



Lasting Peace Comes Only Through Jesus

People around the world long for peace. Satisfying this longing, however, requires a change of heart that is out of reach for everyone apart from God's grace.

Let's consider the definition of lasting peace. Lasting peace is not simply a cessation of hostility. It also includes wholeness and freedom from distress, both of which are outgrowths of harmonious relationships based on reconciliation and restoration. Relationships of this kind are God-ordained, God-directed, and God-empowered.

Lasting peace originating from God begins with one's spiritual transformation, which Jesus describes as one's new birth (John 3:3). A person is spiritually born again by believing his/her personal sins are forgiven by God through the death of Jesus Christ, a spiritual reality that is divinely validated by the resurrection of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 1 Peter 1:3).

John 3:3, Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

1 Corinthians 15:3-4, For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

1 Peter 1:3, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

From a foundational belief in the person and work of Jesus Christ, a believer can consistently experience God-given peace through prayer and loving obedience to the Word of God.

See *God's Peace can be Yours* at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Gods%20Peace%20can%20be%20Yours.pdf> and

Spiritual Realities Before and After Receiving Christ at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Spiritual%20Realities%20Before%20and%20After%20Receiving%20Christ.pdf>

THE WORLD PROMISES PEACE BUT IT IS AN EMPTY PROMISE

As long as people reject God's way, they remain powerless to overcome sin. As a result, they cannot realize lasting peace (Isaiah 59:8).

Isaiah 59:8, The way of peace they do not know, and there is no justice in their paths; they have made their roads crooked; no one who treads on them knows peace.

The Bible warns of Satan's diabolical characteristics, all of which hinder lasting peace.

THE WORLD'S TEMPORARY RULER (SATAN) OPPOSES PEACE

Ephesians 2:1-2, And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—

- He is a murderer and father of lies.

John 8:44, You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

As this verse indicates, Satan's intent is the opposite of peace, producing destruction, deception, and death in the world.

- He disguises himself as an angel of light.

2 Corinthians 11:14, And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

As an impostor imitating God's messengers, Satan's message may sound good and look appealing; but it ultimately leads to death.

- He is committed to destroying people.

1 Peter 5:8, Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

ALL THAT IS IN THE WORLD WILL NOT FOSTER PEACE

As long as people follow the world's values and perspectives, they will never realize the hope of lasting peace, individually or corporately.

1 John 2:16, For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

- Desires (lust) of the flesh—self-oriented gratification of physical desires with little or no regard for the spiritual, emotional, or physical well-being of others
- Desires (lust) of the eyes—contemplation of fulfilling self-centered desires of any kind which manifests itself in coveting anything or anyone thought to be integral to gratifying desires
- Boastful pride of life—vain assurance in one's own resources along with a self-centered arrogance that exalts one's self or position over those perceived to be inferior in education, abilities, popularity, privileges, or status

All the temptations that anyone will ever face are linked to the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and/or the boastful pride of life. All the sins that have been or will ever be committed are characterized by the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and/or the boastful pride of life.

In spite of being inextricably linked to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life, the natural world vainly promises . . . (1) inner peace, peace of mind, (2) peace between individuals, races, and nations and (3) even peace with God! Authentic peace, however, can never come from anything associated with lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life.

THE WORLD'S SYSTEM OFFERS PEACE IN A VARIETY OF EMPTY PACKAGES, ALL ATTRACTIVELY WRAPPED

- Educationally, the emphasis is on *self*. Self-esteem and self-worth have been the catchwords in educational theory for decades, yet research reveals that the “self” emphasis cannot produce what it promises. Promiscuity is rampant among young people. An abortion is considered simply a personal choice. Alcohol abuse has skyrocketed. Drug use by students has proliferated, and legal barriers to harmful drugs are being discarded. Campus crime is on the increase. Academic performance continues to decline, especially in the western world. School officials increasingly usurp parental responsibilities for training and counseling students.
- Politically, the emphasis is on *self*. Election strategies typically focus on convincing the electorate of so-called benefits that are usually linked to lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life. Local, state, national, and international leaders lie with impunity in order to stay in power. Political decisions are made and laws are enacted based on self-interest rather than biblical morality or the common good.
- Relationally, the emphasis is on *self*. A “friend” is simply a contact associated with a social networking website, without thought of any bond of mutual affection. Fathers routinely desert their families, hindering stability for other family members. Pornography has ensnared hundreds of millions of people and is now a major factor in many divorces. Adultery and promiscuity are viewed as “an affair” or “just something that happens” rather than a destructive social cancer on personal lives, families, and relationships. Sex trafficking world-wide is epidemic with the age of sex slaves now routinely below the age of ten. Sexually transmitted diseases proliferate in countries all over the world.
- Culturally, the emphasis is on *self*. A major emphasis is on one's ethnic roots, as if there were something redemptive in one's racial heritage – ignoring the fact that the *very best* any ethnic group has done or will ever do apart from God is actually “filthy rags” in the Lord's sight (*Isaiah 64:6, We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away*). Minimal recognition is given to the deceitfulness of the natural mind (heart) – *Jeremiah 17:9, The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick, who can understand it*. In many countries, ethnic differences that have been unresolved for centuries remain at the heart of continued conflicts. In countries around the world, politically correct phrases abound in order to try to keep the peace between clashing cultures yet disparaging terms continue and hostilities proliferate.
- Spiritually, the emphasis is on *self*. Political and religious leaders have disregarded clear teaching in the Bible about sexual sins in order to legitimize homosexuality. In many areas of life, self-interest and personal

