

Steps That Lead to Peace

by

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SANCTIFY YOUR JOY

"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. 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.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think of these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:4-9).

Those triumphant and rejoicing verses from the pen of the Apostle Paul set forth the key to victorious Christian living today. They offer help with one of the greatest problems faced by our society today. Two times they speak of peace-deep inner spiritual peace. That is the great need of all mankind.

Hear the promise of the apostle, *"The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."* And again, he wrote, *"The God of peace shall be with you. "*

Are you beset with unnamed fears, uncertainties, dread of the future, fear of death or like forms of insecurity ? If so, God has a word for you. "You can know the peace of God. The peace of God will garrison and guard and keep safe your heart and

mind. The peace of God will come to you in the personal presence of the God of peace."

Does your heart cry out to experience that peace? Philippians 4:4-9 gives five wonderful guidelines which, if you will follow them, will lead you to receive and enjoy *"the peace of God, which passeth all understanding."* Let us review those guidelines one by one, and so enter into His peace.

The first step toward peace is this: "Sanctify your joy by relating it to God." That is to say, you can know peace when your rejoicing is "in the Lord." But that leads to another question: How can one so live as to *"rejoice in the Lord"*?

Admonition: walk in the Spirit Live under the government of the "Spirit" and not the "flesh." That is the admonition of Galatians 5:16-25.

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would ... And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (verses 16, 17, 24, 25).

You see, there are two powers seeking to control your life. They are identified as "Spirit" and "flesh." The "Spirit" to which reference is made is the Holy Spirit of God, third person of Holy Trinity. The "flesh" to which reference is made is the depraved and unredeemed part of human nature which is subject to and desirous of sinful appeals and actions. When the Spirit rules, there is peace; when the flesh rules, there is turmoil.

Hear this word from Romans 8:8-11, *"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."*

There are two natures in you if you are a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ. The old unregenerate "flesh" nature is still present and active; the divine nature of God received at salvation is present and active. Each seeks to control your motives, words, attitudes and deeds. That is why there seems to be a warfare going on within you. The Apostle Paul expressed it this way, *"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to Perform that which is good I find not I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me "* (Romans 7:18, 21). If so great a Christian as the man God used to write one-half of the New Testament found such a conflict within his nature, you need not be surprised if a warfare wages in you, too.

The problem is *"the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride Of life"* (I John 2:15-17). *"The lust of the flesh"* is that which appeals because it feels good to the

sensual appetite. *"The lust of the eyes"* is that which appeals because it is so beautiful. *"The pride of life"* is that which appeals because it makes one feel important. The Bible classes all three together and says they are *"not of the Father, but of the world."*

Result: joy without regrets

Only a life lived under the dominion of the Holy Spirit will experience full joy with no regrets. There is no occasion for repentance concerning those things which are approved by the Holy Spirit. He will lead us to do that which is pleasing to God and profitable to men. Psalm 16:11 reads: *"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."* Psalm 36:7, 8 reads: *"How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures."*

Beautiful! The writer of a popular religious song penned these words: "The service of Jesus true pleasure affords. In Him there is joy, without an alloy. 'Tis heaven to trust Him and rest on His word. It pays to serve Jesus each day." The joy which comes from serving God and living a holy life never has regrets or hangovers. Here is a principle which should be written in every heart. It is stated in the Bible in Nehemiah 8: 10, *"The joy of the Lord is your strength."* And that is a fact! You will never have peace with what the world calls "entertainment" or "fun" or "happiness." All of that is external and superficial and artificial. Peace is a matter of the spirit. It is the deep and abiding inner contentment which comes only by a personal relationship with God.

I do not counsel you to be solemn. I encourage you to be joyful. But my admonition is that recorded in Philippians 4:4, *"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice."*

ENCOURAGE YOUR CONFIDENCE

The King James Version of the Bible states it in these classic words: *"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"* (Philippians 4:6, 7).

Kenneth Taylor has paraphrased it in these words: "Don't worry about anything; instead pray about everything; tell God your needs and don't forget to thank Him for His answers. If you do this you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus."

