

The Peace of God Part 12 – When the Inside Is Stronger Than the Outside

Key Points:

- The enemy's primary tactic in relationships is promoting self-seeking and envy, which opens the door to confusion and every evil work, as described in **James 3:16**.
- Believers are called to pursue peace with all people, meaning to actively chase, hunt, and press forward toward peace rather than waiting for it to happen naturally.
- Spiritual maturity requires personal responsibility, and the scriptures on relational peace are to be applied to oneself first, not used as a measuring stick for others.
- Unity, not uniformity, is what allows the Holy Spirit to move powerfully in a church body.
- Believers do not have to fight when others want to fight, and they do not have to share their opinions simply because they have them.
- Destroying the work of God over personal preferences, comforts, or offenses carries serious spiritual consequences.
- The church often identifies and medicates wounds rather than pursuing true healing through Jehovah Rapha.
- Unhealed offenses hinder the corporate glory of God from manifesting fully.
- Walking in peace with all people is not passive surrender but an active, intentional discipline rooted in obedience to Christ.

The Peace of God Part 12 - 5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

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The Peace of God in Our Relationships

Day 1: The Call to Pursue Peace

Reading: Hebrews 12:14; Romans 12:18

Devotional: Peace is not passive. Scripture calls us to chase it, hunt it, and press forward toward it with intention. Pursuing peace with all people requires personal responsibility, not a waiting game where others must change first. The standard is not what others do but what you do. Ask yourself honestly: have you done everything within your power to live peaceably in your most difficult relationships? Spiritual maturity means taking ownership of your role in conflict before examining anyone else's. Today, identify one relationship where you can actively pursue peace rather than waiting for the other person to make the first move.

Day 2: The Danger of Self-Seeking

Reading: James 3:14-16; Philippians 2:3-4

Devotional: James makes a sobering connection: where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil work follow. Many believers pray against confusion and spiritual attack while leaving the door wide open through unchecked selfish ambition. Simply yielding to your feelings each morning without submitting them to God is enough to invite disorder into your relationships. The world system constantly reinforces the message that your comfort, your preferences, and your desires are supreme. Scripture calls you to a different standard. Today, examine your heart honestly. Where are your own desires creating friction in your relationships, and where is God calling you to lay those desires down?

Day 3: Unity Over Uniformity

Reading: Acts 2:1-4; Ephesians 4:3; Psalm 133:1

Devotional: God does not require everyone to look the same, think identically, or share every preference. He does require unity of heart and purpose centered on His will. When believers are in one accord, focused on God rather than on personal agendas, the Holy Spirit moves with freedom and power. The early church experienced this firsthand. Disagreement is not the enemy of unity. Self-seeking is. When your deepest desire is for God's will to be done above your own, you become someone through whom the Spirit can work freely. Today, ask God to reveal any area where your personal preferences are competing with His purposes in your community of faith.

Day 4: Building Up Rather Than Tearing Down

Reading: Romans 14:19-20; 1 Corinthians 8:9-13

Devotional: Paul warns against destroying the work of God for the sake of personal preferences or liberties. The word destroy carries weight: to demolish, to cause to fail, to simply leave without explanation. Every one of these actions carries real consequences in the lives of people around you. The stronger, more mature believer carries a greater responsibility to protect the faith of those who are younger or weaker in their walk. Your freedom is real, but love governs how and when you exercise it. Today, consider whether there is any area of your life where your personal liberty may be causing harm to someone else's faith and growth.

Day 5: Healing That Makes Peace Possible

Reading: Exodus 15:26; Matthew 5:9; Romans 5:1

Devotional: True relational peace is not possible when unhealed wounds remain buried beneath the surface. Our culture is skilled at identifying pain and managing its symptoms but rarely pursues genuine healing. God is Jehovah Rapha, the Lord who heals, not merely the one who covers symptoms or numbs discomfort. He works at the deepest level of who you are, healing injuries, offenses, and bitterness that would otherwise fuel conflict and destroy relationships. The peace God calls you to walk in has already been provided through Christ. It is not out of reach. Today, invite the Holy Spirit into the places you have kept hidden, and ask God for the deep healing and transformed thinking that makes genuine peace with others possible.

The Peace of God Part 12 – Scripture References from the Sermon

Directly Cited:

John 14:27

John 16:33

Matthew 24

James 3:16

Hebrews 12:14

Romans 12:18

Romans 14:19-20

Alluded To or Referenced Thematically:

Acts 2:1-4 (the gathered believers in one accord receiving the Holy Spirit)

1 Corinthians (general reference to conflict in the early church)

Ephesians 4:3 (keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace)

Exodus 15:26 (Jehovah Rapha, the Lord who heals)

Matthew 5:13 (believers as salt)

Ephesians 5:18 (being filled with God)

Suggested Verses Aligned with Themes Discussed:

Philippians 2:3-4 (doing nothing out of selfish ambition)

Galatians 5:19-21 (works of the flesh including envy and strife)

Matthew 5:9 (blessed are the peacemakers)

Romans 8:6 (the mind governed by the Spirit brings life and peace)

Proverbs 17:1 (better a dry crust with peace than a house full of strife)

Overview:

This session focuses on how to pursue and maintain peace in our relationships — at home, at work, and in the church. The sermon draws from **James 3:16**, **Hebrews 12:14**, **Romans 12:18**, and **Romans 14:19-20** to challenge believers to take personal responsibility for the peace they bring to every relationship.

