

## Peace

Isaiah gave us this prophecy: **For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.** (Isaiah 9:6)



And at Jesus' birth, angels spoke: **For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ... suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”** (Luke 2:11-14)



As we approach the celebration of Christmas, “Christ’s Mass,” it is good to review once again the words of the prophets who pre-announced Christ’s coming, and also the sayings of Jesus as reported by the Gospel writers. This month I want to focus on peace.

“**Prince of Peace**” — if that name belongs to Jesus, and most Christians agree that it does, then what do we make of these words of Jesus? **“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.”** (Matthew 10:34)

Jesus explained himself later when He told His disciples, **“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”** (John 14:27)

And the Apostle Paul wrote this: **Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.** (Philippians 4:6-7)

We see from these Bible passages that there are two kinds of peace. There is worldly peace, which really just means the absence of conflict. It is like happiness — it depends on the circumstances. Worldly peace is easily destroyed when sin results in distrust, envy, greed, anger, or injured pride. The world’s peace is always conditional, and when conditions change, that peace is gone. It was nice while it lasted — but it never lasts very long. World War One was called by some “The war to end all wars.” How long did that post-war peace last? Not very long at all.

God’s peace, the peace that Jesus offers us, is different. The world’s peace is like happiness; temporary and very easily lost; peace with God, the peace that Jesus gives, is like joy. It is a blessing that He offers unconditionally, all the time, to every person, and nothing can destroy it except willfully turning away from God.

Worldly peace cannot maintain itself. It must either be enforced by overwhelming power, as was the *Pax Romana*, (Roman Peace, approximately 27 BC to 180 AD); or kept in place by mutual consent — a “peace treaty,” which is to be honored by the nations or ethnic groups that have agreed to it. But, without exception, every peace treaty is broken as soon as one or another of the parties sees an advantage in breaking it. Worldwide peace has never existed and never will.



God’s peace, by contrast, is a covenant that God offers to every person. It is based on His sovereignty, His goodness, His mercy, and His unconditional love for each human being — including you and me. We can receive His peace, and live in it and enjoy it; or we can refuse it; we can shut ourselves out of it, by our attitudes and our actions.

How can we know this peace that God offers us? Here’s a clue: **You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.** (Isaiah 26:3)

The way to have continuing “perfect peace” with God is to “stay your mind” — constantly focus your attention — on Him; accept and maintain the relationship He desires to have with you; and then, simply trust Him. **Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.** (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Here’s another thing Jesus said, to help us have peace with God: **“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”** (Matthew 11:28-30)

To have “rest for your soul” is to be at peace with God.

A yoke is a device that is placed on the necks and shoulders of two oxen or other animals, so that they will work together to pull a



load. Often a young, untrained animal is paired with an older, well-trained one, so that the younger can learn from the older. Jesus is saying to His followers, “Come, share this yoke of mine, be yoked together with me in the service of God, and I will teach you how to do the work we are to do together.” And when we are learning from Him, and sharing the work with Him, He makes the work “easy” and “light,” because He is doing the major share of it. And when we are willingly sharing his “yoke,” following His lead and obeying His instructions, which He gives us by the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit, then we will find “rest for our souls.” **And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus.** (Philippians 4:7)

Sometimes we need a formula as a guide, so I’ll propose one. Use it or adapt it to meet your needs.

**1. Believe that God loves you.** First and always, keep that truth in mind. Regardless of anything you may have done or not done; He loves you. I don’t say that what you’ve done doesn’t matter — it does — but it doesn’t affect His love for you in any way. You can’t make Him love you less, and there is no way He could ever love you more than He does.

**2. Ask for help.** You should thank God first for saving you (yes, He has already done all that was necessary), then ask Him to fill you with the Holy Spirit, to help you and guide you in every way. **“If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”** (Luke 11:13) Then invite the Holy Spirit to guide you each day.

**3. Spend time** with the Son and the Father. Read your Bible, expecting to find things in it that you need to know. Pray, to praise God, to intercede for others and yourself, and just to listen as you invite Jesus to join you. Pray as if He is sitting next to you, with His arm around you — because He is. Ask Him to help you feel His presence.

**4. Trust God.** He will not always do what you want or what you expect, but He will always do for you what is best for you; what helps accomplish His will; and what gives Him glory in the eyes and minds of people, because seeing and appreciating His glory is a major blessing.

