

COMMANDING PEACE! FREE RESOURCE BIBLE STUDY

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CHAPTER ONE

PURSUING AND COMMANDING PEACE

CORE BIBLICAL THEME

God is the initiator of peace, and those who belong to Him are called both to extend that peace toward others and to actively command it into the storms they face. Peace is a promise, but Scripture shows it must be pursued, maintained, and spoken — not passively awaited.

SCRIPTURE USED IN THIS CHAPTER

- Mark 4:39
- Luke 2:14
- Galatians 6:7
- John 20:19
- John 20:22
- Matthew 5:9
- Romans 12:18
- James 3:18
- Hebrews 12:14-15
- Psalm 34 (esp. Psalm 34:14)
- 1 Samuel 21
- Mark 4:35-41 (esp. vv. 38, 40)

BIBLICAL INSIGHT

In **Luke 2:14**, the angelic announcement declares peace on earth and goodwill toward men — God speaking peace toward humanity first. **John 20:19 and 20:22** show the risen Jesus entering a locked room of frightened disciples with the words "Peace be unto you," followed by the impartation of the Holy Spirit — no rebuke, no accounting of their desertion. **Galatians 6:7** holds the balance: God's mercy does not cancel the reality of sowing and reaping.

Matthew 5:9 identifies peacemakers as blessed and called children of God, tying peace-making to family likeness. **Romans 12:18** commands living peaceably with all men as far as it lies within us — acknowledging that our part is real but limited. **James 3:18** describes peace-

makers planting seeds of peace and reaping righteousness, framing peacemaking as sown work with a later harvest. **Hebrews 12:14-15** couples the pursuit of peace with holiness and warns against the root of bitterness that defiles many — peace is not agreement with sin, and bitterness is what most often blocks it.

Psalm 34:14 instructs us to seek peace and pursue it. **1 Samuel 21** provides the setting: David under a death threat from Saul, feigning madness. Peace was pursued from inside danger, not from safety.

Mark 4:35-41 is the chapter's centerpiece. Jesus sleeps; the disciples accuse Him of not caring that they are perishing (v. 38); He speaks to the storm and a great calm follows (v. 39); then He asks why they were fearful and had no faith (v. 40). The question implies they possessed the capacity to address the storm themselves and did not use it.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. In **John 20:19-22**, Jesus offers peace and the Holy Spirit without addressing the disciples' failure. Where have you assumed God must first deal with your failure before He would extend peace to you?
2. **Hebrews 12:14-15** links pursuing peace with holiness and with guarding against bitterness. Is there a relationship where you are pursuing neither — where bitterness has quietly replaced pursuit?
3. **Romans 12:18** limits your responsibility to what "lieth in you." What specifically lies within your power in your current conflict, and what does not?
4. **Psalm 34:14** treats peace as something searched for. What would an active search for peace look like this week, as opposed to waiting for circumstances to change?
5. In **Mark 4:40**, Jesus questions the disciples' lack of faith after the storm was already calmed. What situation are you currently enduring that you have not yet spoken to in faith?

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. **Luke 2:14** presents God speaking peace toward humanity before humanity sought it. How does that order — God first — shape the way we approach Him in crisis?
2. **Matthew 5:9** calls peacemakers children of God. What distinguishes a peacemaker from someone who simply avoids conflict?
3. **Hebrews 12:14-15** warns that a root of bitterness troubles many and defiles many. Why does bitterness spread beyond the person holding it?
4. **James 3:18** describes peace as seed that yields a harvest. What does it mean practically to plant seeds of peace when the other party is unwilling?

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5. In **Mark 4:38**, the disciples question whether Jesus cares. Is that question ever legitimate, and what does **Mark 4:39-40** teach us about how Christ answers it?

PRAYER & SPIRITUAL ACTIVATION

Prayer

Father, You spoke peace toward the world before we ever asked for it. In **Luke 2:14** Your announcement was goodwill toward men, and in **John 20:19** the risen Christ stepped into a room of fear and offered peace instead of rebuke. I receive that. Where I have believed You were at war with me, correct me. Where I have hidden from You in shame, draw me back.

Search my heart, Lord. **Hebrews 12:15** warns of a root of bitterness, and I ask You to expose any root in me — any offense I have nursed, any wrong I have refused to release. I repent of it. According to **Romans 12:18**, help me do what lies within me to live peaceably, and give me the wisdom to know where my part ends and Yours begins. Teach me to pursue peace together with holiness, never trading conviction for comfort.

