



peace

Describe your idea of peaceful living.
 What challenges do you experience when trying to cultivate a peaceful life?
 How does God's peace differ from the peace of the world?
 What changes could you make in your particular situation to experience peacefulness?



Understanding Peace

I have not felt particularly peaceful lately. In fact, I'm not sure when I last experienced a divine calm. Maybe you can relate. In the frenzy of life, we often feel like peace has eluded us, though we desire to know its presence in our lives.

Helen Keller once wrote, "I do not want the peace that passeth understanding. I want the understanding which bringeth peace". I think we all wish for that kind of understanding. How do we cultivate a peaceful existence?

I believe that God can give us

a peace beyond comprehension (Philippians 4:6-7) but I'd like to understand how to position myself to experience that. The Scriptures have a few tips for us to consider:

1. **PRAY.** Never underestimate the power of communication with God. It is in moments of petition, confession and thanksgiving that He restores our souls.
2. **LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY.** There is a link between our lifestyle and the amount of peace we experience. If we live as God would have us live,

- the Bible tells us that we can expect peace to be the "fruit" of that obedience.
3. **MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS.** Much of our restlessness and anxiety is derived from broken and strained relationships. We are exhorted in Romans to do everything in our power to make things right with others. When things are left unresolved it seriously compromises our potential to experience peace.

If we make a conscious effort to apply these tips to our lives, inner peace may not actually be so far out of reach after all.

Give Peace a Chance



If we allow ourselves little moments of solitude, we might find that simple things can help us restore a proper perspective. Add your own ideas to this list of suggestions that can help you give peace a chance.

- Play your favourite music and really pause to listen to it.
- Light a few candles and enjoy the warmth of a bubble bath.
- Get outside: take some nature photos, go for a run (or walk), have a picnic.
- Create a masterpiece: paint, draw, colour, sculpt, scrapbook, compose.
- Give yourself permission to take a nap and forget about the to-do list, at least temporarily.
- Read something that inspires you: a captivating novel, a book of nature poetry, a devotional.
- Embrace the contemplative life: meditate, reflect on the journey, write in a prayer journal.

Righteousness and peace kiss each other.

Psalm 85:10b



Coffee Talk

1. How were you able to live joyfully in the last month?
2. How does God's perspective on joy add freedom to your personal or your family life?
3. How have you experienced joy with your kids since our last session?

Imagine all the people living life in peace.

John Lennon



mommy moment: Early one morning, sit outside and listen to the “sounds of silence”: the rustle of the leaves in the breeze, the birds singing sweetly, the sound of your own breath. If you are not a morning person, go out late one night and take a quiet walk in the moonlight.

This Month With Ourselves:

EDUCATE:

Psalm 85:10 says that “righteousness and peace kiss each other” and Isaiah 32:17 tells us that the “fruit of righteousness will be peace”. What is the connection between living rightly and experiencing peace? How much do we contribute to our own peacefulness by our behaviour and choices (see Isaiah 48:18)?

EVALUATE:

To what extent do you understand the difference between God’s peace and the

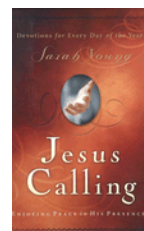
peace the world gives? Read John 14:25-27. What role does the Holy Spirit play in bringing peace to our lives? Why does God’s peace remove “trouble” and “fear” from our hearts?

EXPRESS:

Read Romans 12:17-18. How much are you doing to ensure that peace is maintained in your relationships “as far as it depends on you”? In your journal, brainstorm some relationships that are difficult to navigate: perhaps there is bitterness, hurt and/or unforgiveness that has been left unresolved. Are there steps that you

need to take to restore peace in a currently strained situation? What “possibilities” exist for you to explore?

EXPAND: If you are looking for a new daily devotional, Sarah Young’s book may



be an encouragement to you. She writes each entry as if Jesus was speaking to you directly. The focus is experiencing divine peace, daily. It is a heartfelt book that comes from a deep desire to sense God’s presence in a profound way in her own life.

family fun: On poster paper, draw an image of a tree with deep roots. Write Jeremiah 17:7-8 on the poster and talk about how our trust in God helps us to stay grounded. Write or draw images that represent the things that “root” us and the “fruit” that is produced when we look to Christ as the source of our peace.



This Month With Our Kids:

MAKE A POINT:



Observe your children to discern moments of peacefulness and moments of distress in their day. Try to understand the things that cause

stress and minimize them. Make appropriate decisions with your schedule to cultivate a peaceful home. Balance active endeavors with peaceful ones.

MAKE A PROMISE:

When your kids are feeling anxious help them to bring their concerns to God in prayer. Pause with them and pray for God’s peace in the situation. Even a brief moment may be enough for God’s peace to enter their hearts. (Philippians 4:6-7)

MAKE A PLAN:

Consider making “the blessing” (from Numbers 6) a ritual in your home: as they leave for school or at bedtime, for example. Place your hands on your child and sing or recite the verses.

***The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you;
the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.***

Numbers 6:24-26

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, PEACE, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Galatians 5:22-23

6 Tips for Peaceful Parenting

1. Model peaceful living.
2. Give your kids free time daily.
3. Spend one-on-one time listening and interacting with each child.
4. Resolve conflicts peacefully and help your children do the same.
5. Offer sincere and specific encouragement as often as possible.
6. Make love the foundation of each interaction in the home.

Adapted from *PEACEFUL PARENTS, PEACEFUL KIDS: Practical Ways to Build a Happy Home* by Naomi Drew.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13