

The Messenger

The Atlanta Church of Christ

in Guinnett

Let the Peace of Christ Rule in Your Hearts

By Peter Berry



Colossians 3:15 teaches that we should "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful."

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

This is a great thought, but what is the secret? In our modern, high speed lives, we are surrounded by recession, bills, problems at work (or NO work!), children in trouble, parents in need, health issues... and many of us find it easier to worry than to be at peace.

No matter how positively intended, it is cold comfort to someone out of work just to say "don't worry, God has a plan!" When it is our child in the hospital, it helps to know we're loved and supported, but hearing that God loves our family may not be enough to give us real peace. When we feel alone and helpless in a great big world, a powerful time reading the Bible will help, but how do we find the "peace of Christ?"

Fortunately, we aren't left with just a command, but God provides teaching, examples, and the power to be at peace.

What does the Bible teach about peace?

Let's start with the passage quoted above, with the full context:

Here the Holy Spirit through Paul relates the "peace of Christ" to some other key actions, choices, and attitudes.

Apparently, our relationships with one another are important to our personal peace. If we can bear with one another, showing compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, we are closer to personal peace as well.

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Elders

Steve Galbreath
Alan Rouse

Evangelist

Richard Alawaye

Teacher

Gary Roberson

Women's Ministry & Welfare

Sarah Alawaye
Roxanne Galbreath
Sherry Rouse

Teens

John and Marisabel
Becker

Deacons

Peter Berry
Steve Collier
Danny Doble
Danny Emmett
Audie Flowers
Bill Francis
Patrick Freeman
Glenn Hayes
Kendall Knight
Karl Lynn
Russ McGarr
Alvin Modest
Jeff Mueller
Todd Reynolds
Dan Stehr
Ken Watson

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sun. 4/19: Guest Speaker: Dolapo Ogundipe, Evangelist, Johannesburg Church of Christ

Sunday 5/17: International Sunday
Guest Speaker: John Porter, Miami Church of Christ (Missionary work in Sao Paulo, Brazil)

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Let the Peace of Christ Rule in Your Hearts

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Forgiving one another is a powerful tool for peace, while carrying a grudge or hidden anger will disrupt our equilibrium and add stress to everything we do. It is insufficient to “bury” those feelings, because deep inside they don't go away; the joy and peace comes with talking, forgiving, and restoring a Godly relationship with one another.

Next, over all these virtues, we are asked to clothe ourselves in love. This goes beyond “bearing with” one another and into a whole new realm as a true family of God. Whether we had the loving nuclear family when we were young or just longed for it, the image of safety, security and peace as a child in a caring family with loving brothers & sisters and a perfect Father is both powerful and available to us in Christ. How can I have peace? By living in God's family! Our Father in heaven is bigger than bills, jobs, health, whatever is troubling us, and to be able to come back to a place where Daddy ultimately takes care of things is a wonderful choice we all need to make, even as we do our best with our personal challenges.

And next – be thankful! This thankfulness flows from our peace and gives God the glory and appreciation for our safe place. There is no greater protection for our peace than to remain thankful to God and to our brothers and sisters. By exercising gratitude we change our character and embrace the secure and restful place in which our Father has placed us. Sing songs, hymns, and psalms of joy with gratitude for our Father and our family.

Then to continue building peace, we must dwell richly in God's Word, teach and admonish one another, and keep on learning. I honor and try to follow the examples of our elders, teachers and leaders, who although they know more than most of us can imagine about God's Word, remain the most avid of students and somehow always are able to bring us new insights. As we fill ourselves with His Word and move beyond just “getting the facts,” God's Holy Spirit can work powerfully within us to change and mold us into His image, and bring us to a growing confidence and peace knowing that He is in control. This is the source of that stable and mature faith to which we aspire!

And finally, if everything we do is done in the name of and for the glory of our heavenly Father, we can truly leave the guilt and disquiet behind and rest peacefully in God's love. Does He say we must be perfect? NO!

He says we should do all in His name and while giving thanks to Him; then God can work and make us perfect in His sight. Here is perfect peace.