Here is the Bible answer to an important question. "How can I know real peace ? " is answered by, "Keep your faith strong and vital as you encourage confident trust in God." The King James Version says, "*Be careful for nothing.*" That means, "Don't worry about anything. Do not fret or have any anxiety about anything." The admonition is clear: Do not entertain anxious care, but encourage your confident faith. That is the **answer to** the question of how to enjoy real peace.

Are you filled with anxious care which disturbs your peace of mind ? If so, the Bible admonishes you to turn that worry over to God and let Him give you peace instead. First Peter 5:7 reads, "*Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*" That is why you can have confident faith; God cares for you. What a privilege to turn the worries over to our Heavenly Father and rest contentedly in His peace.

The Sermon on the Mount is the greatest sermon ever delivered in human language. It was spoken by the Lord Jesus to His disciples as they were on a mountain which overlooked the beautiful Sea of Galilee in northern Palestine. One portion of that sermon, recorded in Matthew 6:25-34, deals with the problems of fretting and worrying, which destroy peace. From it, there are four principles which encourage our confidence and lead us to the enjoyment of the peace of God.

Have you thought about the fact that most of our worries are about external and material things ? We worry about whether we will have food, clothing, shelter for now and the unknown tomorrows. We fret about investments, savings, insurance, etc. How foolish we are to let such concerns overwhelm us. Look what Jesus has to say about the provision of God for His dear children, and cease to fret.

Life is more than bare necessities

Jesus said life is more than food, clothing, and shelter. He said, "*Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; not yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment ?*" Jesus said that when you worry about material supply, you are worrying about the wrong things. Life means more than having food. It is a greater gift than food; it is more important than nourishment. The God who has your life will also provide the necessities to sustain that life, won't He ? Of course He will.

The body means more than wearing clothes, doesn't it ? He who gave you a body and sustains it in health will provide clothes for you to wear, won't He ? Of course He will. Be concerned what you do with your life and how you use the body God has given you. Set your priorities right in that area; and God will see that you have all you need in material supply.

God cares for all creation, including man

Jesus said God's providential care extends over all and supplies all His creatures (Matthew 6:26-30), including man.

A. Think about food. The birds of the air neither sow nor reap nor gather their

harvests into barns. Yet the Heavenly Father keeps feeding them day by day. A human being, made as he is in the image and likeness of God, is of much greater value than a bird of the air (Matthew 10:31). If God cares for the bird's appetite, He will also provide for His dear children. Stop your worry.

B. Think about clothes. The lilies of the field do not toil nor spin, yet their glory excels that of Solomon in all of his beautiful kingly apparel. The queen of Sheba was overwhelmed by the magnificence of Solomon's court (I Kings 10:4-7), but God's provision for the flowers of the field exceeded that glory.

Here is the application Jesus made: "*Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith ?*" (Matthew 6:30).

C. Think about the body. Man is so helpless conceding his own body that he cannot add to his height nor increase the number of his allotted days (Matthew 6:27). God has all that under His control. Do you suppose such a God will permit His dear children to suffer lack of that which the body needs ? God is working by divine providence (He has provided for every need before the need has arisen!), and it is safe to trust Him.

You belong to God

Jesus said to remember your relationship with God (Matthew 6:30-32). Fretting about food, drink and clothing is a mark of the heathen. The Christian need not be filled with anxiety about them. Jesus said, "*Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things*" (verse 32).

God is the Father of those who are in Christ Jesus by repentance and faith. A great duty of a father is to provide for his children. If an earthly father is concerned about the needs of his children, how much more must our Heavenly Father be concerned about our needs ? He has provided the means of prayer by which we may present our petitions before Him. But even so, He encouraged us with the statement, "*Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him*" (Matthew 6:8). He delights to give what His dear children need.

Keep your values right

Jesus said to keep your values right (Matthew 6:33). "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*" What does it mean to "seek first" the kingdom of God ? It means to pursue His government in your life, to set your heart on Him alone, to make His kingdom your greatest concern. To seek first the kingdom of God means to seek the most important thing in life before you seek any other thing. The promise is that if one seeks the government of God above all other things, God will provide every needed thing for him. That is keeping the values right, putting first things first.