Psalms 34:14 tells me to seek peace and pursue it, so I will not wait passively. Give me the resolve of **Mark 4:39** — to speak to what is raging rather than be ruled by it. Where I have had no faith, forgive me and strengthen me. Let me remember that the Prince of Peace is aboard.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Activation Step

Identify one unresolved conflict or one storm you have been enduring in silence. Do one thing today that lies within your power (**Romans 12:18**): pray a genuine blessing over the person involved, or speak aloud to the situation as Jesus did in **Mark 4:39**, commanding peace in His name. Write down the date. Then guard against bitterness in that same matter for the next seven days, per **Hebrews 12:15**.

CHAPTER TWO

KNOWING THE PROMISES OF PEACE

CORE BIBLICAL THEME

Peace is not a vague hope but a promise God has bound Himself to across Scripture — touching long life, family, finances, health, and the mind. Confidence to command peace comes from knowing what God has actually promised, and Scripture supplies a repeatable pattern for laying hold of it.

SCRIPTURE USED IN THIS CHAPTER

- Psalm 29:11
- John 16:33
- John 14:27
- Isaiah 9:6
- Philippians 4:4-7; 4:6-8; 4:8
- Genesis 15:15
- Psalm 91:16
- Exodus 23:25-26
- Galatians 3:13-14
- Proverbs 10:27
- Romans 6:23
- Hebrews 3:19
- 1 Peter 3:10-11
- Acts 12
- 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2
- Acts 21:11-13
- 2 Timothy 3:12
- Ephesians 6:2-3
- Exodus 20:12
- Proverbs 3:1-2
- Psalm 92:13-14
- Acts 4:23
- Psalm 37:37
- Isaiah 26:3

- Psalm 119:165
- Matthew 6:19-34
- Isaiah 26:12
- Psalm 20:3
- Malachi 3:11
- Acts 16; Acts 16:31
- Isaiah 54:13
- Deuteronomy 28
- Isaiah 49:15-18; 49:17-18
- 1 Peter 3:1-6
- Luke 4:18
- Romans 8:6
- Proverbs 4:20-22
- Romans 8:26
- Isaiah 53:4
- Isaiah 54:10

BIBLICAL INSIGHT

God's stated intent. **Psalm 29:11** declares the Lord blesses His people with peace — a gift given, not earned. **John 16:33** promises peace in Christ alongside the certainty of tribulation in the world. **John 14:27** distinguishes His peace from what the world gives and commands the heart not to be troubled or afraid. **Isaiah 9:6** names Him the Prince of Peace.

The working pattern. **Philippians 4:4-7** supplies an order: rejoice, let moderation be known, be anxious for nothing, and make specific requests with thanksgiving — with the peace that surpasses understanding guarding heart and mind as the result. **Philippians 4:8** then governs the thought life: what is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, praiseworthy.

Peace and length of days. **Genesis 15:15** promised Abraham he would go to his fathers in peace at a good old age; **Galatians 3:13-14** extends Abraham's blessing to those in Christ. **Psalm 91:16** promises satisfaction with long life, and **Exodus 23:25-26** ties serving the Lord to the fulfilling of one's days. **Proverbs 10:27** contrasts the fear of the Lord prolonging days with the years of the wicked being shortened; **Romans 6:23** names death as sin's wage; **Hebrews 3:19** attributes Israel's exclusion from the land to unbelief. **1 Peter 3:10-11** ties enjoying life and many good days to guarding the tongue, turning from evil, and searching for peace. **Ephesians 6:2-3** with **Exodus 20:12** attaches honoring parents to living long and things going well; **Proverbs 3:1-2** joins length of days, long life, and peace to keeping God's commandments. **Psalm 92:13-14** pictures those planted in the Lord's house still bearing fruit in old age, and **Acts 4:23** shows the apostles returning to their own company under threat.

On martyrdom: **Acts 12** records James killed and Peter delivered through the church's prayer;

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2 Thessalonians 3:1-2 has Paul asking prayer for deliverance from wicked men; **Acts 21:11-13** records the Spirit's warning about Jerusalem; **2 Timothy 3:12** states that all who live godly will suffer persecution.

