The Peace of God Part 15 – When the Inside Is Stronger Than the Outside

Key Points:

- Peace is an internal reality rooted in the indwelling Christ, not a product of favorable external circumstances or relationships.
- Believers are commanded, not merely encouraged, to walk in lowliness, gentleness, long-suffering, and love in order to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- Unity in the body of Christ functions like an electrical circuit -- when pride, offense, bitterness, or strife break the connection, the flow of God's power is hindered even though the power source has not changed.
- The characteristics of love described in 1 Corinthians 13 -- patience, kindness, freedom from envy, humility, the refusal to be easily provoked, and the refusal to rehearse evil -- are the practical tools for maintaining peace in every relationship.
- Rehearsing and brooding over past hurts is spiritually destructive; believers are not permitted by scripture to maintain a hurt identity because the healing power of God is complete and sufficient.
- Individual spiritual maturity and personal responsibility are directly connected to the advancement of the kingdom of God.
- Spiritual labor is required to walk in love; believers are not saved by works but unto good works, and they are called to work peace from the grace they have received.
- Walking in love produces a witness to the world, a commanded blessing on the household, and the condition under which the glory of God fills the individual and corporate body.

The Peace of God Part 15 - 5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

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Day 1: The Peace That Is Already Yours

Reading: Galatians 5:22-25

Devotional: The fruit of the Spirit is not something you earn through perfect circumstances or ideal relationships. It is already present within you because Christ is within you. Peace is not the absence of difficulty. It is the presence of God operating in the middle of difficulty. The question is not whether you have peace available to you. The question is whether you are choosing to walk in it. Today, identify one area of your life where you have been allowing external conditions to dictate your internal state. Declare that the Lord lives in you, and therefore peace lives in you. Choose it.

Day 2: The Circuit of Unity

Reading: Ephesians 4:1-6

Devotional: Paul urges believers to walk worthy of their calling with lowliness, gentleness, long-suffering, and love. These are not personality traits reserved for the naturally easygoing. They are commands rooted in the reality of who God is and who He has placed inside of you. When pride, offense, or bitterness enters a relationship, it breaks the connection through which God's power flows. Unity is the wiring that keeps the circuit intact. Today, ask the Lord to reveal any broken connection in your relationships. Humility, patience, and love are the tools He has given you to restore what has been disrupted.

Day 3: Love That Does Not Count Wrongs

Reading: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Devotional: One of the most quietly destructive habits a believer can develop is rehearsing the wrongs done to them. Every time a past offense is replayed in the mind, it is incubated, given warmth, and allowed to grow. The Scriptures describe love as something that does not keep a running account of evil done against it. This is not weakness. This is one of the most powerful expressions of the nature of God. You were not designed to carry the weight of accumulated hurt. You were designed to receive and walk in the love of God.

Day 4: Healed, Not Just Hurt

Reading: Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24

Devotional: There is no scriptural basis for a believer to take up a permanent residence in hurt. **Isaiah 53:5** declares that by His wounds, healing has been provided for you, and **1 Peter 2:24** affirms that this healing is already accomplished. Hurt may come, but it does not have to stay. A wound that is brought to the Lord can be healed completely. The danger is not in experiencing pain. The danger is in building an identity around it and carrying it into every relationship that follows. Today, surrender any hurt you have been holding. You were not saved to live wounded. You were saved to live whole.

Day 5: One Sound, One Glory

Reading: 2 Chronicles 5:13-14; Psalm 133:1-3

Devotional: When the musicians in Solomon's temple became one in praise, the glory of God filled the house so powerfully that the priests could not stand to minister. They were not unified because everything was easy. They were unified around a declaration: He is good and His mercy endures forever. **Psalm 133** promises that where brothers and sisters dwell together in unity, God commands a blessing. The glory of God does not fall on competition, pride, or division. It falls on one sound. Today, examine what sound your life is producing. Lay down personal agendas and lift the one declaration that never fails: He is good.

The Peace of God Part 15 – Scripture References from the Sermon

Directly Cited:

Ephesians 4:1-6 -- The call to walk worthy, with lowliness, gentleness, long-suffering, bearing with one another, keeping unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 -- The characteristics of love: patient, kind, not envious, not boastful, not provoked, bears all things, never fails.

Proverbs 14:30 -- Bitterness (envy) is rottenness to the bones.

2 Chronicles 5:13-14 -- The trumpeters and singers as one sound, the glory of the Lord filling the house.

Psalms 133:1-3 -- How good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell in unity, where the Lord commands the blessing.

John 13:35 -- By this all will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

1 Corinthians 3:16 -- You are the temple of God (alluded to in the Paul and Corinthians reference).

Ephesians 2:8-10 -- Saved by grace, not of works, but saved unto good works.

Alluded To:

Galatians 5:22-23 -- The fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace.

Romans 12:20 -- If your enemy is hungry, feed him.

1 John 4:4 -- Greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world.

Isaiah 53:5 -- By his stripes we are healed.

The Peace of God Part 15 – Personal and Small Group Study Guide

Small Group Guide: Peace in Relationships

Based on the Sermon Series on Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 13

Overview

This guide is designed to help you explore what it means to walk in God's kind of peace within relationships. The sermon draws from **Ephesians 4:1-6** and **1 Corinthians 13:4-8** to show that peace is not determined by external circumstances but is a choice rooted in the love of God that lives within every believer. Unity in the body of Christ is not optional -- it is essential for the advancement of the kingdom and the individual maturity of every believer.

