



MAY 2022 NEWSLETTER

PEACE THAT PASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING

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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:2 NAS95).

As Paul writes to various Christians and churches throughout the known world, he often greets them, as we see above, with the desire for them to have grace and peace. In fact, “shalom” (peace) was a common salutation among the Jews at that time. Paul’s hope is for all brothers and sisters in Christ to experience the unmerited favor of God and the peace that comes from reconciliation with God.



Despite the Bible’s focus on the subject, peace is often missing in our lives. We live in a difficult world, full of stress, a world in which we need relief—we need grace and peace. Our world needs peace, especially among warring nations; nations need social and political peace; individuals need inner peace; and, most of all, people of all nations need peace with God. The COVID-19 pandemic hangs over us and has made a strong contribution toward robbing us of personal inner peace as well as peace among individuals. This pandemic is matched by another silent pandemic: a pandemic of depression and anxiety.

Any number of books and “how to” videos promote theories that claim to have the answers to all of the stresses in our lives. In fact, an entire industry has developed around this subject. The problem is most of these theories are exploring answers to life’s problems without God: such pursuits can never be completely successful.

God, however, has given us the answer to this dilemma. First, He gave us His Son who died that we might have forgiveness of our sins and be reconciled to Him. Second, He gave His word that provides guidance in solving both our spiritual as well as our personal problems. Third, He gave us prayer so that we can speak with Him and have assurance that He hears us.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving

let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6 –7 NAS95).

The key to real peace, then, is to develop a lasting relationship with God, based on the instructions and assurances He has given us in His word. He is an all-powerful God, the Creator of heaven and earth; and we can approach Him confidently in prayer with all our worries and stresses. He promises an answer as long as our requests are in accordance with His will.

Our God is a God of peace. This reality is established throughout the Scriptures. For example, Paul writes to the Romans and says, “Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen” (Romans 15:33). Peace is what God offers to all His people, both personal peace and spiritual peace.

For personal peace, He has given us instruction about dealing productively and positively with such difficulties as anger, anxiety, failure, fear, grief, and loneliness, as we may need to in our everyday lives (*these topics will be discussed in future articles*).

For spiritual peace, He has provided the means for us to have a spiritual relationship with Him. In the beginning, He created a Garden where His creation could live with Him in peace. While mankind rejected the peace of the Garden by going against God’s will, He sent Jesus Christ to die on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins so that we would no longer be separated from Him and so that we could live in peace with Him.

God wants us to share with Him our deepest worries, concerns, and anxieties just as any earthly father wants his children to communicate with him. Rather than being anxious and thinking we can solve all of our problems ourselves, we are to approach God, always with thanksgiving. As well, He wants us to rely on Him to secure our future spiritually.

It is with confidence that we reach such a conclusion because while we were yet sinners, God sent His Son to die for us on the cross. “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that

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while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (**Romans 5:8**). If God would give His Son as a ransom for us as sinful people, how much more will He help us now that we are saved and adopted into His family? As His faithful children, we enjoy a peace the world simply cannot imagine because we have a God who loves us and answers our prayers.

OVERCOMING ANGER

Sam Garrison | Salem Church of Christ | Salem, OR

Editor’s Note: This is the first in a series of articles about how to deal with six different human emotions: anger, anxiety, failure, fear, grief, and loneliness.

The Bible says, “He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city” (**Proverbs 16:32**).

Public outbursts of anger are commonplace in the world. Such behavior is often promoted in pop culture and on social media. Sadly, many Christians do not keep their own tempers in check but erupt in anger—sometimes even at the slightest provocation. God’s word tells us to put this behavior away from us.



“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice” (**Ephesians 4:31**). Again, **Psalms 37:8** says, “Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret—it only causes harm.”

To overcome anger, we first need to understand how serious this problem is. We may be tempted to dismiss a bad temper as nothing more than an unpleasant personality trait, inherited from our parents or grandparents; however, the act of “flying off the handle” does great damage to ourselves and others. In **Proverbs 14:17**, the wise man says, “A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, and a man of wicked intentions is hated.”

Furthermore, the Apostle Paul identifies “outbursts of wrath” as a work of the flesh (**Galatians 5:20**). This phrase is derived from a Greek word Thayer defines as “passion, angry heat, impulses and outbursts of anger.” Paul lists this behavior alongside sexual sins, idolatry, sorcery, all manner of strife, and drunkenness; and he warns that “those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (**Galatians 5:19–21**).

Recognizing our need to overcome anger, the next step may be to ask, “What makes us angry?” Even a little self-awareness about our personalities and the things that “trigger” us will go a long way in preventing angry outbursts. The Bible says, “The

discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression” (**Proverbs 19:11**).

Probably, we have all experienced times of heightened stress, discomfort, insecurity, or disagreement and have felt the frustration building within us, ready to explode. Many factors, such as these, may be out of our control, but we still must maintain control over our spirits as we respond.

We must, however, remove other factors like jealousy, pride, and ignorance because these traits can lead to outbursts of wrath (cf. **Genesis 4:5; 2 Kings 5:12; Luke 4:28**), and we need to catch ourselves before rushing ahead in anger.

Proverbs 30:32–33 says, “If you have been foolish in exalting yourself, or if you have devised evil, put your hand on your mouth. For as the churning of milk produces butter, and wringing the nose produces blood, so the forcing of wrath produces strife.”

