



Feeling Peace & Contentment

(www.mensgroup.org - "Original Study")

PRAY: A suggested opening prayer for small group members or individuals to invite God to connect as we seek Him in His Word and bless us with peace and contentment in our lives.

Lord, our prayer is that you will guide us to realize your blessings of feeling peace and contentment. Help us to trust you in the crush of everyday life, to trust you to handle the challenges we face, and to let go of our own worries and fears. Amen.

Peace and contentment. What does it mean to feel peace and contentment? Merriam Webster defines peace as, "freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions," and contentment as, "the quality or state of being contented (feeling or showing satisfaction with one's possessions, status, or situation)." Words such as still, quiet, calm, happy, pleased, and satisfied might be used to describe feelings of peace and contentment.

It's no secret that in today's world, there are so many things that can put stress on us. These stressors might be pressures from school or work, or emotional events such as a death in the family or a divorce. We may have fears about our health or that of a loved one. We may worry about our finances and obligation to pay the bills. Any one or more of these stress factors can lead to anxiety, excessive worry, and fatigue.

What types of stress do you experience and how do you manage the stress in your life?

Matthew 6:25-34 is a portion of Jesus' famous "Sermon on the Mount," given to a crowd on a mountainside overlooking the Sea of Galilee, which specifically addresses the topic of worry. This was his longest and most popular sermon, from the early part of his ministry when news of his healing miracles was spreading like wildfire and large crowds had begun following him.

"Do Not Worry"

²⁵ "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?" ²⁶ Look

at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Holy Bible - New International Version

What examples does Jesus provide that show us we can trust God?

What does Jesus say we should “seek first?”

About a year later, in **Matthew 11**, we learn that Jesus was confronted by John’s disciples. There were many “wise and learned” people who had witnessed or heard about Jesus’ miracles yet remained unrepentant and unbelieving. In **Matthew 11:25-30**, Jesus gives us these comforting words:

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. ²⁶ Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.”

²⁷ “All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

²⁸ “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Holy Bible - New International Version

What do you think Jesus means when he says, “take my yoke upon you,” and what are the benefits of doing so?

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Philippians 4:4-9

In **Philippians 4:4-7**, the apostle Paul writes:

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Holy Bible - New International Version

It is amazing to think about Paul, writing these passages thousands of years ago. He was in prison at the time of these writings, which would normally be considered a high-stress situation. But despite the challenges he faced, he is encouraging, hopeful, and anxiety-free.

1. What does Paul say we can do to overcome anxiety?

In **Philippians 4:8-9**, Paul continues:

⁸ 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. ⁹ 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. Holy Bible - New International Version

2. What does Paul recommend here?

3. Can you think of some good examples of this advice actually put into practice? Bad examples?

4. What does Paul say will happen when we think about and practice living according to the teachings of Jesus?

APPLICATION

In this study, we learn that we should not worry. As demonstrated by nature, we should seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness and trust that God will take care of us. It is comforting to know that He is gentle and humble and promises rest for our souls. Our thoughts are very important to realizing peace and contentment in our lives, and thus we should keep them focused always on Jesus and his teachings. Through prayer, the peace of God is available to us in every situation.

What practical application will you apply to help you feel peace and contentment?

SUGGESTED CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, thank you for these teachings. Thank you for your gentleness and Love. May the peace of God guard our hearts and minds. May we trust you everyday in every situation we face AND the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with us. Amen.

All our Blessings,

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Note: *If you're not experiencing true fulfillment in life, visit the following website for more information on how to make certain you are getting the most out of this life:*

<http://www.cru.org/how-to-know-god/would-you-like-to-know-god-personally.html>