How can one know peace ? Let Him encourage his confidence to trust God for all necessities and seek to follow God in all things.

ENGAGE IN PRAYER

*"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" (Philippians 4:6, 7).*

How can I know peace ? We have come to the third guideline in our quest for peace. Let us review. (1) Peace comes when one sanctifies his joy by rejoicing in the Lord rather than those things which the Lord disapproves. (2) Peace comes when one encourages his confidence by trusting in the Lord and casting all his cares and needs upon Him. Now a third principle. (3) Peace comes when one engages in continuing and earnest prayer.

I do not speak as a ritual of the church nor a discipline for the Christian. I speak of prayer as a personal communion with God. It is speaking with God as one would speak to a loving relative or dear friend. The Bible says instead of worrying, Christians should make their requests known to God with prayer and supplication and thanksgiving. Those who do that find that the peace of God, which is deeper than knowledge, will keep the heart and mind secure in inner assurance.

Let us investigate the kind of prayer which is necessary for peace to reign in the heart. The Bible doctrine of prayer is very extensive, but we will review a few points to encourage our hearts.

Everyone pray

Who can pray ? Every person can pray, whether he has received religious training in it or not. Psalm 34:17 says, *"The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out o all their troubles. "* You see, the righteous person can pray, and God will answer. Psalm 72:12 reads *"For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that, hath no helper."* You see, the needy, poor and helpless can pray, and God will answer. Matthew 7:7, 8 reads, *"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"*. That is God's personal promise, repeated once and again, assuring you that He will answer when YOU pray.

Pray about everything

What are the proper subjects of prayer ? It is tragic that so many people think it proper to pray about "religious" matters (church, forgiveness, etc.) but they cannot pray about "secular" concerns. All of life is a proper subject for prayer.

Jesus said it is appropriate to pray about "*what things so ever ye desire*" (Mark 11:24), "*what you will*" (John 15:7), and "*anything*" (Matthew 18:19). The parent can pray about his children, the businessman about his investments, the student about his studies. There is no area of life which is inappropriate for prayer.

The historical portions of the Bible report how people prayed and how God answered their prayers for many different things. Moses prayed for food and water to sustain Israel in the wilderness (Exodus 15:24, 25). Gideon prayed for guidance in making a decision about his life's vocation (Judges 6:36-40). Samuel prayed for divine help when his nation was in war against a fierce enemy (I Samuel 7:9, 10). Solomon prayed for the presence of God to be manifest in the house of God when the people of God came to worship (I Kings 9:3). Elkanah and Hannah prayed for a son, just as Zecharias and Elizabeth prayed for a son centuries later, and God gave a little boy into the homes of each (I Samuel 1; Luke 1). The early church prayed for the power of God upon her witness for Christ (Acts 4:3-1), and then with equal vigor prayed God to protect Simon Peter while he was in prison because of his preaching (Acts 12). And in every instance, in spite of the content of the petition, God gave the thing asked for. Anything that is right for you to be concerned about, is right for you to talk to your heavenly Father about. Here is a promise to encourage your faith as you pray, "*For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him*" (Romans 10: 12).

Pray all kinds of prayer

Engage in all kinds of prayer. The Bible uses many different words to cover the whole scope of prayer. It speaks of prayer, petition, requests, intercessions, supplications, thanksgiving and like terms. Those terms do not indicate different kinds of prayer but rather different emphases in prayer.

"Petition" is "asking." It is a solemn and earnest request one makes to a superior person. The term is used in the Bible to include all forms of asking" in which the prayer is asking God to give or do a thing. It includes all requests.

"Intercession" is "petition on behalf of another." You offer petition in behalf of personal needs and intercession in behalf of other people.

"Supplication" is intercession which is presented with fervent emotion. It is urgent petition, humble and earnest asking.