Peace through nearness and the Word. **Psalm 37:37** speaks of a good future for those who love peace. **Isaiah 26:3** promises perfect peace to the mind stayed on God because it trusts Him. **Psalm 119:165** says those who love God's law have great peace and nothing causes them to stumble. **Proverbs 4:20-22** presents God's words as life and health to the flesh.

Specific arenas. Finances: **Matthew 6:19-34** forbids anxious worry over provision; **Isaiah 26:12** credits all we have accomplished to God; **Psalm 20:3** and **Malachi 3:11** connect offerings with God's remembrance and the rebuking of the devourer. Family: **Acts 16** and **Acts 16:31** show the jailer's belief as the doorway for his household; **Isaiah 54:13** promises children taught of the Lord with great peace; **Deuteronomy 28** includes blessing on the fruit of the body; **Isaiah 49:15-18** insists God does not forget His children; **1 Peter 3:1-6** shows godly conduct influencing a spouse. Mind and emotions: **Luke 4:18** identifies Christ's anointing to heal the broken-hearted and free the oppressed; **Romans 8:6** contrasts the mind controlled by the flesh with the mind controlled by the Spirit, which yields life and peace. Health: **Romans 8:26** describes the Spirit's intercession; **Isaiah 53:4** says He bore our pain and suffering.

The closing anchor. **Isaiah 54:10** declares that though mountains depart and hills are removed, God's kindness and His covenant of peace will not be removed.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. **Philippians 4:4-7** places rejoicing first, before circumstances change. Which of the four actions in that passage do you most consistently skip, and why?
2. **Philippians 4:8** distinguishes what is *true* from what is merely *factual* about your situation. Name one truth from God's promises you have not been fixing your mind on.
3. **Isaiah 26:3** conditions perfect peace on a mind stayed on God. What specifically has your mind been staying on this week?
4. **1 Peter 3:10-11** connects your speech to your days. What have you been saying aloud about your current trial?
5. **Isaiah 54:10** calls God's peace a covenant. Where have you treated His peace as a mood that comes and goes rather than a covenant that stands?

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. **John 14:27** says Christ's peace is unlike what the world gives. What are the practical differences you have observed between the two?

2. **Proverbs 10:27**, **Romans 6:23**, and **Hebrews 3:19** all connect sin or unbelief to shortened life, while **Acts 12** shows one apostle killed and another delivered. How do we hold both honestly without drawing conclusions Scripture does not draw?
3. **Ephesians 6:2-3** and **Proverbs 3:1-2** tie honor and obedience to peace and long life. Why might honoring difficult parents be a peace issue?
4. **Acts 16:31** presents the jailer's faith as a lifeline to his whole household. How does that shape the way we pray for unsaved family members while still respecting their own decision?
5. **Romans 8:6** contrasts two ways of letting the mind be controlled. What does redirecting the mind actually look like in the middle of an ongoing hardship?

PRAYER & SPIRITUAL ACTIVATION

Prayer

Father, You have said in **Psalms 29:11** that You bless Your people with peace, and I receive that gift now — not because I have earned it, but because You give it. **John 14:27** tells me the peace You give is not the world's peace, so I stop looking for it where it cannot be found, and I stop letting my heart be troubled and afraid.

Search me, Lord. **Philippians 4:8** calls me to fix my mind on what is true, and I confess how often I have fixed it instead on the worst outcome I can imagine. I repent of that. **Isaiah 26:3** promises perfect peace to the mind stayed on You, so stay my mind. Where my words have run opposite of Your promises, forgive me — **1 Peter 3:10-11** warns me to keep my tongue from evil and search for peace, and I will guard my mouth.

Where unbelief has hardened in me as it did in Israel (**Hebrews 3:19**), soften me. I bring You my specific needs with thanksgiving as **Philippians 4:6** instructs, and I trust You with my family, my provision, my body, and my mind. I hold to **Isaiah 54:10** — that Your kindness will not depart from me and Your covenant of peace will not be removed.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Activation Step

Choose one promise from this chapter that speaks directly to your current battle — **Isaiah 26:3** for a racing mind, **Isaiah 54:13** for a wayward child, **Isaiah 26:12** for finances, **Proverbs 4:20-22** for the body. Write it out by hand and place it where you will see it daily. Then walk the four steps of **Philippians 4:4-7** aloud once each day for the next seven days, repeating them as often in a day as the situation requires.

