*THE PRACTICE of GODLINESS* by Jerry Bridges

**Chapter Thirteen– “PEACE” – Romans 12:18**

**“If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.” (Romans 12:18)**

*“…peace should be a hallmark of the godly person, first because it is a Godlike trait: God is called the God of peace several times in the New Testament. He took the initiative to establish peace with rebellious men, and He is the author of both personal peace as well as peace among men. Peace should be part of our character also because God has promised us His peace, because He has commanded us to let peace rule in our lives and relationships, and because peace is a fruit of the Spirit and therefore an evidence of His working in our lives.” (pg.157-158)*

Are you in search of peace? “Christians are not exempt from the turmoil of living in a sinful world. We, too, experience the anxiety of disquieting circumstances and the anguish of broken relationships.” (pg. 157)

Let’s together seek to understand how to embrace, experience and endeavor the threefold qualities of peace revealed throughout the scriptures by His enabling grace:

***How do I embrace having PEACE WITH GOD?***

**The doctrine of peace**: By entering into a saving relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ we now have peace ***with*** God. God is no longer opposed to us, but is for us! *“Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom.5:1)*

**The assurance of peace:** God is committed to and promises to use every circumstance in our lives for our good and for His glory as He conforms us more into the image of Christ (Rom. 8:28)

**The beauty of peace:** The peace we now have with God is the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives which enables us to experience the peace of God and to endeavor to be at peace with others.

***How do I experience having the PEACE of GOD?***

**The disturbers of peace:** What keeps us from experiencing the peace ***of*** God? Sin that is not confessed, shame and guilt, self-love, selfishness, stubbornness, sorrows and fears and anxieties, suffering, strife, significant trials, and even Satan’s strategies that cause us to question God’s character and to doubt His Word… all of these and more can steal our peace.

**The attainment of peace:** ***Philippians 4:4-9***—Rejoice in the Lord (vs.4), Resolve to have gentle (non-retaliatory) spirit (vs.5), Remember the Lord is near (vs.5), Refuse to be anxious about anything (vs.6), Recognize your need to pray with a thankful and repentant heart (vs.6), Rest in His promises (vs.7), Renew your mind (vs.8), Ready yourself to put God’s Word into practice (vs.9). ***1 Peter 5:5-9****—*Clothe yourself in humility (vs.5), Commit yourself under the powerful, sovereign hand of God (vs.6), Cast all your anxiety upon Him (vs.7), Comfort yourself with the reality that He cares for you (vs7), Control your emotions by thinking biblically so you will not be overwhelmed by the devil’s temptations. (vs 8), Come to God in faith and humbly submit to Him. This is how you resist (Lit. “take your stand”) against the devil (vs.9) (James 4:6-7).

**The blessings of peace:** It is only by the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us that we can trust God, obey God and are able to experience the peace ***of*** God in every circumstance!

***How do I endeavor having PEACE WITH OTHERS?***

**The directives of peace:** “Pursue peace with all men…”Make every effort to do what leads to peace”…”Whoever would love life and see good days…must seek peace and pursue it” (Heb.12:14; Rom.14:19; 1 Pet. 3:10-11). “Pursuing peace does not mean running away from the causes of discord” but instead is a “single-minded pursuit—to leave no stone unturned in our efforts, to lay ourselves out and to humble ourselves, if need be, in order to achieve the goal of peace with others.” (pg.165)

**The appeals of peace:** We must remember, “We are fellow members of the same body” and “It is Christ’s body of which we are members” (1 Cor. 12:12,25; Rom. 12:5) (pg. 165,166). “In humility acknowledge to the other person any sinful attitudes, actions, or words on your part” (Jam. 5:16). “We must take the initiative to restore peace with believers (Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15) and unbelievers and “we are in no way to seek revenge” (Rom. 12:17-21). (pg. 166-168)

**The bonds of peace:** *“…with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace…”* (Eph.4:2-6) The Spirit of God has created the bond of peace, the bond of love that binds all of His children together!

Ladies, are you still in search for peace? Now that we have briefly sought to understand how to embrace the ‘peace with God’, how to experience the ‘peace *of* God’, and how to endeavor to have ‘peace with others’, I pray and trust that the Holy Spirit of God will help you take the practical and necessary steps to glorify Him the next time you are tempted to be anxious and when you are in conflict with others. (Romans 15:13NASB)

Pressing onward and looking upward,

Christyn