God cannot be coerced, manipulated, or obligated to satisfy your will; but He is always ready, willing, and able to help you do whatever is according to His will. And you should be wise enough to know that your will is good only when it is in accord with His will. “Father, Your will be done” is the best prayer we can pray, and the only prayer we can be certain He will always answer.

**5. Be a peace-maker.** Be someone who makes both kinds of peace. Help others to know God’s peace, by loving them and sharing the Gospel with them. Also, promote peace instead of conflict; forgiveness instead of anger; and so on. Here is Paul’s instruction: **Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”** (Romans 12:17-19)

Finally, to summarize: **And [now] let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.** (Colossians 3:15)

Be blessed and be at peace, my brothers and sisters in Christ!

*Brother Roland*

[Being at Peace, in spite of] **Burnt Toast**  
by Deb Billy Graham

When I was a little girl, my Mom liked to make breakfast food for dinner every now and then. And I remember one night in particular when she had made breakfast after a long hard day at work. On that evening so long ago, my mom placed a plate of eggs, sausage and extremely burnt toast in front of my Dad. I remember waiting to see if anyone noticed! Yet all my Dad did was reach for his toast, smile at my Mom and ask me how my day was at school. I don't remember what I told him that night, but I do remember watching him smear butter and jelly on that toast and eat every bite!

When I got up from the table that evening, I remember hearing my mom apologize to my dad, for burning the toast. And I'll never forget what he said, "Baby, I love burnt toast." Later that night, I went to kiss Daddy goodnight and I asked him if he really liked his toast burnt. He wrapped me up in his arms and said, "Debbie, your momma put in a hard day at work today and she's real tired. And besides — a little burnt toast never hurt anyone!" In bed that night, I thought about the scene at dinner and the kindness my Daddy showed to my Mom.

To this day, it's a cherished memory from my childhood that I'll never forget. And it's one that came to mind just recently when Jack and I sat down to eat dinner. I had arrived home late, as usual, and decided we would have breakfast food for dinner. Some things never change, I suppose! To my amazement, I found the ingredients I needed and quickly began to cook eggs, turkey sausage, and buttered toast. Thinking I had things under control, I glanced through the mail for the day. It was only a few minutes later that I remembered that I had forgotten to take the toast out of the oven! Now, had it been any other day, I would have started all over. But it was one of those days and I had

just used up the last two pieces of bread. So burnt toast it was!

As I set the plate down in front of Jack, I waited for a comment about the toast. But all I got was, "Thank You!" I watched as he ate bite by bite, all the time waiting for some comment about the toast. But instead, all Jack said was, "Babe, this is great. Thanks for cooking tonight. I know you had a hard day!" As I took a bite of my charred toast that night, I thought about my Mom and Dad — how burnt toast hadn't been a deal breaker for them. And was quietly thankful for having a marriage where burnt toast wasn't a deal breaker either!

You know life is full of imperfect things and imperfect people. I'm not the best housekeeper or cook. And you might be surprised to find out that Jack isn't the perfect husband! But, somehow in the past 37 years Jack and I have learned to accept the imperfections in each other. You might say that we've learned to love each other for who we really are! We share the same goals. We love the same things. And we still are best friends. We've traveled through many valleys and enjoyed many mountain tops. And yet at the same time, Jack and I must work every minute of every day to make this thing called "marriage" work!

What I've learned over the years is that learning to accept each other's faults- and choosing to celebrate each other's differences- is one of the most important keys to creating a healthy, growing, and lasting marriage relationship. We could extend this to any relationship, in fact, as understanding is the base of any relationship, be it a husband-wife relationship or parent -child or friendship."

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**Moving?** If your address is changing, please send me your new address. Maryland inmates, don't forget to include your SID number. I would like to keep sending you the "Good News Guide" for as long as you'd like to receive it. As always, if you want to send me a question or a comment, send them to me at this address:

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# Things that hinder us or help both kinds of PEACE.