It is worth mentioning, being angry is not necessarily a sin, by itself. Thus, Paul writes, “Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil” (**Ephesians 4:26–27**). Therefore, whatever the cause for our anger, we must be careful to conduct ourselves in a righteous manner.

The Bible teaches us to be slow in becoming angry and to learn to subdue it when it rises up. James writes, “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God” (**James 1:19–20**). **Proverbs 14:29** says, “He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, but he who is impulsive exalts folly.”

Clearly, preventing anger is ideal; but when we do become angry, how can we subdue it? If the problem can be described as “angry heat,” certainly the solution has something to do with “cooling down”! The following suggestions are cliché; but when we feel like erupting in anger, we may find it calming to breathe deeply while counting, go for a walk, or absorb ourselves in another activity. “He who has knowledge spares his words, and a man of understanding is of a calm spirit” (**Proverbs 17:27**).

In conclusion, to overcome anger we need to understand how serious a problem it is. We should recognize the factors that tend to make us angry and prayerfully prepare ourselves to react appropriately—or remove them. Finally, we need to slow ourselves down.

“Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, for anger rests in the bosom of fools” (**Ecclesiastes 7:9**).



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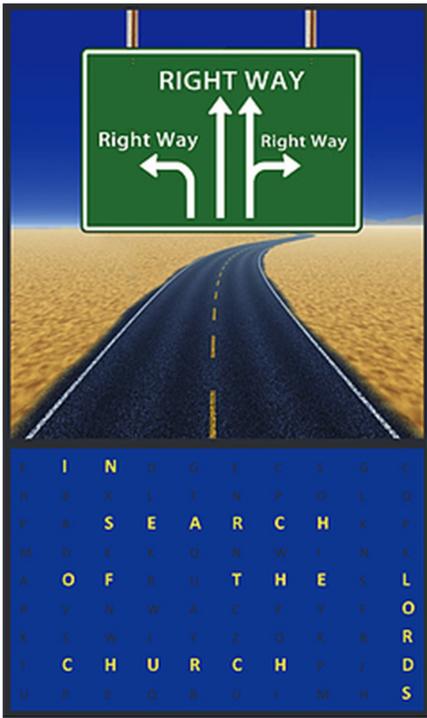
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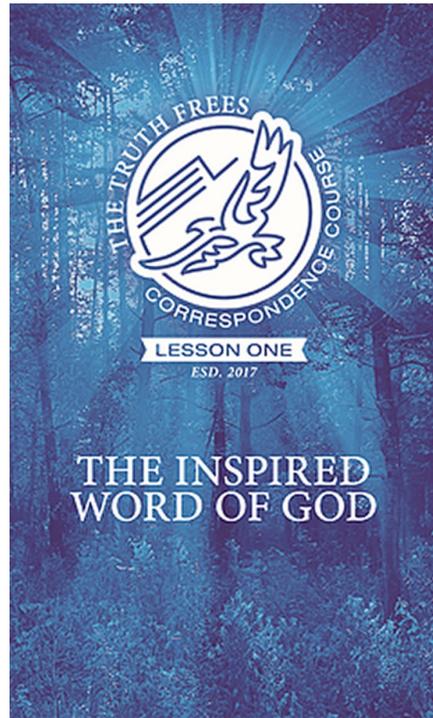
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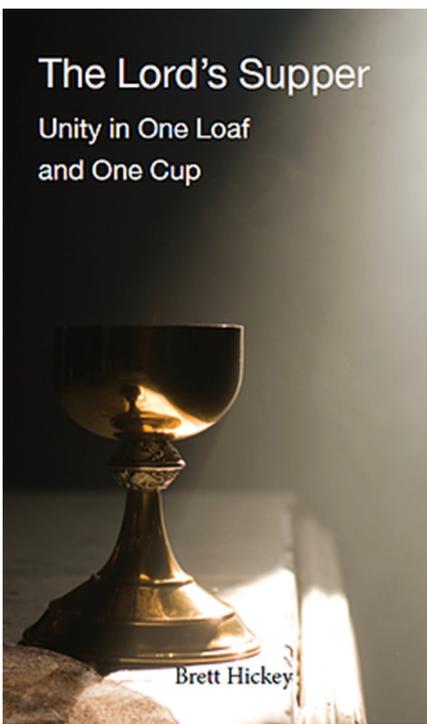
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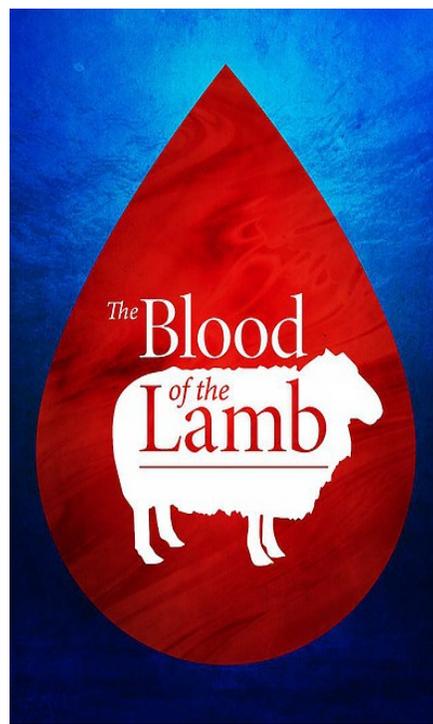
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