

Live Together in Peace

Bring peace to your Christian fellowships and maintain it. Solve problems without quarreling. Do not make an issue out of small things.

**Isaiah 26:3; 2 Cor 13:11; Romans 14:17-19;
Col 3:15; 1 Thess 5:13; 2 Tim 2:23-24**

The Bible declares that the kingdom of God is peaceful. Roman 14:17 declares, *“In the kingdom of God, eating and drinking are not important. The important things are living right with God, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.”*

Therefore, Christians are commanded to live together in peace. It is one of the most important things in God’s society, both His kingdom on earth and His kingdom in heaven. Our relationships should be without all of those things that disturb peace: self-centeredness, quarreling, dissension, destructive competition, lying and distrust, superiority, and all the many other sins.

There is a peace for those who know and trust God that is so deep that it cannot be fully understood. Phil 4:7 tells us, *“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”* This peace is our goal. We all want such peace.

Deeper peace comes when relationships require resolving conflicts that mere pleasantries cannot. The peace of God which passes all understanding and protects our hearts and minds in Jesus, as well as the peace that outsiders will marvel at, comes in the midst of differing opinions, conflicting wants, complicated needs, and anger. The difficulty in bringing peace to unpeaceful people and situations creates spirits with stronger commitment to peace and an ability to value peace more completely.

If we are to bring peace into our Christian relationships, it will be founded on trust in God. The first step in bringing peace into our Christian relationships is for us to be full of peace inside of ourselves.

The foundation of this peace lies in truly believing both the love of God and the sovereignty of God.

The worst thing that could ever happen to us would be to be taken away from God and His love. One of the most wonderful promises in the Bible is found in the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Romans, chapter 8, verses 38 and 39: *“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* We can be peaceful because we will always be loved by God.

And, Jesus promised to always be with those of us who believe, although He is invisible. Hear these things Jesus says to us in the pages of the Bible. Matt 28:20: *“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”* John 14:27: *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.”* John 16:33: *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*

Match all of that with the fact that God is in control of everything, what we call the sovereignty of God. When good things happen, God is in control. When bad things happen, God is in control. Some of us wish that God would control the world so that only good things happen to us and to those we love. And, that was God's original desire also, but the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, chose to bring evil into the world and the human heart. God had to be true to His word, and He brought hardship as a consequence of Adam and Eve's desire to go their own way. More disastrous, Adam and Eve invited evil into the world with their initial act of cooperation with Satan.

Fortunately, this life is short and the life to come for believers is endlessly peaceful. In the worst of situations, peace must come by knowing that upon death, all will be safe and peaceful, and that it will be so forever. Christianity's first martyr Stephen possessed that divine peace that passes understanding while he was being stoned to death. (You can read about that in Acts, Chapter 7.) If we have listened to Jesus, if we believe that He rose from the dead so that we will also rise from the dead, then, impossible as it seems, we can have peace in a world of trouble.

The death and resurrection of Jesus changed everything about Christian relationships. Peace with God had come. Peace with one another was now possible and expected. Living peacefully with one another obviously worships God by following His wishes.

Living peacefully with Christians can be difficult, but the good part is that creating and maintaining peace changes our spirits and makes them more ready for heaven. Whatever we have to do to be peaceful in various circumstances changes us more into the image of Jesus, making our spirits more ready for heaven. In heaven we will not have to change anything inside of ourselves to be full of peace. The old self with its unpeacefulness will have been left behind.

In heaven we will live in peace with one another, and we will not be able to do otherwise. However, our wonder at the peace of heaven will depend on how we took care of peace before death. There are those whose relationships are untroubled and full of peace this side of heaven. When they get there, heaven will feel very natural. Then there are those who lived in unpeaceful relationships and had to lean on the peace that comes from God. In heaven, they will not experience peace as natural, but as a gift from God. Finally, there will be those who came out of either peaceful or unpeaceful relationships and worked at being peacemakers. When they get to heaven, they will sigh with relief that they no longer will have to work so hard at establishing peace.

While we cannot prepare to be more peaceful in heaven, the things that have to be done to establish and maintain peace in Christian relationships now prepare us for many aspects of heaven. Overcoming sins that can cause division and lack of peace in Christian relationships will have their own particular benefits in the life to come. The necessity of living peacefully with one another in our Christian families, Christian marriages and Christian friendships will demand we stretch various spiritual strengths. That spiritual growth will definitely enhance our heavenly experience magnificently with many different kinds of benefits in heaven. Those various gains will come from defeating the different enemies of peace in our relationships. In heaven, we will be happy that we kept the peace in our earthly Christian relationships.