preferences and rights have ascended to prominence over the clear teaching of Scripture. Inside the religious world, self-interest also influences decision-making among professing Christians. For example, church members often make sure their felt needs are met before giving time or treasure to advance the Lord's work. Some church leaders market their churches as being "seeker sensitive," focusing on the perceived self-interests of present and potential adherents in order to promote attendance. Nonetheless, there has been a continual decline in the number of church members over the past quarter century. In addition, church members now routinely "switch churches" based on personal preferences instead of considering how best to serve others in their community and church family for God's glory and others' benefit.

Truly, we live in an age where "everyone does what is right in one's own eyes" (Judges 21:25). Listing all of the on-going destruction in every facet of life in every community and city of the world would take more than one lifetime. People, however, generally do not consider or accurately evaluate the devastating effects that the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life produce globally.

The pronounced self-orientation prevalent all over the world is devastating but often hidden or conveniently overlooked. For example, ethnic cleansing continues as members of one race or nationality murder those unlike themselves. Illicit, harmful drugs are sold worldwide as part of a multi-billion dollar enterprise. Financial scams, identity theft, "under the table" payoffs, and corporate bribery are part of global economic realities. Self-centeredness is at the heart of all these lawless activities.

Largely unreported throughout the globe, more Christians were martyred in the 20th century than all other centuries combined. Currently, 150,000 to 200,000 Christians are murdered each year because of their commitment to Jesus Christ. Isn't it paradoxical that those noted for proclaiming and embracing peace are the ones targeted for murder in many countries? This hostility is primarily due to the disdain and hatred aimed at Christianity's Founder . . . the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 15:18-19 [*Jesus speaking to His disciples*], If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.
¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. [*Explanation added*]

Where is the outcry against Christian genocide?! Why is this practice not condemned globally? It should come as no surprise that many in positions of power are too concerned about their own self-interests to denounce countries, ethnic groups, religious fanatics, or misguided individuals who unashamedly participate in the purposeful annihilation of Christians.

AUTHENTIC, LASTING PEACE COMES ONLY THROUGH JESUS

Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ know the importance of the following truths.

- Jesus destroyed the devil's works.

1 John 3:8, Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

- Jesus made peace with God on our behalf.

Romans 5:1, Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Jesus provides His peace in difficult circumstances.

John 14:27, Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

- Peace between antagonists is provided only through Jesus.

Ephesians 2:11-16, Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

- Jesus reconciled all things to Himself and produces peace by His shed blood.

Colossians 1:19-20, For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

THE PEACE OF JESUS PROVIDES A NEW WAY OF LIVING

Maturing in Christ means a growth in inner peace. When you come to Christ, you not only experience the reality of sins forgiven, but you can also realize His peace in an increasing manner.

Galatians 5:22-23, But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. [*Underlining added for emphasis*]

- Peace is a result of trusting God and keeping one's mind focused on Him.

Isaiah 26:3, You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

- Peace is fostered by a love for the Word of God.

Psalms 119:165, Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble.

- Peace is a benefit of faithful prayer.

Philippians 4:6-7, do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

As a committed believer in Christ, you can realize inner peace even when trouble comes your way.

John 16:33 (*spoken by Jesus*) I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.

God's peace is a priority to be maintained between believers in order for them to experience all that God has in store for them.

Romans 14:19, So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

Ephesians 4:1-3, I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Equipped spiritually, believers are enabled to maintain peace.

Ephesians 6:14-15, Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

Anticipating the return of Jesus keeps believers at peace. In maintaining an eternal perspective, believers remain motivated to maintain peace.

2 Peter 3:14, Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these*, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. (** in previous verses, "these" are the destruction of this world in judgment followed by the creation of new heavens and new earth*)

PERSONAL EVALUATION—IS YOUR LIFE CHARACTERIZED BY LASTING PEACE?

