

Week 12 Day 5 | *Fruit of the Spirit: Peace*

When have you felt the most at peace? If you’re like a lot of people, peace ebbs and flows according to what’s going on in your life.

Maybe you noticed you had the most peace after completing a major project at work. Perhaps you had a huge sense of calm after paying off your student loans. Peace might have come when you had your first baby or when you held your grandchild after your daughter’s difficult delivery. It could be a little daily dose of tranquility, but only after surviving a workout you didn’t want to do. Fighting through the temptation of junk food cravings can bring peace too.

There are a few problems with this kind of peace. First of all, it’s more akin to relief than true peace. You’re experiencing a reprieve from a heavy workload, stressful situation, financial pressure, or temptation. The heaviness of the burden has been lifted. You feel you can now breathe, but it correlates to the lack of trouble you’re facing.

Since it’s related to a specific issue, that emotion is circumstantial. When things are going well, you feel “peace.” However, when things are hard, frustrating, and fear-filled, there is no harmony. The events in your life dictate when you experience peace.

Of course, if the peace you know is circumstantial, then it’s temporary. It’s only around for as long as the pressures are absent. When one trial is resolved, the inner stillness returns. Then a new trouble arises and the peace is gone once again. Temporary peace is really no kind of peace at all. Even when things seem at ease, in the back of your mind you know it won’t last. That causes a spirit of unrest. Peace and unrest cannot coexist.

The Holy Spirit bears the fruit of peace, unlike the conditional, fleeting kind we have come to know. His peace is rooted in a permanent, saving relationship with Jesus Christ. That transcends any kind of earthly peace we might claim.

Unlike relief, true peace will allow you to breathe all the time. Rather than an absence of heaviness, there’s freedom even amid heaviness. That’s because it’s not coming from the removal of something hard.

Peace, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, is unlike earthly peace. It is unrelated to what’s going on in our lives. It doesn’t depend on us to perform, produce, achieve, or avoid. It’s unrelated to anything we do because it’s Christ working through us. His peace has the power not only to withstand the hard times, but to triumph in them.

Also, the Holy Spirit’s peace is permanent. True peace is built upon a relationship with Jesus Christ; therefore, it’s steadfast and dependable. It doesn’t ebb and flow. It’s trustworthy and faithful and can characterize our lives not just at certain times, but *at all times*.

Towards the end of a fitness journey such as ours, people are usually feeling one of the following emotions: 1) This has been awful. I haven’t gotten near the results I had hoped. I’ll never get there. 2) I saw some results in the beginning, but then I slacked off. Now I’m back to where I was. What should I try next? 3) This has been good, but I just don’t think I can keep it up. 4) This has been awesome. I sure hope I don’t lose my mojo.

All of these outcomes incorporate the man-made, performance-based kind of peace, but it doesn’t have to be that way. No matter what kind of physical results you’ve seen, the Holy Spirit can produce His perfect peace in your life.

Here’s the blueprint:

*“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.”—Philippians 4:6–7 (NLT)*

First thing, don’t worry. Don’t be anxious. That’s not the same as saying, “Do nothing about it.” Rather, while you’re working on your fitness, don’t get caught up in the emotional highs and lows of your progress. Don’t give your fitness that kind of power.

Then, you pray about it. You can pray about everything. Last time I checked, fitness is part of “everything.” While you are praying, you can tell God what you need. At the top of the list of what you need should be a clean heart and pure motives, that you might bring Him glory.

Lastly, you should be dependent on Him for all things. As such, you should always make known your appreciation for what He’s done, for the answers He has given you. You want to show God gratitude in all situations, regardless of the outcome.

Look at what happens! You can and will experience “God’s peace,” which far exceeds the earthly peace you might try to manufacture. It will keep you safe as it guards you. *The Living Bible* translates it as, “His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest . . .”

Quiet thoughts and a heart at rest—this is true peace. The kind that can be experienced no matter how difficult or disappointing the situation. The kind of peace that surpasses understanding. The kind given by our Everlasting Father . . . the Prince of Peace.

If you keep the Father at the center of your fitness, you can be at peace regardless of the results. That’s because God’s peace is always available to His children as a fruit of the Holy Spirit. His peace will produce contentment without producing complacency, a perfect balance able to sustain you in your fitness pursuits.

Prayer

*Father, thank You for the Holy Spirit and the peace He can produce. Will You forgive me when I worry or am thankless or fail to pray? Please help me to rest always in the gift of the cross. Amen.*

Meditation

The peace produced by the Holy Spirit can characterize my life.

Daily Spiritual Exercise

Today you will focus on the fruit of peace. Remember, these are not “fruits of ourselves.” These are the outcomes of the Holy Spirit working in and through our lives.

As you are focusing on the fruit of peace, pray for wisdom. You may need help in discerning whether you’re working out of your efforts or allowing the Holy Spirit to work.

Also, be sure to be teachable. Sometimes we are being taught a lesson we don’t want to learn. If we are truly open to the Lord working in our lives, however, we need to humbly receive all He wants to teach us.