

How To Get And Keep The Peace Of God

By Pastor Art Watkins

Philippians 4:5-7 says: Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

The peace of God in verse 7 is that peace that stills the heart of the believer in a time of trouble, distress, uncertainty, sickness, suffering and pain like we are now in.

No one is exempt from these bad things. 1 Thess.3:3-4 says we will suffer all these things and sooner or later we will. These things and even the fear of them can paralyze us and make us say and do things that we ought not. If we are not careful, they can make us blame God foolishly. They can make us doubt his faithfulness, his care, his love, and even his word.

But here is a promise in Philp.4:7 that we can have the peace of God in our hearts and minds when these bad things happen to us. The peace of God can keep our hearts and minds calm when these bad things happen to us. The peace of God can calm our fears and keep us from being overcome by worry, anxiety and fear in the midst of our trouble and tribulations.

The peace of God is not the absence of trouble. It is the calm in the midst of the storm. In John 16:33 Jesus promised: **These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.**

In this verse there are two promises. One of them is tribulation. In the world we will have tribulation and trouble. No one is exempt from tribulation and trouble. If you haven't had any yet, just wait, it will find you.

Job 5:7 says: **Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.**

You and I are destined to trouble, trials and tribulation. As long as we are in the world we will have to contend with these bad things. There will be storms in our lives.

But there is another promise in the verse. He promised to give you peace in your tribulation. He did not exempt you from tribulation, but he did promise to give you peace when it comes. That peace will keep your heart and mind from being overcome by fear and dread and sorrow.

That is why Paul said be careful for nothing. The word careful means full of care. It's another word for worry and anxiety. It's the kind of care that torments us, distracts us, which disturbs our joy in God and destroys our peace.

We don't have to be overcome and paralyzed by cares, worries, and fear. We will always have tribulation and trouble till Jesus comes, but we don't have to be defeated by them or paralyzed by them. We can have the peace of God that passes all understanding instead.

What do we worry about?

We worry about the past.

Some worry about their past sins, if they are forgiven or not.

Some worry about their past failures which keep them from attempting anything new in the future.

Some worry about their past lives that were spent fulfilling the lust of the flesh.

Some worry about their past reputation catching up with them again.

We worry about the present

Do we have enough food to eat?

Do we have clothes to wear?

Do we have enough money to buy food and pay our bills?

Am I going to keep or lose my job, or will I find a job?

Will I ever get well?

We worry about the future

Worry and fear of the future is one of our biggest problems. Fear of sickness and disease, fear of what may happen to us, fear of the unknown, fear of losing a job, fear of poverty, fear of being disabled, fear of things that may not even happen.

The reason Paul said be careful for nothing is because worry, anxiety, and fear can paralyze us, depress us and overcome us. They can make us weary till we faint and give up in despair.

Worry and fear is a device of the devil to get us down and to keep us down. But God has provided a way to overcome worry, fear and anxiety. There is a way we can live free from worry and fear. We will never be free from tribulation and trouble, trials, or sickness. But there is a way we can experience the peace of God during them so we can get through them without fainting and giving up in despair and even retain our joy when they come.

(1) Becoming Aware Of The Presence Of God ***"The Lord is at hand"***

This speaks of the Lord's ever abiding presence and help.

Hebrews 13:5-6 says: For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Psalms 46:1: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

The Lord is at hand at all times to aid and assist us when trouble trials and tribulation enters our life. He knew they would happen and he made these promises to stand with us to help us when bad things happen to us.

*When Daniel went into the Lion's den, the Lord went with him

*When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were cast into the fiery furnace, the Lord went into the fire with them. He was the fourth man in the fire.

*When all the plagues fell on Egypt, the Lord protected his people from them.

*When Paul and the Apostles were thrown into prison, the Lord went to prison with them.

*When the martyrs went to the stake, the Lord was with them.

*When they wheel you into the operating room the Lord will go with you to guide the doctor's hands.

*If you lose your job, you will not lose the Lord.

*When you lose a loved one you will never lose the Lord, he is still with you. He will stand with you at the grave side while he escorts your love one in the Lord into heaven.

The Lord does not desert us in our hour of need. His presence is there at all times. You are not alone in your distress and trouble. The Lord is at hand at all times and we need to become aware of his presence at all times. If we were, we would not fear or be full of care and worry.

When I was a young child my family walked to church. In the day time it was no problem but at night I was full of fear. We did not have street lights in those days (1940's) and it was very dark. But when my father took me by the hand my fear went away. And when you sense God's hand and presence with you in the bad times it takes away your fear and worry.

(2) Pray About Everything

The last thing that many people do when they get into trouble or distress is pray. It should be the first thing you do. God invites you and encourages you to call on Him and to make your requests known unto Him in prayer.

Read these verses

Jeremiah 33:3: Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

Psalms 18:6: In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.

Hebrews 4:15: For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

God urges you to call on him in prayer. He said call on me and I will answer thee. He said let your requests be made known unto God. Why not take him up on his offer and see if he does what He said He would do.

So many of us are full of care and worry simply because we will not take God up on his offer. He said, you have not because you ask not. He said, Let your requests be made known unto God. Do you have a request? Do you have a need that only God can supply? Are you worried about something that is serious? Is there something in the future that you fear and dread? Call out to God and pray and ask him to give you what he

thinks you need to relieve your worry and take away your fear and dread. In the verses we just read He has given you an open invitation to do it.