"Prayer" is the term we use to include all forms of approach to God. It can be thanksgiving, petition, adoration, confession or any other prayer. Prayer is "the soul's sincere desire" expression of the human heart. expressed to God.

Each Christian has full opportunity to engage in the full scope of praying. The more he engages in the full scope of prayer, the more meaningful his prayers will become to him and to God, and the greater peace he will enjoy because of assurance that God is hearing and answering his prayers.

Don't be afraid to ask God for anything

Include petitions in your prayers. There are two great problems concerning petitions in prayers. (1) Some people present nothing but petitions when they pray. There is little thanksgiving, adoration, confession or other forms of prayer. All of prayer is "bless this, give that, do the other." Such prayer is a form of spiritual immaturity. (2) Some people think it is not appropriate to ask God for anything when they pray. They think they are on their own, as separated from divine aid as are the heathen. Such prayer is indication of misunderstanding.

The Bible recognizes that asking God for particular and specific things is a proper part of prayer. It speaks of our "asking" and God's "giving.". Do not hesitate to ask when you pray, but let your prayer be filled with thanksgiving, too.

But what does that have to do with the Christian's enjoyment of peace ? It is essential. The life without prayer is the life without peace. Look back to Philippians 4:6, 7, *"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. "*

Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:23, 24).

The third guideline on the pathway to peace is this: "Engage in Prayer."

CONTROL YOUR THOUGHTS

Philippians 4:4-11 sets forth five guidelines which, when followed, lead to a life filled with peace. The steps are as follows. (1) Sanctify your joy by "rejoicing in the Lord," verse 4. (2) Encourage your confidence by trusting instead of worrying, verse 6. (3) Engage in prayer and talk over everything with our heavenly Father, verse 6. (4) Control your thoughts by thinking on uplifting and honorable subjects, verse 8. (5) Discipline your actions by following the example and teaching of mature men and women of God, verse 9.

It is that fourth guideline which we must consider just now. If you would be filled with the peace of God, control your thoughts.

Why is it important ?

Why is it so important that one control his thoughts ? It is important because we become what we think about. The human brain is the most marvelous "computer" ever devised. It was created of God as the control center of the whole person. The thoughts one thinks are like the program which is fed into a computer. As the information given a computer determines its response, so the thoughts a person thinks determines his deeds and attitudes.

The mind is the inmost center of personality. It is the reflective faculty of the human frame where plans are laid and actions are determined. In the mind are the activities of thinking, apprehending, understanding and evaluating. The mind is the key to what one is and what he does.

The thoughts of a person are capable of corrupting or up building. God warns against thoughts of iniquity (Isaiah 59:7) and rebellious thoughts (Isaiah 65:2). It is the person with a "*corrupt mind*" who becomes "*reprobate concerning faith*" (11 Timothy 3:8). The person who is afar off from God is said to be "*alienated and enemies in your mind*" (Colossians 1:21) and walking after the "*vanity*" (emptiness, profitlessness) of the mind (Ephesians 4:17). The Bible says that a person is what he thinks in his heart (Proverbs 23:7).

Wrong thoughts can never produce right living. Wicked thoughts can never live with inner peace. God warned, "*The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked*" (Isaiah 57:20, 21). That is why the person who would live in peace must fill his mind with uplifting and honorable thoughts.

How is it possible ?

How is it possible to discipline one's thoughts ? With that question, we come to the heart of the matter. It is necessary for one to exercise discipline of his thoughts if he would think of honorable things and live in peace.

The apostle Paul wrote of the spiritual warfare going on in the world, saying, "*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds)*" (11 Corinthians 10:3, 4). That warfare is waged in large part in the arena of one's thoughts. Therefore, Paul continues that one is victorious when he is "*casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*" (11 Corinthians 10:5).

What does it mean to "*bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*" ? It means to cause every thought to come under the authority of Christ; to compel every human thought to surrender in obedience to Christ and be available for Christ's service. It means that every thought must be approved by Christ before it is permitted to remain in the mind or be expressed in attitude or act.

