

STUDY 4

Peace: “The Peace of God... Will Guard Your Hearts”

ROMANS 5:1-8; 12:16-21; PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9

We usually define *peace* in negative terms such as the “absence of tension” or “living without hostility.” When we regard peace only as the absence of conflict or tension, we may feel that the way to peace is in manipulating our circumstances to eliminate stress.

Augustine of Hippo captured a more biblical view in his definition of *peace* as “the tranquility of order.” For the Christian, there are three applications of the experience of peace. We have “peace with God,” or spiritual order; “peace on earth,” or relational order; and “the peace of God,” or psychological order. True peace is that overall sense of well-being that comes from knowing that, our lives are in God’s control.

1. When was the last time you felt “at peace”? What made you feel that way?

READ ROMANS 5:1-8.

Peace with God: Spiritual Order

2. According to this passage, what does it mean to have peace with God (see also 5:10)?

3. In what things can we rejoice (verses 2-3)?

How would these things contribute to our peace?

4. What is the Holy Spirit’s part in securing our hope (verse 5)? What do you think is our part?

5. How does God’s demonstration of love in Christ affect your overall peace of mind?

READ ROMANS 12:16-21.

Peace on Earth: Relational Order

6. What things prevent us from living in harmony with others?

7. Why not repay evil with evil?

- ✎ 8. What actions will result from taking seriously Paul's command in verse 18?

How do you live this out when the other party doesn't cooperate?

9. What is difficult about following the principle in verse 20?

Have you ever been treated like this by someone else? How did you respond?

10. How does having peace with God affect your ability to live peacefully with others?

READ PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9.

The Peace of God: Psychological Order

- ✎ 11. What is Paul's prescription for having the peace of God?

How does this differ from our culture's view of achieving inner peace?

12. What is the relationship between prayer and the peace of God?

✧ 13. Paul encourages us not to be anxious about anything. Is all anxiety sin, or are there times when anxiety and concern are appropriate? Discuss.

✧ 14. How does having peace *with* God affect your ability to experience the peace *of* God?