



Fruit of the Spirit: Peace

Galatians 5:22-23



Peace is something that everyone wants. They want it in their nations, in their relationships, and in their own hearts. Those who believe in Jesus are sealed with God's peace.

Day #1: Seeing the Unseen

Just because you can't see something with your eyes, doesn't mean it isn't there. Can you see air? (No.) Blow on your arm. Can you feel the air? Is it real? (Of course it is.)

There was a wonderful prophet of God back in the Old Testament named Elisha. There was also a very bad king who wanted to capture Elisha. One night, the king sent his army to surround the city where Elisha was.

Early the next morning, Elisha's servant went outside and saw the fierce army surrounding them. He became very frightened because he thought he and Elisha were as good as dead. The servant did not have peace! But Elisha was completely calm because he knew that God was in control. He told his servant not to be afraid.

+ *Elisha prayed, "Lord, open my servant's eyes so he can see." – 2 Kings 6:17a*

When the servant looked back outside, he saw something amazing! The hills were actually filled with warrior angels standing between Elisha and the enemy army! God's angels were there to protect Elisha the entire time; the servant just couldn't see them until God allowed him to. Elisha lived in peace because he was certain that God was with him even though he could not see Him. (The Bible tells other stories very similar to this one: Daniel 10, Acts 9:1-16, Hebrews 12:1, Ephesians 3:10).

***** Just because we can't see God at work doesn't mean that God isn't working! God is always at your side, always protecting you, just like

Day #1 continued:

He was with Elisha. When you feel overwhelmed or frightened, pray the prayer of Elisha. Ask God to open your spiritual eyes so that you can see where He is at work around you.

Day #2: Who's in Control?

This is a silly scenario that would never happen, but what if you were on an airplane and the pilot fainted? Suddenly YOU were put into the pilot's seat, and you had to land the plane! The safety of all the passengers would depend entirely on you. How would you feel? Would you feel calm and peaceful deep inside? Most likely, you'd be panic-stricken! Why? Because flying an airplane is not something you are able to do.

Then, imagine that suddenly another man entered the cockpit and told you that he is a pilot who happened to be on the plane. How would you feel as he sat down at the control panel? Your panic would turn to peace because this man knows what he's doing. He is able to handle the airplane.

We feel panic or a lack of peace when we know that we are in a situation that we cannot take care of. What we often forget is that we are ALWAYS in the hands of our all-powerful God and there's nothing that He can't handle.

+ *Lord and King, You have reached out your great and powerful arm. You have made the heavens and the earth. Nothing is too hard for You. – Jeremiah 32:17*

***** You probably won't be asked to fly an airplane any time soon. But what situations are in your life that you cannot control? (Maybe a friend is moving away, or maybe a loved one is sick.) The next time you are not at peace because you are in a difficult situation, remember that God is at the control panel of your life. There is peace in knowing that God can handle every situation.

Day #3: Give it Up!

Try lifting different objects. Lift a pencil, then a pillow, and then a backpack full of books. Choose several items of different weights. Which was heaviest? Which was lightest?

Sometimes the cares and worries in your life can feel like a weight in your heart. Some cares are heavier than others.

 Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you. - 1 Peter 5:7 NLT

This verse tells us to give all our worries to God. The original word for "give" is **epiripto**, which means cast upon, or give up. The verse doesn't say that God will step in and **take** your cares away from you. It is an act of your will to **give** your cares to Him. He can handle the heaviest load.

Have you ever had a problem that weighed heavily on your heart? Every once in a while you might even get distracted and forget about that issue or situation. But then you remember the problem, and you feel like a cloud of gloom overtakes you. These are the heavy loads that God invites you to cast upon Him.

 Try to name a problem that God cannot take care of. Praise God, there isn't one!

Day #4: Pass the Peace

It is so wonderful to have God's peace, but we cannot just keep that peace to ourselves. When a friend or classmate is troubled, share your source of peace with them. Tell them that you know for certain that God is in control and that you trust that He won't let anything happen to you that is not what's best for you.

 You can actually practice what you would say to a friend. This is called role-playing. Ask your mom or dad to pretend he or she is a friend at school who has a problem (maybe they got a bad grade, maybe their pet ran away). Act out a conversation between you and this friend.

How do you know when a friend has a problem?

Day #4 continued:

How could you ask what is wrong? Is there a Bible verse you can share with them? Here's a great one to share:

 *And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.* - Romans 8:28

When you practice saying the words, you will be more likely to try it with a real friend who needs to hear your good news!

Day #5: Peace with Everyone

Trusting God gives us inner peace. But there is another kind of peace. Jesus wants you to live in peace with everyone around you. Hmm...everyone. Does that include your brothers and sisters? Of course it does.

 *If possible, live in peace with everyone. Do that as much as you can.* - Romans 12:18

There are two parts to living in peace with others: the way you act toward people, and the way you react to them.

First of all, act kindly to others. Treat others well. Don't do things that are harmful, hurtful, or hateful. God's Spirit lives in you. His Spirit is none of those things. His Spirit is loving, kind, gentle, and patient (Galatians 5:22-23). If you do things that are unkind, you are not depending on His Spirit (Galatians 5:16).

Secondly, don't react badly when someone is unkind or annoying. God's Spirit lives in you, giving you the power to hold your tongue when you are hurt or frustrated. When you depend on God's Spirit, you will not react in the "natural" way. You'll surprise people by reacting in a kind, gentle way. When you act and react well, your peaceful life will point those around you to Jesus.

 Give yourself a grade. How well do you act toward others? How well do you do in the area of reacting? The more time you spend with God, the more His Spirit will control your actions and reactions so that you will live in peace with everyone.