CHAPTER THREE

PUT ON YOUR PEACE ARMOR

CORE BIBLICAL THEME

Peace is guarded by armor, not by wishful thinking. Because the real conflict is spiritual, Scripture supplies both a daily uniform to wear and weapons to wield — and each piece exists to end the conflict that steals peace.

SCRIPTURE USED IN THIS CHAPTER

- 1 Peter 5:8
- Ephesians 6:10-12
- Ephesians 6:13-17; 6:14-18
- Ephesians 6:15
- Ephesians 6:16
- Ephesians 6:18
- Matthew 17; Mark 9; Luke 9
- Luke 9:42-43
- Mark 16:17
- Mark 5:35-43
- Mark 6:1-6
- James 4:7
- 1 Thessalonians 2:18
- 1 Thessalonians 3:11
- Daniel 7:25
- 2 Corinthians 5:21
- Hebrews 11:1
- Philippians 4:8
- 1 Corinthians 14:13-15
- Romans 8:26

BIBLICAL INSIGHT

The nature of the fight. **1 Peter 5:8** describes an adversary on the prowl. **Ephesians 6:10-12** locates the real conflict not in flesh and blood but in evil rulers, authorities, powers, and spirits

— which is why battles that look purely circumstantial have an unseen dimension. **Ephesians 6:13-17** lists the armor to be worn.

Shoes of peace. **Ephesians 6:15** assigns peace to the feet: peace that comes from the Good News, worn so that you are fully prepared. Peace is therefore both a possession and a piece of equipment — something put on before the day begins rather than sought after trouble arrives.

Authority that restores peace. In **Luke 9:42-43** (with the parallel accounts in **Matthew 17**, **Mark 9**, and **Luke 9**), a demon throws a boy into violent convulsion; Jesus rebukes the spirit, heals the boy, and returns him to his father, and the crowd is gripped with awe. The restoration of peace followed the confrontation. **Mark 16:17** names casting out demons among the signs that follow believers.

Wisdom in warfare. **Mark 5:35-43** shows Jesus removing the mockers before raising Jairus' daughter, permitting only the parents and three disciples. **Mark 6:1-6** shows unbelief limiting what was done at Nazareth. Together they teach discretion about who is present. **James 4:7** promises the devil flees when resisted; **1 Thessalonians 2:18** records Paul repeatedly hindered by Satan, and **1 Thessalonians 3:11** shows him praying for the way to be cleared — endurance, not a single blow. **Daniel 7:25**, though speaking of the antichrist, reveals the tactic of wearing out the saints.

The remaining pieces. **Ephesians 6:14-18** lists them. The breastplate rests on **2 Corinthians 5:21** — we are made the righteousness of God in Christ — worn both as a settled position and as daily conduct. **Ephesians 6:16** places the shield of faith "above all," and **Hebrews 11:1** defines faith as the assurance of what is hoped for and evidence of what is not seen. The helmet guards the mind, which **Philippians 4:8** instructs on what to dwell upon. The sword is God's Word, wielded as Jesus wielded it: "It is written." **Ephesians 6:18** commands praying always in the Spirit, which **1 Corinthians 14:13-15** connects to praying in tongues, where understanding is unfruitful — and **Romans 8:26** describes the Spirit interceding where our own minds fall short.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. **Ephesians 6:12** says the fight is not against flesh and blood. In your current situation, whom or what have you been fighting instead?
2. **Ephesians 6:15** pictures peace as footwear put on daily. Is peace something you currently wear before trouble comes, or something you scramble for after it arrives?
3. **Ephesians 6:16** places the shield of faith above all. Recall your last crisis — did your first words reflect faith or fear?
4. **2 Corinthians 5:21** declares you the righteousness of God in Christ. Where has a sense of unworthiness quietly kept you from asking God for help?

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5. **Philippians 4:8** governs the mind. Of the five areas the chapter names — will, intellect, emotions, imagination, memory — which one most often surrenders your peace?

