well. Hurrying is trying to do more than the Holy Spirit is leading you to do. Be led by the Spirit.
2. Be prepared to say no nicely. Sometimes we take on things we know we shouldn't, just because we're uncomfortable saying no. If you feel this pressure, ask God to put your spirit at rest and give you loving words to speak that will take away the unnecessary awkwardness of saying no.
3. Resist the spirit of procrastination. It's the attitude that says I'm going to sit here and wait until I feel like doing what I need to do. But God's Word tells us to exercise self-discipline. Do what you need to do now so you can fully enjoy your times of rest.

4. Eliminate key distractions. If you know you are easily distracted, set some guidelines for yourself. Don't let them keep you up late at night so you oversleep the next morning and end up setting yourself up for a hurried, stressful day.

5. Set appropriate boundaries for interruptions. Life is full of interruptions, but we can learn to set boundaries that help us manage them in healthy ways. Schedule times when you are "off-limits." Let your calls go to voicemail, turn off your email, and decide to get back to people after your "off-limits" time is over. Trust the Holy Spirit to tell you when there is a true emergency.

6. Modify your life. Ask God to show you "out-of-the-box" ways to save time and trouble. For instance, when I don't have time to do the dishes, I use paper plates. And if I'm having a birthday party for one of my kids and don't have time to make a meal, we just have cake and ice cream.

7. Listen for the Holy Spirit. If you can see that your plan is not producing peace, go back to God; pray for peace and for wisdom to make changes that will benefit your life.

If you can learn to trust God "in the now," receive His grace as you need it, and you can become a truly peaceful person. Now that's powerful!