Peace in heaven will be multi-dimensional, filling everything. We will be able to experience that peace much more comprehensively if we put our hearts now into effecting deep peace in our fellowships, not superficial peace through mere niceness. We might think of the peace of heaven in the same way that we know light has different frequencies. Not everyone will be prepared to experience ultra-violet peace.

Since peace in heaven will be unchallenged by anything, growth in being peaceful is best done now against conflict. Clearly, ever challenging situations can create more solid and stronger peace in our

spirits. Hopefully, we can identify situations that in the past left us without internal peace, but can now be met with more peace because we have seen many times in the past God deliver peace out of hurt .

It is best not just to be concerned about our own peacefulness, but to become peacemakers. The usual response to conflict in Christian relationships is to just hope that it will resolve itself. And, often it does. However, when it does not, people are left in torment and they need someone to come in and be a peacemaker.

Parents are those who often cannot stay uninvolved and must become peacemakers when their children are in conflict. However, parents who sit back and hope that their children will eventually get along are living dangerously. Those conflicts can go underground to arise years later as resentments. All throughout those years, there will have been a lack of peace inside the siblings.

Christian Inner Circles must identify lack of peace in marriages. Peacemaking is mandatory if divorces are to be prevented. Those in our Christian Inner Circles must take action when marriages turn sour and without peace. The same is true for conflicts among friends.

There is no standard formula for peacemaking, but the first and most powerful thing for Christians to use is to remind those in conflict that God wants His people to live in peace, not just so they can be peaceful, but that His kingdom be a peaceful place that honors and glorifies Him as well as aids Him in drawing watching unbelievers to faith. How many people curious about Jesus have turned away when they saw conflict between believers?

Reminding Christians that God asks His people to live in peace together does not usually bring peace, but it should motivate the various kinds of action necessary to bring problem resolution and usher in peace. Often various Togethers will be needed. For example, the Together to “Bear with One Another” will often need to be taught and implemented to help conflicting parties allow one another to be who they are. The Together to “Forgive One Another without Being Asked” is almost always applicable, and has wonderful benefits for life in heaven that can motivate those in conflict to bring peace into their relationship by forgiving.

Heaven is so often overlooked that people do not understand that holding on to grudges and unpeacefulness will have eternal effects. The cost is very high and yet Christians are not adequately warned that whatever is causing a lack of peace in Christian relationships is minor when the losses in heaven are considered.

Imagine the joy of being in heaven and being able to have total peace inside with who you are with your strengths and weaknesses, all meant to glorify God. Also imagine the peace of not having to worry at all about discord in relationships. The more we value peace now, the more sensitive to it and appreciative of it we will be in heaven.

* * *

This only minimally explains living in peace together and how to do it. To learn much more, go to our website ChristiansTogether.org and go down the list of the Togethers and click on “Live Together in Peace”.

Prayer to Embrace this Together

O God of Peace, I want to be like You, having Your peace inside of me and taking it into every one of my Christian relationships.

I and those in my Christian Inner Circle will need Your help to grow our spirits to hunger for peace in all of our Christian relationships. Help us to yield to the work of the Holy Spirit for all of us to give You more glory in the way we work toward peace continually. May we cooperate with the Holy Spirit to make our fellowships peaceful as we try to do those things You want us to do with one another, most of which can be troubled by defensiveness and a lack of peace.

Please help us all to become more like Jesus and bring peace into the most troubled relationships. Like Jesus, empower us through the fruit of the Holy Spirit to destroy the enemies of peace when we see them in Christian fellowships. Give us victory over self-centeredness, quarreling, dissension, destructive competition, lying and distrust, and superiority, and promote that victory to Christians trapped in unpeacefulness.

May our lives worship You more because we honor You by accepting Your peace as given to us by Jesus, a peace that can keep our hearts from being troubled and afraid. Since Jesus has overcome the world and all of its troubles, empower us to reach for that peace that comes from the victory of Jesus. Evil in the world does not make You unpeaceful; help us to be like You in that way, trusting in Your ultimate control over the universe.

Make us strong in Your power to defeat the devil by refusing to respond to his evil challenges with unpeacefulness. Empower us by the might of the Holy Spirit to be peaceful when Satan attacks, resting in Your strength and protection.

Help us all to prepare for the peace of heaven by growing more completely to appreciate peace, strive for peace, and become peacemakers. Then we will be able to enter heaven and feel natural with its peace, recognize its peace as the great gift from You that it is, and be relieved that we no longer have to work so hard to bring peace to troubled relationships.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.