



*A Ministry of the
Church of God (Seventh Day)*

Finding Peace of Mind



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Take the kids to school or daycare.
Do the grocery shopping.
Run errands.
Care for elderly parents.
Fight the rush hour.
Sit in meetings.
Work overtime. . . .

We don't have to go far or wait long these days to encounter stress, do we? Everyday wear and tear leaves us physically or emotionally drained.

Daily routine is rarely the only source of stress, however. Divorce or the death of a spouse brings a life of loneliness; a job layoff tightens the budget; a natural disaster cuts a path of destruction; past abuse haunts the present; wrong choices reap a bitter harvest; chronic illness or an accident steals quality of life or threatens death.

These circumstances prompt questions about the future:

“Will the pain ever go away?”

“Can I trust anyone again?”

“What will I do with no place to live?”

“Can I face tomorrow without promise of adequate income or good health?”

“How will I face death when it comes?”

Searching for relief

It's not surprising that many of us search for relief — something to bring peace of mind. It's also not surprising that we hear conflicting advice from several sources on how and where to find relief. Some religions suggest meditation and yoga. Health gurus tout natural herbs that calm the body. Then

there are tranquilizers, sleeping pills, alcohol, psychotherapy — anything to help us cope with life or shut it out.

There's just one problem with these solutions: After we've tried any one of them, reality still awaits us. Stress and worry remain, even if we've achieved a momentary escape.

God never intends us to be overwhelmed by stress. He knows we can't cope with the enormity of life alone. Because He wants to help bear our burdens, God says,

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned (Isaiah 43:2).

Divine and human

How is the heavenly God able to understand the sufferings and stress of humans on earth?

Through His Son, Jesus Christ.

When Jesus lived on earth two thousand years ago, He had a human body just like ours. He suffered physical pain and was worn out from a busy schedule. He slept; He ate. He had times when He just wanted to get away.

Jesus also had human emotions. He felt compassion for a widow whose son had died. He cried when He visited the grave of His friend, Lazarus. Sounds a lot like us, doesn't it?

Jesus knew firsthand that life on earth is no picnic. That's why He gave us this assurance:

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid (John 14:27).

Notice that Jesus said “my peace” — not what the world offers through herbs and meditation and such. The peace of Jesus has more to do with the heart and with a mind set on faith, hope, and love.

Lifting the weight

All of us carry a weight of sin inside. Sin isn't confined to such things as indecent actions, lies, murder, and stealing. It's deep-down rebellion against God. We want to do our own thing our own way. This rebellion causes disharmony with God and robs us of inner peace.

We can't ignore our sin or cover it up. No matter how many ways we divert our minds, the burden of our internal discord inevitably stresses us. As one biblical writer puts it, “I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me” (Psalm 51:3).

But through His Son's death on the cross, God makes people right with Himself. It is God's gift to us — a free gift of salvation. To enjoy harmony with God, we have only to accept this gift. Truly believing in Christ means placing our full confidence — our faith, our hope, our love — in Him. Knowing He is the only Savior who can lift our weight of sin, we are set free from the heaviest load, and we learn to cast every other care upon Him.

God's grace

The grace of God makes this salvation possible. Grace is God's way of looking past our sin to our need for deliverance. He accepts us as His very own children without approving of our sinful behavior.

God's grace is favor we didn't deserve — like a pardon granted to a death row inmate before execution. We can't contribute time and money to win it; we can't help the less fortunate; we can't even attend church or follow the rules. The only way to enjoy God's grace is to receive it as a gift through believing in Jesus Christ.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship (Ephesians 2:8-10a).

What does all this have to do with finding peace of mind?

Everything. The Bible says that when we believe in Christ, we are made right with God (Romans 3:24). Being brought into this right relationship is the first step to finding peace of mind. As the Bible puts it,

We have been made right with God because of our faith. So we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (5:1).

Is that all there is?

Once we place our faith in Christ and gain peace with God, we can trust God not only in the big things but also with our everyday problems and stresses. He urges us to not be anxious about anything, but to bring all

our troubles to Him in prayer (Philippians 4:6). The Bible goes on to say,

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (v. 7).

Here we see an important characteristic of God's peace that comes in response to prayer: internal protection. The word *guard* is a military term meaning "to garrison." The peace of God stations itself to defend against any attack on our hearts and minds. It holds us secure on the inside regardless of what upsets us on the outside. No wonder Philippians 4:7 says that this peace is beyond human comprehension!

Telling God our concerns through prayer should be followed by setting our minds on Him alone, regardless of the troubles we face. Isaiah 26:3 says that God "will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you [the Lord]." As we learn to practice this mindset minute-by-hour-by-day, other options that promise peace will become less appealing.

Here, then, is another characteristic of God's peace: It is perfect and complete; nothing needs to be added to it. It comes in response to our trusting solely in God, confident that He's not trying to harm us but help us. He is working for our good, no matter what (Romans 8:28).

Inner peace

Unhappily, problems and stress are part of this world's fabric. But the good news is that Jesus Christ points us to true peace of mind by offering peace of heart first. That's the kind of peace we should be looking for — the kind that dwells in the core of our

being. We can learn to deal with life outwardly because God has first dealt with us inwardly.



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