## Puzzle:

S C Y R M I M P A T I E N C E T A U A H P G G T W Q W F Z F J T  
S R O C B L K Z N C Q B V L L I X R H G L I R U Z N L M X L N W  
E U W Y R C A E D Z Y Q S U I L T O G G I O H A N Z G W F Z Z E  
N E M Y I E M C O N T E N T I O N F N U F T R S T Y R M J E V T  
E L X Z G E M T Z A R A J V L E M I D M M O A T D I S F H O K L  
V T S S E N L U F H T I A F S U D R O O T E S T N N T T L P J I  
I Y S R F C I F E J M E N T Q N S C U S F V N Z I O E U R I W X  
G N G S T H N R D C D C Y N A U K N Z T N U I T O O C I D E B N  
R A O L E L S E A W N O I T A R E D I S N O C Z S I N F R E S F  
O F O I H N Y S I C X E S D I S S A T I S F A C T I O N L F S S  
F T C E S V N N E D F R I Z R Y S T R U S T W O R T H I N E S S  
S S E N L U F E G N E V Y T S D P R F S E R E Y Y N F Q Q P S V  
C T T I W A F A P D D B H U A I N A S N N G T S K E G Y I I P G  
C P H S U A R N N O L N O G H P Y E C G N L B S E M G T G R R N  
P J U S U Q U U O G L L I S T T N F N G A Q V E C E E B A R E I  
I I M E N R S X S C A I W K I H F I S Y E X S N I G P Y F E S T  
Q E I N O I T A R E P O O C S D S S O Y M S Q E D A E A F C T H  
X U L L M E R S J O L D O I I S E L G G E L X L U R S M I O F G  
W D I U I H A I I L X N F T E N D E R N E S S T J U T I R N U I  
M N T F A Y T N E D T L G L L B N Y H Y X Y X N E O R S M C L F  
S L Y T H P I F M E E R B U H E Q S N G D X R E R C U T A I N I  
M E R H S C O I N S U N F O R G I V E N E S S G P N T R T L E J  
R E C G S S N T N D B P V O C F M G Y T E I X N A E H E I I S D  
D V L U W S M U G E L A S I L W O B U L L Y I N G S F A O A S E  
O I N O R E E E S E G I W E O O Y T N I A T R E C N U T N T C H  
O B R H N I S N H M T L S I D L A E P R L Z U U G E L M B I I H  
V R E T R G T X R Y I T E N S S E N N R O B B U T S N E W O F P  
Y F U E T R Q Y Q I T L E C V D F N G V I C B D K O E N V N I F  
W I C K E D N E S S A S E D T N O G C E Y D J I O H S T I E V A  
U A H M Y B D F T M S F N S C K Q M F E R S E X K L S T U F R V

## Words:

### Hindrances

AGITATION  
ANGER  
ANXIETY  
ARGUMENTS  
BULLYING  
CONFUSION  
CONTENTION  
CRUELTY  
DISOBEDIENCE  
DISSATISFACTION  
DISTRUST  
ENVY  
FEAR  
FIGHTING  
FRUSTRATION  
GRUDGES  
HATRED  
IMPATIENCE  
INSULTS

JEALOUSY  
MEANNESS  
MISTREATMENT  
MISUNDERSTANDING  
NEGLECT  
PAIN  
PREJUDICE  
PRIDE  
SELFISHNESS  
SPITE  
STRESS  
STUBBORNNESS  
TURMOIL  
UNCERTAINTY  
UNFORGIVENESS  
VENGEFULNESS  
VIOLENCE  
WICKEDNESS  
WORRY

### Helps

AFFIRMATION  
AGREEMENT  
BLESSING  
CALM  
CARING  
COMFORT  
CONSIDERATION  
CONTENTMENT  
COOPERATION  
ENCOURAGEMENT  
FAIRNESS  
FAITHFULNESS  
FELLOWSHIP  
FORGIVENESS  
FRIENDSHIP  
GENEROSITY  
GENTLENESS  
GOODNESS  
GRATITUDE  
HELPFULNESS

HONESTY  
HUMILITY  
KINDNESS  
LOVE  
LOYALTY  
MERCY  
OPENNESS  
PATIENCE  
PRAYER  
QUIET  
RECONCILIATION  
RESTFULNESS  
SECURITY  
SELF CONTROL  
SMILES  
TENDERNESS  
THOUGHTFULNESS  
TRUTHFULNESS  
TRUSTWORTHINESS  
UNSELFISHNESS  
WISDOM