How to Lose Peace of Mind

by Johnny Ramsey

Jesus Christ came into this world as "*the Prince of Peace*" (Isa. 9:6). Men of good will can have peace on earth because of Him, as the angels sang (Luke 2:14). With the "*gospel of peace*" (Rom. 10:15) the Lord Jesus grants us peace that actually surpasses our understanding (Phil. 4:7). Through the blood shed on the Cross, we have our access to the removal of chaos and frenzy in our life-style: *"For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fulness dwell; and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross"* (Col. 1:19-20). Anything that hinders these rich blessings would be a crime against heaven. A great hymn proclaims:

> *Peace, perfect peace,*
> *In this dark world of sin,*
> *The blood of Jesus*
> *Whispers peace within.*

The best-selling book in the world, apart from the Bible, some fifty years ago, was written by a Jewish writer, and was entitled, **"Peace of Mind."** Every salient point came from the Bible - the Psalms, Philippians and the life of Jesus as recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The Scripture already had the message! We often block the radiant bliss which God offers to our sad heart by expecting others to provide the secret of happiness when it really begins. within our own grasp.

The great writer, Ralph Waldo Emerson, wrote these words of wisdom:

> *The wise man in the storm*
> *Prays to God –*
> *Not for safety from the danger,*
> *But for deliverance from fear.*
> *It is the storm within That endangers him,*
> *Not the storm without.*

In Psa. 68:19, we find a rich challenge: *"Blessed be the Lord, who daily beareth our burden, even the God who is our salvation."* We are so often guilty of accusing others, when "circumstances" make us miserable. Some "wise" person demands our honesty in these graphic words: "To err is human, but to blame it on the other guy is even more human!" What are these quirks that prohibit genuine peace and contentment within the framework of our daily endeavor? There are five major ones. In this article, let's examine them in the light of the Scriptures.

Listening to Discouraging Words

The Bible contains *"good news"* (gospel), but most people spend little time carefully reading its pages. Television and newspapers spread sad reports constantly. We dwell on negative matters daily. War, rather than peace, makes the headlines and grab our attention. Prophets of doom hold the spotlight of the world and truth stays in the shadows. *"Again therefore Jesus spake unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life"* (John 8:12). Though Christ came to bring light to the world, Satan's message "circles the globe while truth is putting on its boots." The glad message of redemption should be heralded far and wide to give hope and solace to nations steeped in darkness and gloom.

To have peace of mind, we must have this assurance from God: *"For 1 am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Rom. 8:38-39). False teachers in Corinth were denying Christ's resurrection and teaching that those had forever *perished who had died in the Lord (1 Cor. 15). Paul countered such error by stating clearly: "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep"* (1 Cor 15:20).

Double-Mindedness Produces Misery

Paul told the Corinthians that is was impossible to partake of the Lord's table while engaging in the devil's dainties. We dare not *"halt between two opinions"* (1 Kings 18:21), if we would please God. Having one foot in the world and the other in the church produces sorrow, as Jesus said*, "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon"* (Matt. 6:24).

"Riding the fence" in spiritual pursuits will always create a dilemma that destroys our peace of mind: *"But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord; a doubleminded man, unstable in all his ways"* (James 1:6-8). The gospel of Christ clearly enunciates the situation: *"The mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace"* (Rom. 8:6). There it is. Carnality and spirituality are mutually exclusive!

Associating with Worldly People

"Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33). "You cannot run with the goats without smelling like them" is a crude old saying. But still absolutely correct! After listing the "works of the flesh" in Gal. 5:19-21, the apostle Paul describes in the next two verses the "fruit of the Spirit," to show the line of demarcation between the two. *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law"* (Gal. 5:22-23).

Pure religion demands a benevolent concern for others and for our own holiness: *"Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world"* (James 1:27). If we would have peace of mind, we must heed that.

Living in the Past

Christianity has the power and ability to change lives and cleanse us from iniquity. We must not allow the burden of sin to keep us from proceeding toward heaven, when God clearly tells us, *"For 1 will be merciful to their iniquities, And their sins will 1 remember no more"* (Heb. 8:12). The apostle Paul admitted that, before he had become a Christian, he had been *"the chief of sinners"* (1 Tim. 1:15) in opposing Christ. But after believing in Christ, His attitude changed*: "I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 3:14). So should we *"press on"* and not allow Satan to draw us away, due to shame and remorse over the mistakes of the past.

Living by Misplaced Values

Popularity calls, and weak people buckle under the pressure of pleasing men rather than the Savior. If we want to retain peace of mind, we must take a stand for truth, regardless of what men may think*: "For am 1 now seeking the favor of men, or of God? or am I striving to please men? if 1 were still pleasing men, 1 should not be a servant of Christ"* (Gal. 1:10). When we lack the courage it takes to walk with God, we then fall from a steadfast loyalty to cowardice. Also, when we are so deeply wrapped up in "self" we are worthless in the service of Jehovah, and we forfeit the beauty, genuine peace and contentment which God provides when we faithfully serve Him. Henry Van Dyke wrote on this matter:

> *Whatever comes, God's will be done,*
> *And in that moment, Peace was won!*

Do you really want to enjoy life and see good days? Listen to the Prince of Peace: *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful"* (John 14:27). Let us seek after peace of mind in the way God reveals. And let us remember these words of wisdom: "Great people are not affected. by every wind that blows. Like great ships, they sail serenely on in calm seas or great tempests." Then, as the apostle Paul wrote, *"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 4:7).