Key Takeaways

- Peace is a choice. Every believer has the capacity to walk in peace regardless of circumstances or the behavior of others.
- Unity functions like an electrical circuit. When pride, offense, bitterness, or strife disconnects believers from one another, the flow of God's power is hindered -- even though the power source has not changed.
- The characteristics described in **1 Corinthians 13:4-8** are not suggestions. They are a portrait of the love of God that already lives inside every believer (**Romans 5:5**), and they are the practical tools for maintaining peace in relationships.
- Spiritual maturity requires personal responsibility. The kingdom advances when individual believers take ownership of their own walk, their own attitudes, and their own responses.
- Believers are not permitted to live in a posture of hurt. The healing power of God is sufficient for every wound, and living as a permanently hurt person is a denial of what Christ accomplished.
- Unity releases the glory of God. When God's people lay aside personal agendas and become one in love and praise, God's presence fills the house.

Discussion Questions

Opening

1. The sermon opens with a direct statement: "My peace is up to me." What is your honest initial reaction to that idea? Does it feel freeing, challenging, or both?
2. Think of a relationship in your life right now where peace feels difficult to maintain. Without sharing names or details that could cause harm, what makes that situation feel so hard?

Section 1: The Electrical Circuit of Unity

3. The sermon uses the illustration of an electrical circuit to describe unity. The power source is real, the wires are intact, but a broken connection stops the light from shining.

Where have you seen a broken connection -- in a relationship, a family, or a church community -- limit what God could do through that group?

4. The sermon says that when individual believers yield to darkness, the collective light of a church goes down. How does that shift the way you think about your personal choices and attitudes? Does it change the sense of responsibility you feel?

Section 2: The Characteristics of Love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

5. The sermon describes love as "relentlessly patient in bearing with the offenses and injuries of others with kindness." Which part of that phrase is hardest for you -- the patience, the bearing of offenses, or the kindness in the middle of it?
6. Envy, parading oneself, and being puffed up are all identified as expressions of pride that damage relationships. Which of those three do you think is most quietly accepted or even celebrated in our culture today? How does it show up in everyday life?
7. The sermon asks a pointed question about irritability: "Why do you get easily irritated in that area?" Take a moment to think honestly. Is there a relationship or situation where you are easily provoked? What do you think is underneath that irritability?
8. The sermon describes "thinking no evil" as rehearsing or counting over wrongs done to you -- like incubating eggs so they hatch. Have you ever caught yourself doing that? What did it produce in you over time?

Section 3: Living Healed, Not Hurt

9. The sermon makes a strong statement: "There is no place in the scripture that declares that we are allowed as believers to live hurt, period." How does that land with you? Is there a difference between experiencing hurt and living as a hurt person?
10. The sermon says, **"Because of what Jesus did for me, I can overcome what they did to me."** Is there an area of your life where you need to move from knowing that truth intellectually to actually living from it? What would that shift look like in practice?

Section 4: The Benefits of Unity

11. **Psalm 133:1-3** describes unity as the place where God commands a blessing. Have you ever experienced a season -- in a family, a friendship, or a church community -- where unity was strong and blessing seemed to follow? What characterized that season?
12. The sermon closes with the image of an orchestra coming into unity under one conductor. The sound changes from noise to harmony when everyone submits to the same purpose. What is one "personal agenda" -- a preference, a grievance, or a habit -- that you need to lay down in order to become part of one sound in God's Kingdom purposes?

Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to work on individually or as a group before your next meeting.

Daily Confession Each morning this week, speak this aloud before you begin your day: "The Lord is in me, so I have peace. I have the ability to be relentlessly patient in bearing with the offenses and injuries of others. I will not live hurt -- I will live healed."

Self-Examination Exercise Using the characteristics listed in **1 Corinthians 13:4-8**, honestly assess one relationship in your life. Go through each quality -- patience, kindness, freedom from envy, freedom from pride, not seeking your own way, not being easily provoked, not rehearsing wrongs -- and identify one area where you have room to grow. Bring that area before the Lord in prayer this week.

Breaking the Rehearsal Habit If you have been rehearsing a past hurt or wrong done to you, make a deliberate decision to interrupt that pattern. When the thought comes, replace it with a declaration of what God's love can do. Write down one specific hurt you are choosing to stop rehearsing and one truth from Scripture or this sermon that you will declare in faith in its place.

Unity in Practice Identify one person in your life -- a family member, coworker, or fellow believer -- with whom your connection has been strained. Take one small, concrete step toward peace this week. It does not have to be a large gesture. It might be a kind word, a moment of patience, or simply choosing not to respond with irritation when you normally would.

Prayer Focus Spend time this week asking God not just for more peace, but for revelation of the love he has already placed within you. Pray specifically: "Lord, show me where I am limiting the flow of your power in my relationships. Teach me to walk in the love that you have already given me."

Closing Thought for the Group

The sermon reminds us that the goal is not simply to be a nice person. The goal is for people who come into contact with us to encounter the very presence of God -- because he lives in us. A perfectly ripe piece of fruit does not have to announce itself. Its quality is simply evident. As a group, pray together that your lives and your relationships would bear that kind of fruit -- not occasionally and not halfway, but fully and consistently, to the glory of God.

Suggested Closing Prayer

Father, we thank you that your love never fails. We thank you that peace is not a feeling we have to chase but a reality we can choose to walk in because you live in us. Forgive us for the places where we have allowed pride, bitterness, envy, and rehearsed hurts to break the connection of unity. We choose today to lay those things down. Teach us to be relentlessly patient, genuinely kind, and deeply rooted in your love. Make us one sound -- not for our own glory, but so that your glory fills this house. In Jesus' name, amen.