The obedient Christian must be alert to what thought processes he permits to transpire in his mind. Thoughts of anxious worry, lust, greed, envy and all other unspiritual thoughts must be cast away. That is why the Christian must be careful what programs he receives on radio and television, what kind of literature he reads, the lyrics of the songs to which he listens and all such matters which feed thoughts into the mind. Some thoughts should be rejected by an act of the will the moment they

come. Others must be rejected when the Holy Spirit makes one aware that the thoughts are not wholesome. Yes, the will is involved in pure thinking.

What are some practical helps ?

How can a person control his thoughts so they will be healthy and helpful ? Consider these suggestions. (1) Resolve to be pure in your thought patterns. (2) Read literature, sing songs and talk with people who contribute to uplifting and honorable thought patterns. (3) Substitute uplifting and honorable thoughts for those of lesser value when you become aware that you are thinking wrong things. (4) Refuse, by an act of your will, to entertain and cultivate thoughts which are hurtful to your mental and spiritual health or which do not strengthen your relationship with God and other people. (5) Memorize verses of scripture to recite and meditate upon when you need another subject to engage your thoughts. (6) Ask God in fervent prayer to make you pure in thoughts as well as in actions that you may be the kind of person you ought to be.

Is a new thought pattern possible ?

Is it possible for one to change his thought pattern after living in sinful ways for years ? Yes, it is possible. The Bible speaks of being "*transformed* (changed, renewed, made over) by *the renewing* (new ideas and standards) *of the mind*" (Romans 12:2). That is the "*renewing of the Holy Spirit*" spoken of in Titus 3:5. The person who yields to God will find the law of God written in his heart and placed in his mind (Hebrews 10:8). The "*eyes of his understanding* " *will* be opened (Ephesians 1: 18) as he is "*renewed in the spirit of his mind*" (Ephesians 4:23). The Christian receives "*the mind of Christ*" when he is saved (I Corinthians 2:16). Yes, it is possible for him to change from thoughts which debase and destroy him to thoughts which uplift and strengthen him. Even after years of evil thought patterns, a person can think and live honorably.

What thoughts are honorable ?

What kind of thoughts are conducive to honorable living ? Paul lists the qualities of good thoughts in Philippians 4:8 as being true, worthy of reverence and honorable and seemly, just, pure, lovely and lovable, kind and winsome and gracious. Those kinds of thoughts are virtuous, excellent and worthy of praise. The person who fills his mind with that kind of thoughts will live a life that is honorable before God and men. Therefore, ask yourself often if your thoughts are of such nature as to meet that standard. You will learn to think honorably.

Does God know our thoughts ?

What is the relationship of God to our thoughts ? The Bible tells us that God knows every thought we think (Psalm 139:2). It warns us that God will bring us into

judgment for every idle word (which is produced, of course, by idle thoughts) which we shall speak (Matthew 12:36). It promises that God can change our thoughts so that they are characterized by righteousness and goodness rather than by sin and harm. To be wholly right with God, you must be right in your thoughts as well as in your deeds. No one can have peace unless he is right with God. Therefore, the way to have peace is to control your thoughts according to the will of God.

DISCIPLINE YOUR ACTIONS

Someone has given the principle to guide Christian conduct in these words: "So let your lips and lives express the holy gospel we profess." That is a lovely way of saying, "Be what you have become. Make your actions agree with your character." It is that principle which is expressed in Philippians 4:9. The apostle Paul writes that section of the epistle to tell the Christians there how to enjoy God's peace in daily life. He had spoken of "*the peace of God, which passeth all understanding*" as guarding their "*hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*" (4:7). Now he writes, "*Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you*" (4:9).

Please do not misunderstand the spirit of the great apostle. He did not mean to set himself up as the boastful example of the Philippians converts. Remember that they did not have the New Testament scriptures at the time he wrote those words. Many believers, new converts, in Philippi would wonder how to behave in this situation or that situation.

