

PRESENCE

PART 3: MY PEACE PLAN — REPLACING ANXIETY WITH TRUST

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MESSAGE NOTES

1. Jesus promised we would have trouble in this world AND He promised us His peace.

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

2. The peace Jesus wants us to experience is found in Him—the one who is all powerful and always present.

You know you're not experiencing loving union when you ...

- Are always rushing.
 - Routinely fire off quick opinions and judgments.
 - Are often fearful about the future.
 - Are overly concerned with what other think.
 - Are defensive and easily offended.
 - Are routinely preoccupied and distracted.
 - Consistently ignore the stress, anxiety and tightness of your body.
 - Feel unenthusiastic or threatened by the success of others.
 - Routinely spend more time talking than listening.
- Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*

In loving union, we keep the door wide open. We allow the will of God to have full access to every area of our lives ... Cultivating this kind of relationship with God can't be hurried or rushed. We must slow down and build into our lives a structure and rhythm that make this kind of loving surrender routinely possible. — Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*

3. Peace comes about by bringing our anxieties to God and cultivating trust in His management of our lives when we've done what we can.

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, 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. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from Me, or seen in Me — put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. — **Philippians 4:4 – 9**

Five verses with four practices that lead to one awesome promise (Philippians 4:4 – 9):

- Celebrate God's goodness. *"Rejoice in the Lord always."* (v. 4)
- Ask God for help. *"present your requests to God."* (v. 6)
- Look for God's many provisions *"with thanksgiving"* (v. 6)
- Meditate on all that is good and life giving. *"excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things."* (v. 8)

The ultimate freedom we have as individuals is the power to select what we will allow or require our minds to dwell upon and think about. ... The focus of your thoughts significantly affects everything else that happens in your life and evokes the feelings that frame your world and motivate your actions. ... We can control our feelings by directing our thoughts.
— Dallas Willard, *Life Without Lack*

- The Promise: *“the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”* (v. 7)

4. What we think about will ultimately have a great impact on our feelings and our actions.

CELEBRATE

ASK

LOOK

MEDITATE

= CALM

5. Peace is the result of a heart and mind surrendered to God.

Several times during the day ... ask yourself for a moment if you have your soul in your hands or if some passion or fit of anxiety has robbed you of it ... Quietly bring your soul back to the presence of God, subjecting all your affections and desires to the obedience and direction of His divine will. — St. Francis of Assisi

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. 4 Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD himself, is the Rock eternal. — Isaiah 26:3 – 4

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- As you look over your notes from the weekend, was there one thing that stood out to you?
- Do you think most people have an intentional plan for handling their anxieties?
- To what degree do you think media can impact people’s stress level, mood and overall sense of well-being?
- Think back through the movies, books, and social media content you’ve recently consumed. In what ways do they pass or fail the Philippians 4:8 test?
- What safeguards can you put into your life to help you better filter the content you consume?
- What are some verses from God’s Word you can meditate on to replace the time you spend consuming unhelpful or inappropriate content?
- What connection do you see between the time we spend with God in prayer and our level of anxiety?
- What is the biggest hindrance you face in spending quiet time with God?
- This week, what practical steps could you take to rest in God’s ultimate power and care for you?