Who are some Biblical examples we can learn from?

God's Word holds many examples of those who found peace in difficult circumstances, and God gives us these examples to help us learn. A couple of life studies that should provide some peace-inspiring quiet times might include:

Paul – Philippians 4:12 (and elsewhere)

“I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.”

Paul found a big secret, and it wasn't about money, power, or position, all of which he walked away from, or health, which he apparently had struggles with, but simply about knowing God's will for his life and living it out wholeheartedly every day.

Joseph – Genesis 37 - 42

He was rejected by his brothers, enslaved and jailed, but somehow knew that it was all about God's plan. I'm certain he had his difficult moments, but we don't read about his doubt or fear, just his persisting faith in God and his joyful deliverance of not only himself but his family as well.

Where do I get the power to be at peace?

Paul, who learned the secret of peace in all circumstances, reveals to us the source of that power. Not surprisingly, that which God asks of us He gives us, through the power of the Holy Spirit indwelling.

Romans 13:13

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.

Never underestimate God's love for you. He wants you to find peace and joy, so He provides the teaching, the examples, and most importantly the power. Ask Him, trust Him, and be at peace, knowing that it is God who supplies all your needs.

The Economy of the American Family

By Alan Rouse

Mark 4:7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain.

The American family has changed dramatically in our lifetime. Compare the economy of the typical middle class American family (Mom, Dad, two kids) in 1970 to the same type of family in 2005. In 1970, the typical family had one income (Mom stayed home with the kids). If someone had told us in 1970 that by 2005, most families would have two incomes, that women would have made huge advances in education, job opportunities, and salary, we would have expected these families to be affluent, well adjusted, and well prepared for retirement. Boy, would we have been wrong.

In 1970, our typical one-income family saved almost 11% of their gross income, and had very little debt other than home mortgage and payments on the single family car. By 2005, our study family had two incomes, a negative savings rate (spending more than they were earning), and \$7000 in credit card debt. Not only were they spending the entire second income, but also all the money their parents had been saving, and all the money they had borrowed. And they were continuing to borrow more.

So what were they spending all that money on? Not primarily on essentials like food and clothes. Instead, they were buying a second car (since Mom has to drive to work!) They were paying for child care. (Their parents never dreamed of that). They were paying for preschool (again, something their parents did not do). They made great effort, at a premium price, to buy a nice house in a "good" school district (not so much of an issue with their parents). The two-income lifestyle was leaving them more financially strapped than their parents' one-income lifestyle.

Today, the typical family cannot pay their bills without two incomes. That means they have twice the risk of not being able to pay the bills compared to their parents (since there are two workers at risk rather than just one). Sickness, downsizing, injury from a car wreck... and suddenly the family is at risk of bankruptcy. In America today, believe it or not, bankruptcy happens even more frequently than divorce. In contrast, the one-income family has a

safety net in the form of a second potential worker in the case of an emergency.

Our American churches are no different from our neighbors in these matters. So, for the two-income families among us, are you as debt-free as your parents were? How is that retirement nest egg? Are you always on time with all your bill payments? Do you have some money left over that you can use to help others? How is the two income thing working out for you?

It is very tough to get out of the two-income addiction cycle once you are in it. Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace class is helping some of our households to get out of debt, and I recommend his program. For those who are not yet married, or who are early enough in a marriage to still have a chance, I strongly suggest making a commitment to budget to live on a single income. Churches should be teaching these things in premarital counseling. We as church leaders should be setting the example by living this way ourselves.

Mark 4:18 Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word;

Mark 4:19 but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

The busy lives of people in our churches are stifling the work of the church. Two careers, household management, kids booked in every conceivable after-school activity... The fruit is being choked out by thorns. This is a spiritual issue. Here are some practical suggestions that would help many of us:

- 💰 Start saving every month.
- 💰 Cut down your expenses. Get rid of such things as cable TV, dining out, etc.
- 💰 Stop buying things on credit. Save up for items and then buy them with cash.
- 💰 Live within your means. Be content with what God has blessed you with.
- 💰 Start paying down your debt starting with the smallest amounts.
- 💰 Brothers, think seriously about going back to school or learning a new trade that would help support your family.



