

LOVE

Without Hypocrisy

(in the book of Romans)

55 – Peace – When Possible

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.

Matthew 5:9 (NIV)

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you,
live at peace with everyone.

Romans 12:18 (NIV)

PEACE

INVOLVES A HARMONIOUS
RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN TWO ENTITIES.

ABSENCE OF
CONFLICT

PLEASANT CIRCUMSTANCES
OR FEELINGS
RIGHT
RELATIONSHIPS

WELL-BEING IN ALL
AREAS OF LIFE

Scripture describes different types of "peace."

Peace with **GOD**.

Peace with other **PEOPLE**.

Peace with **SELF**.

Peace with **CREATION**.

What characterizes GENUINE PEACE?

- It is **NOT**:
 - A passive attitude that allows compromise, or backs down when truth is attacked.
 - A denial of truth and moral issues. (It refuses to sin; it does not close its eyes to sin.)
- It **does NOT**:
 - Associate with pretension, hypocrisy, false motives, superficial attitudes, etc.

GENUINE PEACE

- It is **always** consistent with:
 - Love and loyalty to God; glorifying God.
 - Personal holiness and righteousness.
 - Proclaiming the Good News about salvation.
 - Building up other people: Promoting what is good for them not only for the present time, but also for eternity.
- It is **always** opposed to:
 - Fake "peace."
 - Anything that is contrary to genuine peace.

LOVE FOR GOD

LOVE FOR NEIGHBOR

Our sin **DESTROYED** our ability to have peace.
But **GOD** has **RESTORED** some of our ability.

- **Unsaved people**: They can comprehend some aspects of peace.
 - ✓ Mainly those related to "external" circumstances.
 - ✓ Things that can be learned through nature, conscience, etc.
- **People who trust and obey Jesus**: The Holy Spirit enables them to grow in experiencing **all aspects** of peace.
 - ✓ This includes "internal" peace that can exist in "unpeaceful" situations.
 - ✓ The Spirit uses the Scriptures to teach and grow them.

God does not give unsaved people an ability to experience 100% of what peace is.

★ WHY? ★

There is no other option!

- **GOD IS WILLING:** He offers it...
But experiencing it requires submission to Scripture.
- **THEY ARE UNWILLING:** They refuse to submit to Scripture! (This includes church-goers who refuse to submit to Scripture – even though they claim to be saved!)

★ "The Logical Conclusion." ★

THE ISSUE: The plight of the unsaved.

- The unsaved: (1) cannot even comprehend some aspects of peace, and (2) often promote what is fake (sometimes in ignorance).

THE CONCLUSION: The obligation of the saved.

- It's the duty of the saved person to promote peace in its fullest and most genuine sense.

A WARNING

to those who claim to be following Jesus, the "Prince of Peace":

- **IF THE UNSAVED** are doing more to promote peace (what little they do understand) than you are, consider yourself rebuked by them.
 - They (though unsaved) are living more righteously than you (who claim to be saved)!
- **IF YOU** are unwilling to follow Jesus in this matter, then quit pretending that you are following him ...
 - ... because you aren't following him!

FOR ALL WHO ARE SAVED:

GOD has called
you
to PEACE.

God has called you to live in peace. } THIS APPLIES TO ALL SITUATIONS IN LIFE.

1 Cor. 7:15b (GW)

You are commanded... you have an obligation.

To pursue / promote peace... all kinds of peace.

- PEACE (and a LOVE FOR PEACE) must characterize the way you interact with others.

Seek peace, and pursue it!

Psalm 34:14b (GW)

THERE ARE BLESSINGS ASSOCIATED WITH OBEDIENCE!

There is ... joy for those who promote peace.

Proverbs 12:20 (NIV)

PROMOTING PEACE ... With Who?

- **In your spiritual relationships:** Your family in Christ.

Dear brothers and sisters... Encourage each other. Live in harmony and peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you.

2 Cor. 13:11 (NLT)

- **In your natural relationships:** Everybody you meet, such as...

- Family
- Community
- Enemies

Pursue peace with everyone, ...

Heb 12:14a (ISV)

Such commands allow for **NO EXCUSES!**

"I DON'T LIKE THEM... THEY IRRITATE AND OFFEND ME."

You need to repent of your refusal to love your neighbor.

"I'M JUST NOT A PEACEABLE PERSON... IT'S JUST NOT MY GIFT."

It requires obedience, not giftedness.

"I KNOW I SHOULDN'T BE THIS WAY... BUT I CAN'T HELP IT."

Then the Holy Spirit is not in you. Only unsaved people "can't help it."

"I TRIED IT AND THEY DIDN'T RESPOND... NOW, THEY NEED TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE!"

Their disobedience does not justify your disobedience.

Such commands allow for **NO OMISSIONS!**

"Just with Christians."

Rather: ALL people. ✓ Saved and unsaved.
✓ People within your community.
✓ Even enemies.

"Just certain types of peace."

Rather: ALL types of peace.
✓ Types that can be naturally promoted.
✓ Types that require the work of the Holy Spirit within you.

"Only if they respond back in peace."

Rather: Your obligation remains, regardless of their response.

PEACE will not always be possible.

If **it is possible**, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Romans 12:18 (NIV)

**THOUGH YOU WANT IT,
THEY MAY REFUSE TO ALLOW IT.**

PEACE Will Sometimes Be Impossible.

