

Unleashing Peace: How to experience God's Shalom
2 Corinthians 2:13; Philippians 4:6-9

Please read in the NIV Translation

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Mental pain is less dramatic than physical pain, but it is more common and also more hard to bear. The frequent attempt to conceal mental pain increases the burden: it is easier to say "My tooth is aching" than to say "My heart is broken." – C.S. Lewis in The Problem of Pain

There are 750,000 words in the English Bible, comprised of 1,169 chapters.

138,162 words in the Greek New Testament.

304,901 words in the Hebrew/Aramaic Old Testament (Hebrew Bible).

If you had to summarize the entire Bible in one word (descriptor or keyword) what would it be? (Circle the best).

Love Truth Hope Forgiveness Peace Salvation Heal Reconciliation Deliverance Shalom
Shalom

Shalom = Peace that heals, restores, and makes complete; means wholeness, to lack nothing.
Hebrew: Shalom (שלום) | Greek: eirēnē (εἰρήνη)

After the name of Jesus, there is no greater word or concept than shalom (peace).

Shalom (Hebrew noun), 225 occurrences; Shalem (Hebrew verb), 117 occurrences; Shalem (Hebrew adjective), 27 occurrences; Shelem (Hebrew noun), 87 occurrences; and Eirene (Greek noun) 94 occurrences.

God's peace, His shalom, can penetrate every aspect of your life—spiritually, mentally, physically, and emotionally.

Although the word shalom appears **550** times in the Scriptures and was a constant theme in Jesus' teachings, it is a neglected topic today. As a result, God's peace has been **elusive** to so many followers of Jesus.

"A viral spread of Anxiety Contagion" Panic is as contagious as any other pathogen and is dangerous in its own right. We are in the midst of a pediatric mental health crisis.

"The battle of the Christian life is ... the battle for the Christian mind." – John Stott

The Way of Peace – 5 Steps to start living in Shalom

1. **Shalom** happens when I have a plan (no plan = no peace).

The Holy Spirit is our **Peace** Planner (John 16:13).

It **is** God's Will for every follower of Jesus to live in His Shalom (Peace).

It is **not** God's will for me to live in conflict, confusion, or anxiety.

As I evaluate my life today, I should answer the following questions: **Is my life currently defined by living in Shalom (Peace), a truce, or conflict? Do I bring peace or am I an agent of conflict in my home and community?** (Barnabas)

2. Shalom is always connected to **Jesus**.

The healing, forgiving, loving relationship Jesus won for us at the cross penetrates every aspect of our lives—spiritually, mentally, physically, and emotionally.

The Divine order of God's Peace: In Jesus, we experience peace **with** God (Romans 5:1; Colossians 1:20), and then we can experience the peace **of** God (Colossians 3:15; Phil 4:9).

John 16:33: These things that I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

Three **contrasts** in John 16:33

“in Me” vs. “in the world,”

“You may have” over against “you will have,” and

“peace” over against “tribulation”

It is Jesus's **purpose** that we have peace. When we place our trust in God, He can give us peace in the midst of pressure.

Key Question: Are you missing peace because you've missed Jesus?

“As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.” Lk 19:41–42.

This is the position we need to claim: we are *in Christ*, and therefore we can overcome the world and all of its hatred.

3. Living in Shalom is a **discipline**.

Shalom is not a talent or a spiritual gift only for “delta force” Christians.

Peace happens through action verbs: **Thinking** and **Trusting**. (See Phil. 4:8)

⇒ The **content** of our thinking determines our peace and happiness factor. Am I trusting what I know is true in my life through Christ, or am I focusing on the problem, or adversity, to the extent that God is factored out of my situation?

⇒ Each time you experience anxiety, please take a moment to misbelieve any lies you are thinking and instead focus on the truth.

My life must be bolted to **Truth** = Transformation.

"There's stupid peace, and there's smart peace. The Christian's peace is not by making yourself stupid; it's by making yourself as aware of your beliefs, as thoughtful as possible." – Timothy Keller

(Key Thought: - we **"learn"** the peace of God – see Phil 4:9; 11-12).

Paul used the word Truth **55** times in his letters. He loved Truth!

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is **true**, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

(There are 32 words in Philippians 4:8 and only one of them is an action verb – and it is the keyword of the verse and the sole imperative – **THINK**).

Paul was determined to have less anxiety. In one incredible verse, he exegetes all of Matthew chapter 6 and Psalm 37.

I must choose to trust in the Truth of God's Word over against all lies:

- I am alone; I have no hope; there's no plan for me
- I must have it all figured out
- I must live in certainty; uncertainty = danger
- I'm the only person who's ever struggled with this
- No one would understand
- I am hopeless and helpless
- Built a prison of distortions (about God, myself, reality)
- No room for grace and God's promises do not apply to me

4. Living in Shalom is a **counter**-cultural lifestyle.

Shalom/Peace is contrary to everything the world says will bring you peace.

I need to develop my **care** team: Who is helping me manage the stress and anxiety?

5. My faith is not what I **feel**; my faith is what I **believe**.

Here's the key: Even when I **feel** emotionally out of sorts, the truth of the Scripture is that because of Christ, God's got me.

We all find ourselves on emotional thin ice at times, or experience times when our physical bodies are not well. But that doesn't change the objective truth found in the Word of God.