

The Peace of God Part 13 – When the Inside Is Stronger Than the Outside

Key Points:

- Peace is a mandate for believers, not a suggestion, and must be actively pursued with all people.
- Genuine peace does not require compromising biblical truth or Christian values.
- Gossip must not be disguised as prayer requests; true prayer involves faith, not emotional venting.
- Bitterness is a willful holding on to angry feelings that produce slander, wrath, and an inability to reconcile.
- The love of God, as described in **1 Corinthians 13**, takes no account of a wrong suffered and does not brood over injury.
- Spiritual maturity is the most effective and lasting source of peace in relationships, marriage, and family life.
- Believers must choose peace intentionally, declaring it in prayer and refusing to rehearse offenses in their minds.
- Unity in the Spirit is a shared responsibility among believers, and petty disagreements can destroy the work of God.
- The atmosphere of peace in a home has a tangible spiritual effect on those who live there.
- Growing closer to God produces peace, not division; those who are truly maturing in faith become peacemakers.

The Peace of God Part 13 - 5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide: Pursuing Peace

Day 1: The Call to Pursue Peace

Reading: Hebrews 12:14-15

Devotional: Peace is not a passive condition that simply falls upon you. It is something you are called to actively pursue. The writer of Hebrews makes clear that pursuing peace with all people is not optional for the believer — it is a mandate. Bitterness, left unaddressed, takes root and defiles not only you but those around you. Today, examine your relationships honestly. Is there a root of bitterness quietly growing beneath the surface? Choose to uproot it through prayer and obedience. Grace is where victory lives, and grace cannot fully operate where bitterness has taken hold.

Practical Application: Identify one relationship where bitterness may be present. Pray over it specifically by name, releasing that person and refusing to rehearse the offense.

Day 2: Love Keeps No Record**Reading: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7**

Devotional: The love of God does not brood over injury. It does not stew over wrongs the way a slow-cooked pot simmers for hours, growing thicker and heavier with time. Yet that is precisely what bitterness does — it incubates, it stews, it grows. True love, the kind that flows from the Holy Spirit within you, takes no account of a wrong suffered. This is not weakness. This is the most powerful force available to a believer. When you choose to love rather than rehearse an offense, you are walking in the nature of God himself, who forgave you fully and completely.

Practical Application: When a past offense surfaces in your thoughts today, deliberately speak a blessing over the person involved rather than allowing the thought to take root and grow.

Day 3: Do Not Destroy the Work of God**Reading: Romans 14:19-20**

Devotional: Paul's challenge is sobering: the work of God can be undermined over matters that, in the eternal scope of things, amount to very little. The flesh has a remarkable ability to inflate small irritations into massive grievances. Before allowing an offense to take hold, ask yourself honestly whether what you are upset about is truly worth disrupting the unity God has built. Spiritual maturity produces the ability to see conflicts in their proper proportion. As

you grow closer to God, the things that once provoked you begin to lose their power. Pursue the things that build others up rather than tear the work of God down.

Practical Application: Before responding to a frustrating situation today, pause and ask: Is this worth damaging what God is building here? Let that question guide your response.

Day 4: Walking Worthy of Your Calling

Reading: Ephesians 4:1-3

Devotional: Paul writes from prison and still calls believers to walk worthy of their calling with lowliness, gentleness, and long-suffering. The conditions around him did not determine the posture of his spirit. Unity in the bond of peace is something to be actively maintained — it requires endeavoring, striving, making it your aim. You are in covenant with the Almighty, and he does not simply command you to live this way and leave you to manage it alone. He empowers you by his Spirit to bear with one another in love. The harmony that results from that obedience creates an atmosphere that others can feel even when they cannot explain it.

Practical Application: Begin your day by declaring out loud that you are choosing to walk in gentleness and long-suffering toward every person you will encounter. Commit to it before the interactions begin.

Day 5: Spiritual Maturity as the Path to Peace

Reading: Philippians 4:6-9

Devotional: Peace is not merely the absence of conflict. It is a growing, deepening reality that becomes more present in your life as you mature spiritually. The more you love God, the more you become a peacemaker. The more you renew your mind, the less power offenses hold over you. Spiritual maturity is among the greatest gifts you can give to those who live and work alongside you. Your home, your marriage, your workplace — all of these environments are shaped by the condition of your inner life. As the peace of God guards your heart and mind, it begins to overflow into every space you occupy, becoming a witness even before a single word is spoken.