As a child didn't you ask your father to give you what you wanted? Isn't every Christian a child of God? If so then why can't you ask your heavenly father to give you what he thinks you need?

In Matthew 7:7-11 Jesus said: **Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?**

Do you withhold your hand from your children when they come to you with needs, fears and trouble? No. You do what you can for them. Will God turn away his ear when his children come to him with needs, worries, fears, trouble and tribulation? Will God turn his back on his children? Never!

"Supplication"

Is humble and earnest prayer. It's the opposite of formal, dead, repetitive prayer. It is serious prayer from the heart. If you will get serious with God in prayer he will get serious with you with an answer. Many times our prayers go unanswered because they are not serious. We ask for things we don't need or we speak into the air or we throw a two second prayer and expect big results.

(3) Be Thankful For Everything

Being thankful for past blessings and past answers to prayer will help you get your present prayers answered now.

A man had two Sons. One Son was very grateful for everything that his father did for him. He always said thank you when he was given anything by his father. He was always thankful and showed it by obeying and honoring his father. But the other Son rarely said thank you. He was unthankful and rarely obeyed his father unless he wanted something. Which one of those two Sons will the father show favor to when they come to him to get their needs supplied?

God hates the sin of un-thankfulness and it is the sin of un-thankfulness that prevents many Christians from getting their prayers answered. God knows that if he answered them they would not be thankful or even acknowledge that he answered their prayers. I have seen Christians lose their jobs and pray for God to give them one and he did, but then they disappear from church and rarely come and show no interest in the things of God..

Every Christian ought to devote time every day thanking God for past and present blessings and especially answers to prayer. Get in the habit of doing it and you will find yourself doing it all day. And when you do, your cares and burdens will disappear. Thanks, praise and prayer are great antidotes to worry, fear and anxiety.

(4) Claim The Promises Of God

2 Peter 1:4 says: **Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.**

These precious promises are not only the things he has done for us in the past, but promises of what he will do for us in the future. We talk about them, discuss them, sing about them so why not claim them and use them?

I have known people who have gone to the doctor get a prescription to cure their ills but never get it filled. What good is medicine if you are not going to take it? And what good are promises like these if you are not going to claim and use them? The promises of God can help you overcome every worry, fear, trouble, trial and tribulation you now have if you would claim them.

Why be overcome by care and worry when God said to cast them on him?

1Peter 5:7: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Why worry about your present needs when God promised he would supply all your needs.

Philippians 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. He did not say desire or greed but need. This is a very practical promise and you need to claim it. Christ explains it in Matt.6:25-33

Why be a slave to fear when God promised you victory over fear

2 Timothy 1:7: For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Why fret about your failures when God can make all things, including your failures, work together for your good

Romans 8:28 says: And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Why fret about your future needs when God supplied your past needs

Romans 8:31-32: ***If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?***

The promises of God give us the peace of God that passes all understanding. In his promises God shows us that he is on our side and that he has our best interests at heart. He shows us that he cares about us and loves us and is working all things together for our good. These promises keep our hearts and minds from being overcome by worry and fear and dread. After all if God be for us who can be against us?

See Numbers 23:19.

(5) Trust The Great Power Of God

No matter how big your problem or need is; how desperate your condition is; how helpless you feel; how weak you are; what odds you are up against; there is nothing greater than the power of God.

Jeremiah 32:27: Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?

Ephesians 3:20: Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.

What kind of power does God have?

The God of the Bible can speak words and create a universe.

He will speak words in the future that will unravel the universe.

He can drown the whole world with water

He can dry up seas and oceans with the breath of his mouth.

He can feed millions with bread and meat from heaven for years

He can cause water to come out of solid rocks
He can destroy cities with fire and brimstone from heaven.
He can make the sun to stand still in heaven for almost a whole day to give his people a little more daylight to fight their enemies.
He can walk on water.
He can raise dead people from the grave.
He can heal all manner of sickness and disease.
He can lead people across seas and rivers without getting wet.
He raises up and brings down kings and rulers and nations.

This is the God who is working all things together for your good. Is there anything you need to fear with a God like him working for you? Is there any problem you have that he can't handle?

(6) Believe In The Divine Providence Of God

Romans 8:28 says: **And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.**

Many of the things that happen to us are foreordained by the Lord for our good even though they may seem to hurt us. The providence of God is God working all things together for our good even those which seem for a time to cause us grief. Paul was given a messenger of satan to buffet him. It caused him pain. He called it an infirmity but God did not remove it to keep him from becoming proud. If he would have become proud we may never have heard of the Apostle Paul, because God does not use proud people.

Many years ago a man was traveling on his donkey and at night fall he came upon a town to find a room in the Inn. The people in the town were mean and ran him off. So he went outside the city and found a dark, dirty cave to sleep in. He lit a light to scare off animals during the night but it was blown out by the wind and so he had to stay up all night for fear of being attacked by wild animals. He went outside the cave in the morning and found his donkey killed by a mountain Lion. He sat down and moaned, woe is me. He went back to the town the next morning and found that during the night it had been attacked by a gang of robbers who killed everyone in town. Then it dawned on him that if he would have gotten a room he would now be dead, and if my light would not have been blown by the wind they would have seen it and came after me and killed me and if my donkey would not have been killed, they would have heard him and came after him and found me and killed me. He then rejoiced and said, the Lord has been

so good to me! That's an example of Romans 8:28 at work for our good.
That's an example of the divine providence of God at work in our lives.

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