Key Takeaways:

- **Self-seeking is an open door for the enemy.** **James 3:16** makes clear that where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil work follow. Peace in relationships begins with rooting out self-centeredness.
 - **Unity is not uniformity.** The church is called to be of one heart and one mind — focused on God's will above personal preference — while still embracing diversity among its members.
 - **Pursuing peace is active, not passive.** The word "pursue" in **Hebrews 12:14** means to chase, hunt, and press forward. Peace in relationships requires intentional effort.
 - **Personal responsibility is non-negotiable.** **Romans 12:18** calls each believer to do everything within their own power to live peaceably with all people. The verses on relational peace are for us to apply to ourselves, not to use as a measuring stick for others.
 - **Healing must go deeper than management.** The culture tends to identify hurt and medicate it without ever healing it. God, as Jehovah Rapha, offers true healing from the inside out — healing deep enough to transform how we respond even to those who have wronged us.
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Discussion Questions

Opening (Ice Breaker)

1. Think of a relationship in your life — past or present — where maintaining peace required real effort. Without going into unnecessary detail, what made it difficult?

Going Deeper

2. The sermon opened with this quote from "The Peacemaking Church": "Where two or three come together in Jesus' name, there will soon be conflict." Why do you think conflict is so common even among believers? What does that reveal about our human nature?
 3. **James 3:16** connects envy and self-seeking directly to confusion and every evil work. Where do you see self-seeking show up most subtly in everyday life — in your home, your workplace, or your church? Why do you think it is so easy to miss in ourselves?
 4. The sermon made a distinction between unity and uniformity. In your own words, what is the difference? Why does God value unity but not require uniformity?
 5. **Hebrews 12:14** calls us to pursue peace with all people and connects that pursuit to holiness and seeing the Lord. What does it say to you that seeing God is connected to how we treat the people around us?
 6. The pastor said, "I do not have to share my opinion." That statement carries a lot of weight. In what areas of life do you find it hardest to hold your opinion back for the sake of peace? What would it look like to practice that this week?
 7. **Romans 12:18** says, "as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all mankind." The qualifying phrase "as much as depends on you" is important. What is within your control when it comes to relational peace, and what is not?
 8. **Romans 14:19-20** warns against destroying the work of God over personal preferences. The sermon applied this broadly — beyond just food — to coffee preferences, stylistic opinions, and other non-essential matters. Can you think of a time when something non-essential became a source of division? What was the real cost of that conflict?
 9. The sermon closed with a strong point about healing versus medicating hurt. The pastor said the culture is very good at identifying pain and covering the symptoms but not actually healing. How does unhealed hurt in our own hearts affect the peace we bring to our relationships?
 10. The pastor said: "Healing so deep that you will find the best, coldest water for your enemies." What would it take for you to get to that place in a relationship where real hurt exists?
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Practical Applications

This week, choose at least one of the following to put into practice:

1. **Identify one relationship** where you have not actively pursued peace. Spend time in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to show you what role you have played and what step you can take toward peace.
2. **Practice holding your opinion.** Choose one situation this week where you would normally share an unsolicited opinion and intentionally hold it back. Reflect on what that felt like and what it produced in the relationship.
3. **Invite the Holy Spirit into the hurt.** If there is an unhealed injury, offense, or buried bitterness in your heart, set aside intentional time with the Lord this week and ask Him — as Jehovah Rapha — to bring genuine healing, not just management of the pain.
4. **Ask yourself the Romans 12:18 question** in one of your more difficult relationships: "Have I done everything that depends on me?" Be honest with your answer and take one concrete step if the answer is no.
5. **Strengthen the unity around you.** Look for one practical way this week to prioritize someone else's needs or preferences over your own in a group setting — at church, at home, or at work.

Closing Thought

The peace God calls us to in our relationships is not passive, comfortable, or easy. It is something we chase, work at, and press toward — even when others are not doing the same. It begins not with changing the people around us, but with allowing God to change us from the inside out. As the pastor reminded us, this peace has already been provided. The question is whether we will choose to walk in it.

Closing Prayer Points

- Ask God to reveal any self-seeking or envy operating in your heart.
- Ask for the grace to pursue peace actively in your most difficult relationships.

- Ask Jehovah Rapha to bring deep healing to any unresolved hurt that is affecting your relationships.
- Ask for unity — true, God-centered unity — to grow in your church, your home, and your community.