EXAMPLE #1 – WHEN THEY OPPOSE PEACE.

- They may be hostile to it.

As for me, I am for peace;
but when I speak, they are for war!

Psalms 120:7 (NLT)

★ | **Make sure the hostility is not from you.**

EXAMPLE #2 – WHEN THEY PROMOTE FAKE PEACE.

- They may place restrictions on it that are contrary to Scripture: sin and error.
- They may be filled with pretension, evil motives, moral compromise, etc.

... wicked people, ... who speak of peace with their neighbors but have evil in their hearts.

Psalms 28:3b (GW)

★ | **Make sure the fakeness is not there because of YOU.**

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Romans 12:18 (NIV)

Whatever the reason, if peace does not exist, MAKE SURE IT IS NOT BECAUSE OF YOU!

- They may "take" offense
> because you love truth and righteousness, and they hate it...
- But don't "cause" offense
> because of sin on your part (including an unwillingness to actively obey this verse).

[THEM] "I AM OFFENDED!"

[YOU] "I AM OFFENSIVE!"

{ THERE IS A BIG DIFFERENCE! }

You must maintain LOVE for God and neighbor.

Jesus replied: " **Love the Lord** your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment.

And the second is like it: **Love your neighbor** as yourself.' "

Matthew 22:37-39 (NIV)

IF YOU LOVE GOD AND NEIGHBOR, THE WORLD MAY OPPOSE YOU.

If you have **LOVE FOR GOD**, you will ...

- Not compromise holiness and righteousness, when pursuing peace.
- Make holiness your #1 objective – this has to do with peace with God!

If you have **LOVE FOR NEIGHBOR**, you will ...

- Be willing to rebuke and oppose their sin, when necessary.

**THESE ACTS MAY RESULT IN CONFLICT, DISPLEASURE AND OPPOSITION!
BUT IT WON'T BE YOUR FAULT, BECAUSE YOU DID NOTHING WRONG!**

THEY MAY HATE YOU, EVEN THOUGH YOU HAVE DONE NOTHING WRONG.

My enemies are many;
they hate me though I have
done nothing against them.

Psalms 38:19 (NLT)

Those who hate me without cause
are more numerous than the hairs on my head.
These enemies who seek to destroy me
are doing so without cause.

Psalms 69:4a (NLT)

THEREFORE...

Don't be surprised when the world opposes your attempts to promote **GENUINE PEACE**.

- ✓ Consider how they treated Jesus, the
"Prince of Peace"!

'They hated me without cause.'

John 15:25b (NLT)

And he will be called ... Prince of Peace.

... you have betrayed and murdered him ...

Isaiah 9:6b; Acts 7:52b (NIV)

Your Mission...

**BE A FOLLOWER OF JESUS, AND
PURSUE PEACE ...**

★ **REGARDLESS OF THE WAY
OTHERS MAY RESPOND!** ★

Credits

SCRIPTURE

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Your Mission...

**"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you,
live at peace with everyone."**

Romans 12:18

GENUINE PEACE

Here are some of the characteristics that separate
genuine peace from the counterfeits.

This peace is something that the unsaved *cannot*
comprehend - Romans 3:17.

ITS SOURCE

It comes from God / Jesus Christ.

- "The God of peace" - Romans 15:33; 16:20; Philippians 4:7 ("peace of God"); 4:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:20.
- Jesus Christ - Ephesians 2:14; Colossians 3:15; "the Lord of peace" - 2 Thessalonians 3:16.
- God the Father and Jesus Christ - Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; Galatians 1:3; Titus 1:4; 2 John 1:3; + many other verses.

It's part of the Gospel ("Good News").

- The gospel of peace - Ephesians 6:15.

CHARACTERISTICS ASSOCIATED WITH PEACE

- Being a recipient of God's grace - Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; Titus 1:4; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 John 1:3; + many other verses.
- Being a recipient of God's mercy - Galatians 6:16; 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2; 2 John 1:3; Jude 1:2.

- The kingdom of God, righteousness, joy - Romans 14:17.
- Love - Jude 1:2; love with faith - Ephesians 6:23.
- Fruit of the Spirit (various characteristics) - Galatians 5:22-23.
- Holiness - Hebrews 12:14; morally spotless/blameless - 2 Peter 3:14.

PREREQUISITES FOR PEACE.

What God does:

- God justifies us (by faith) - Romans 5:1; he calls us - Colossians 3:15.
- Jesus made peace possible - Ephesians 2:15, 17 ("preached" by Jesus); given by the "Lord of peace" - 2 Thessalonians 3:16; being "in Christ" - 1 Peter 5:14.
- A "saving knowledge" of God/Jesus Christ - 2 Peter 1:2.

What we must do:

- Follow Paul's example - Philippians 4:9; do good - Romans 2:10.
- Have a mind controlled by the Spirit - Romans 8:6.

OUR OBLIGATION TO PURSUE OR ATTAIN PEACE.

- Various commands given or implied - Romans 14:19; 1 Corinthians 7:15; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Ephesians 4:3; 2 Timothy 2:22; Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 3:11; 2 Peter 3:14.

A FEW OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF HAVING THIS PEACE.

- Unity among God's people - Ephesians 4:3.
- Hearts and minds guarded by God's peace - Philippians 4:7.
- A harvest of righteousness - James 3:18.