Practical Application: Spend time today in focused prayer and declaration. Speak aloud that you are not a bitter person, that the love of God dwells in you, and that you release any and all

unforgiveness. Let your prayer time be one of genuine faith rather than emotional rehearsal of the problem.

The Peace of God Part 13 – Scripture References from the Sermon

Directly Cited:

Hebrews 12:14 - The command to pursue peace with all people and holiness.

Hebrews 12:15 - The warning against falling short of grace and the root of bitterness defiling many.

Romans 14:19 - Pursuing things that make for peace and edifying one another.

Romans 14:20 - The warning against destroying the work of God over minor matters.

1 Corinthians 13 - Love takes no account of a wrong suffered; love does not brood over injury.

Ephesians 4:1-3 - Walking worthy of the calling with lowliness, gentleness, long-suffering, and endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Alluded to Without Direct Citation:

Matthew 18:19-20 - The principle of two agreeing together in prayer.

Matthew 20:28 - Christ coming not to be served but to serve.

Galatians 5:16-25 - Walking in the Spirit versus the flesh; the fruit of the Spirit.

Matthew 5:9 - Being called to be peacemakers.

Numbers 14 - The first generation dying in the wilderness while the younger generation entered the promised land.

Ephesians 4:31-32 - Putting away bitterness, wrath, and slander.

The Peace of God Part 13 – Personal and Small Group Study Guide

Discussion Questions

Opening

- On a scale of one to ten, how much peace would you say currently characterizes your daily life? What is the biggest factor pulling that number down?

On Pursuing Peace

- The sermon described pursuing peace as an active responsibility, not a passive hope. What does that active pursuit look like practically in your most difficult relationships right now?
- **Hebrews 12:14** calls believers to pursue peace with all people. Who is the hardest person in your life to pursue peace with, and what makes it difficult?
- The pastor said you can stand firmly on biblical truth and still be at peace with someone who disagrees with you. Do you find that easy or hard to believe? Why?

On Bitterness

- Bitterness was described as an internal reel playing on repeat. Have you ever experienced that? What did it feel like, and how did it affect your relationships?
- The sermon noted that bitterness often causes people to explode on someone who had nothing to do with the original offense. Can you think of a time, without naming others, when you witnessed or experienced this?
- What is the difference between acknowledging that someone genuinely hurt you and holding onto bitterness about it?

On Gossip and Prayer Requests

- The pastor drew a clear line between a genuine prayer request and a gossip session dressed up as one. How do you personally evaluate which one you are participating in when you bring a situation to someone else?
- What does a healthy, faith-filled conversation about a difficult relational situation actually look like? What elements should be present?

On Spiritual Maturity and Peace

- The pastor said the primary reason his marriage is healthier today than ever is that both he and his wife are growing spiritually. How have you seen your own spiritual growth change the way you handle conflict?
 - **Romans 14:19-20** raises the question of whether what we are upset about is worth destroying the work of God. What is something you have been upset about recently that, when held up to that question, may not be worth the cost?
 - The pastor described declaring out loud in prayer that he refuses bitterness and blesses those who have hurt him. Do you see the value in practicing this yourself? Do you see the Scriptural principle? What would it take for you to make this a regular practice?
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Practical Applications

This Week, Choose One or More of the Following:

1. Identify one relationship in your life where bitterness or unforgiveness has been quietly building. Spend time in prayer this week specifically naming it, releasing it, and declaring a blessing over that person.
 2. Examine the last few conversations you have had about a difficult situation in your life. Were they genuine prayer requests that released the matter to God, or were they primarily rehearsals of the pain? Make a Biblical decision about how you will handle the next one differently.
 3. If you are a parent or live with others, ask yourself what kind of spiritual atmosphere you are creating in your home. Talk with your spouse, roommate, or family member about one concrete way you can pursue greater peace together.
 4. Memorize or meditate on **Ephesians 4:1-3** this week. Let the phrase "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" become a daily filter for how you approach your interactions.
 5. The next time you feel anger rising in a conversation, pause and ask yourself: Is this response coming from something that has been stewing internally? Take that question to God before responding.
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Closing Reflection

The pastor closed by saying that as believers grow year over year, week over week, and month over month, peace grows with them. Fearlessness grows. The blessing of God grows. And they become a blessing to others rather than a burden.

Close your group time by asking each member to share one word describing the kind of person they want to be known as in their relationships one year from now. Pray together that God would make that growth real, and that each person would leave committed to pursuing peace, not waiting for it.