If you are not experiencing lasting peace, your responses to the following questions may help you to answer, "Why not?"

- Are you a believer in Christ? In other words, have you experienced a spiritual new birth by believing in Jesus?

See *Life's Most Important Decision* at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Lifes%20Most%20Important%20Decision.pdf>

- If you are a believer, are you reading and studying God's Word (the Bible)?

See *Divine Sufficiency or Divine Deficiency* at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Divine%20Sufficiency%20or%20Divine%20Deficiency.pdf>

- Do you pray often?

See *Do You Really Believe what You Say about Prayer?* at <http://wordtruth.org/Do%20You%20Really%20Believe%20What%20You%20Say%20About%20Prayer.pdf> and

A Prayer Pattern to Help Structure Your Life at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/A%20Prayer%20Pattern%20to%20Help%20Structure%20Your%20Life.pdf>

- Do you foster peace with others by exhibiting Christ-like love?
See *Are You a Loving Person?* at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Are%20you%20a%20Loving%20Person.pdf>
- Are you centered on Jesus or still depending on yourself?
See *Christ Crucified – The Solution to Self-Dependency* at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Christ%20Crucified%20Study%20with%20Outline.pdf> and
Good Works are not Good Enough and do not Work at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Good%20Works%20are%20not%20Good%20Enough.pdf> and
Jesus IS Lord at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Jesus%20IS%20Lord.pdf>
- Are you living each day in light of Jesus Christ’s return?
See *Signs of Christ’s Soon Return* at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Signs%20of%20Christs%20Soon%20Return.pdf> and
What Does Jesus Mean to You? at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/What%20Does%20Jesus%20Mean%20to%20You.pdf>

As you live in accordance with God’s Word and with the Lord Jesus Christ central to your everyday life, you will experience lasting peace. The world cannot give it, and the world cannot take it away.

See *God’s Peace is Available* at <http://wordtruth.org/PDF/Gods%20Peace%20is%20Available.pdf>

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A Teaching Outline of this Study Begins on the Next Page

LASTING PEACE COMES ONLY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

In light of the times in which we live, let's encourage one another to abide in God's lasting peace and spread the news to everyone who will listen that true peace can only be realized through Jesus Christ.

I. The definition of peace

II. The world promises peace, but it is an empty promise

A. The world's temporary ruler (Satan) opposes peace

- He is a murderer and father of lies

John 8:44, You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

- He disguises Himself as an angel of light

2 Corinthians 11:14, And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

- He is committed to destroying people

1 Peter 5:8, Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

B. All that is in the world will not foster peace

1 John 2:16, For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

- Desires (lust) of the flesh
- Desires (lust) of the eyes
- Boastful pride of life

C. The world's system offers peace in a variety of empty packages, all attractively wrapped

- Educationally, the emphasis is on *self*
- Politically, the emphasis is on *self*
- Relationally, the emphasis is on *self*
- Culturally, the emphasis is on *self*
- Spiritually, the emphasis is on *self*

III. Authentic, lasting peace can only come through Jesus Christ

A. Jesus destroyed the devil's works.

1 John 3:8, Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

B. Jesus made peace with God on our behalf

Romans 5:1, Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

C. Jesus provides His peace in difficult circumstances.

John 14:27, Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

D. Peace between antagonists is provided only through Jesus

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the cross, thereby killing the hostility.¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

E. Jesus reconciled all things to Himself and produces peace by His shed blood.

Colossians 1:19-20, For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

IV. The peace of Jesus provides a new way of living (*application*)

A. Maturing in Christ means a growth in inner peace

Galatians 5:22-23, But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness self-control; against such things there is no law.

- Peace is a result of trusting God and keeping one's mind focused on Him.

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Philippians 4:6-7, do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

B. The peace of Jesus can be yours when trouble comes your way

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C. God's peace is a priority to be maintained between believers

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D. Equipped spiritually, believers are enabled to maintain peace.

Ephesians 6:14-15, Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

E. Anticipating the return of Jesus keeps believers at peace

2 Peter 3:14, Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

Personal evaluation – Is your life characterized by lasting peace?

If you are not experiencing lasting peace, your responses to the following questions may help you to answer, "Why not?"

- A. Are you a believer in Christ? In other words, have you experienced a spiritual new birth by believing in Jesus?
- B. If you are a believer, are you reading and studying God's Word (the Bible)?
- C. Do you pray often?
- D. Do you foster peace with others by exhibiting Christ-like love?
- E. Are you centered on Jesus or still depending on yourself?
- F. Are you living each day in light of Jesus Christ's return?

As you live in accordance with God's Word and with the Lord Jesus Christ central to your everyday life, you will experience lasting peace. The world cannot give it, and the world cannot take it away.

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