Paul said, I have been a believer for a long time. Practice what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and model your way of living after me. When you live that kind of life, God will manifest Himself in your life as the God of peace of untroubled, undisturbed, well being. He will be with you personally and perpetually." The Christian must discipline his actions if he would live in peace. Every man has in himself a God given conscience which approves right and condemns wrong. His conscience will "accuse" or "excuse" him, according to the manner of his conduct (Romans 2:15). No one can live in peace when suffering the accusations of a guilty conscience. Yes, right living is essential to peace of conscience. Therefore, discipline your actions.

Follow mature examples

Discipline your actions by following the example of mature Christians. That admonition follows the practice accepted in all of life. A young man serves as apprentice to a carpenter before he is recognized as a skilled carpenter who can work alone. A graduate of medical school must serve a time as an intern under the supervision of other physicians before he is certified to practice medicine. It is not surprising, therefore, that an immature Christian is instructed to follow the example

and lifestyle of those more mature than he.

Philippians 3:17 reads, "*Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example.*" Hebrews 6:11, 12, reads, "*Show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end ... be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.* "

The very word used commonly in the new Testament to describe Christians is the term "disciple." A disciple is a student, a learner, a follower after the teacher. You can have no higher business in life than to be disciplined by a more mature Christian and to disciple one less mature than yourself.

Every person needs help. God has made Christians interdependent upon one another, just as the members of your physical body are dependent on one another. There are people who need you; there are people you need. Your life will be blessed and your peace will be increased as you share it with other people. Every Christian must discipline himself to follow the example of those more mature than he.

Live by biblical principles

Discipline your actions by living according to principles taught in Holy Scripture. Life operates according to specific laws. There are laws of nature. There are laws of physical health. There are laws of nations. In the spiritual realm, there are laws which govern there.

Who makes the laws which govern the spiritual realm ? There are several sources to which one may look. (1) Some people are a law unto themselves, holding the right thing is their own opinion or preferences. (2) Some people look to their church or denomination to tell them what to believe and how to behave. (3) Some people deny that there are any laws at all which govern the spiritual life of man. (4) Some people believe the Bible is the guidebook for human living, having complete authority in all matters of faith and practice because it has been given by the God who is sovereign ruler over all persons and things.

I believe the Bible to be the complete and perfect revelation of the principles which govern man's relationship with God and with man. In all matters of doctrine and practice, we must follow the principle of Isaiah 8:20, "*To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*"

That means every person must live according to Bible principles if he would live in peace. No person can break the moral and spiritual principles of God without suffering sin and guilt as a result. That constitutes him a sinner, a wicked person in rebellion against God. The Bible says, "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isaiah 57:20, 21).

Submit to Holy Spirit leadership

Discipline your actions by yielding to the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God. *"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children"* (Ephesians 5: 1). *"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit"* (Galatians 5:16, 17, 25).

To refuse to submit to the Lordship of Christ, as manifest by the leading of the Holy Spirit, is to rebel against God and to grieve the Holy Spirit. No one can live in peace while he resists, quenches and grieves the Spirit of God. The *"unity of the spirit"* is *"the bond of peace"* (Ephesians 4:3). The Spirit convicts the erring person of the sinfulness of his way and the guilt he is bearing. There can be no peace until the guilty one receives forgiveness through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is permitted free rein in his heart. No person can be happy when the Lord God is grieved because of sin in that person's life. That is why the Bible admonishes, *"Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption"* (Ephesians 4:30).

So we come to the conclusion of our study of the **"Steps that Lead to Peace."** On the basis of Philippians 4:4-9, we have seen five God-given guidelines to lead us to the path of peace.

(1) Sanctify your joy by rejoicing in the Lord, verses 4, 5. (2) Encourage your confidence by trusting instead of worrying, verse 6a. (3) Engage in prayer by talking to God about everything of concern to you, verse 6b. (4) Control your thoughts by refusing to think on evil and concentrating on good things, verse 8. (5) Discipline your actions by following the example of mature Christians who are living by Bible principles as taught by the Holy Spirit, verse 9.

The world is offering many things as substitutes for peace. Not one nor all of them will satisfy. God has made man for Himself, and man will find peace only as he finds it in a true and personal relationship with God.

"Acquaint now thyself with him and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee" (Job 22:21).