Stress Free & Loving It

By Sherry Rouse



We women seem to be stressed about something all the time. These past few years, with a full time job and graduate school, have been particularly hard for me. I hope some of the things I suggest can be helpful to you as we try to serve God together. There are only two points: Pray and Plan.

1. Pray - We know Philippians 4:6-7 *Do not be anxious about anything but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* My best way of controlling stress is to turn to God and pray. But what if you have put yourself in the situation you are in? Maybe you haven't been wise and need to simplify your life so you have time to serve God. James 1:5-6

2. Plan - I had been asking God for relief, and I was able to down-size in my job situation this fall. Examine your life and see if there are areas you can cut out – Hours of TV or computer? They can really take away our time from our family and friends. Try playing games when you get together as a family or with friends. Is a job taking all of your energy, leaving nothing left for your family or midweek service? Do you have a house and/or cars that take both incomes, leaving no room for lay-offs, car problems, or health issues, emergencies or retirement?

Ephesians 5:15-16 *Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.* Two areas where I see women tend to be stressed out the most are children and finances. Proverbs 10:1 *A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother.* When our children are disobedient or foolish, this really affects us as mothers. How can we help them? Read through the Proverbs with them and help them find a verse of their own. Make sure you are setting a good example yourself. Proverbs 20:11 was one of the first scriptures we had our girls memorize. We don't mind if you take it for your kids too.

Here are some scriptures we can use to help our children in various areas: Laziness – Proverbs 10:4-5; 6:6-11 and other sluggard/ant scriptures. Disobedience – Proverbs 12:1; 10:8; 10:17. Make sure you are asking advice of others who can help you. God will bless your humility of heart. Proverbs 11:14; 10:29; 12:15; 15:22.

The elders have been encouraging your husbands to get to a point where the wives can stay home with the children. Not everyone can do this, but where is your heart in this? School and sleep take up 16 hours a day; what can you do with the other 8? How are you going to shape their characters in only a few hours? I want to end on a positive note. We all want to be here: Proverbs 23:24-25 *The father of a righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him.* May your father and mother be glad; may she who gave you birth rejoice!

Deacon's Directory

Karl Lynn	New Members	770-979-4292
Ken Watson	Benevolence	678-376-2677
Peter Berry	Benevolence	678-376-1878
Danny Doble	Spanish Translation	770-931-0601
Audie Flowers	Visitation	770-277-5749
Patrick Freeman	Kingdom Kids	770-921-1811
Glenn Hayes	Kingdom Kids	770-985-6921
Dan Stehr	Visitation	770-925-2943
Bill Francis	Visitation	770-806-8645
Todd Reynolds	High School	770-682-0027
Russ McGarr	Middle School	770-381-5045
Alvin Modest	Worship	678-344-0061
Steve Collier	Teens-Parents	770-717-5784
Danny Emmett	Hope, Events	770-985-4542
Jeff Mueller	Benevolence	770-492-0544
Kendall Knight	Music Service	770-972-6887

Contribution

2/22 - \$6,570.00
3/01 - \$9,668.50
3/08 - \$7,883.00
3/15 - \$8,190.50

Family Group Leaders

Peter & Nancy Berry	Suwanee	678-376-1878
Steve & Barbara Collier	Lilburn	770-717-5784
Jim & Chandra Dew	Lilburn	770-330-3479
Danny & Cynthia Doble	Lilburn	770-931-0601
Audie & Jackie Flowers	Snellville	770-277-5749
James & Quiana Martinez	L'ville	678-985-5511
Alvin & Beatrice Modest	Snellville	678-344-0061
Jeff & Jessica Mueller	Tucker	770-492-0544
Ricky & Bridgett Roberson	Snellville	770-879-0868
Joseph & Lisa Washington	L'ville	678-407-0306
Ken & Kat Watson	Suwanee	678-376-2677