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. **Ephesians 6:10-12** insists on an unseen dimension to our conflicts. Why do you think many believers find this difficult to accept or act on?
2. In **Luke 9:42-43**, peace and order followed a direct confrontation. What does that suggest about situations we have been patiently enduring rather than addressing?
3. **Mark 5:35-43** and **Mark 6:1-6** both involve unbelief in the room. How do we exercise discretion about where and with whom we pray without becoming timid?
4. **James 4:7** promises the devil flees, yet **1 Thessalonians 2:18** shows Paul hindered again and again. How do we hold both truths without becoming either presumptuous or discouraged?
5. **Ephesians 6:18** and **1 Corinthians 14:13-15** commend praying in the Spirit. Why might a form of prayer that bypasses our own understanding be especially useful when our understanding is overwhelmed?

PRAYER & SPIRITUAL ACTIVATION

Prayer

Father, You have told me plainly in **Ephesians 6:12** that my fight is not against flesh and blood. Forgive me for the times I have battled people and circumstances while leaving the real conflict untouched. Search my heart — where I have grown bitter toward someone the enemy was actually using, correct me and turn my warfare in the right direction.

I put on Your armor today. According to **Ephesians 6:15** I put peace on my feet and carry it everywhere I go. According to **2 Corinthians 5:21** I stand in the righteousness You gave me through Christ, not in my own record; where shame has silenced my prayers, break that silence. According to **Ephesians 6:16** I take up the shield of faith above all — teach me to speak faith first, in small things and in severe ones.

Lord, **Daniel 7:25** shows me the enemy's aim to wear out Your people, and I confess I have grown weary. Renew me. I will not relent. Like Paul in **1 Thessalonians 3:11**, I ask You to clear the way. Fill my mouth with Your Word as a sword, and let me pray in the Spirit as **Ephesians 6:18** commands, trusting the intercession You promised in **Romans 8:26**.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Activation Step

Begin each morning this week by putting the armor on out loud, naming each piece from **Ephesians 6:14-18** and starting with peace on your feet (**Ephesians 6:15**). Then choose one recurring pressure in your life — anxiety, a strained relationship, a persistent physical or financial battle — and this time address it directly rather than only enduring it: resist the enemy per **James 4:7**, speak the relevant Scripture aloud, and spend time praying in the Spirit (**Ephesians 6:18**). Keep at it daily rather than once, and write down every partial breakthrough you notice.

CHAPTER FOUR

ARRESTING THE PEACE THIEVES!

CORE BIBLICAL THEME

Scripture calls believers to expose the unfruitful works of darkness rather than tolerate them. Peace is most often lost not to one dramatic assault but to identifiable thieves — self, media, strife, unforgiveness, disorder, draining people, lost rest, sin, finances, illness, and unbelief — each of which Scripture equips us to recognize and arrest.

SCRIPTURE USED IN THIS CHAPTER

- Ephesians 5:11
- 2 Corinthians 13:5
- James 3:8-10
- Luke 21:26
- Matthew 24:4
- Matthew 24:12
- James 3:2
- Mark 11:26
- Matthew 6:12
- Matthew 18:21-22
- John 20:23
- 2 Thessalonians 3:6-8; 3:10
- Proverbs 26:14-15
- Matthew 7:3
- Proverbs 26:12
- Proverbs 25:17
- James 3:14
- 1 Corinthians 15:33
- Psalm 127:2
- Proverbs 3:24
- Psalm 4:8
- James 5:16
- Proverbs 28:13
- Galatians 6:1

- John 8:1-11
- 2 Peter 3:13-14
- Proverbs 11:25
- Isaiah 41:13
- Matthew 6:33; 6:25
- Proverbs 11:1
- Matthew 3:8
- Exodus 15:26
- Mark 5:36; 5:37
- Matthew 10:8
- Luke 4:39
- Hebrews 11:1
- Hebrews 3:18-19
- Mark 9; Mark 9:23-24
- Mark 6:6

BIBLICAL INSIGHT

The mandate. **Ephesians 5:11** instructs believers not to participate in the unfruitful works of darkness but to expose them — the pattern for the whole chapter.

Self. **2 Corinthians 13:5** calls for self-examination and self-testing rather than pointing outward. Peace is often lost through our own quick reactions, worst-case imagining, and habitual complaining.

Words and media. **James 3:8-10** describes the untamed tongue producing both blessing and cursing from one mouth, concluding these things ought not to be. **Luke 21:26** foretells hearts failing for fear at what is coming on the earth; **Matthew 24:4** warns against being deceived; **Matthew 24:12** ties increased lawlessness to love growing cold. **James 3:2** identifies the one who does not stumble in speech as mature and able to bridle the whole body.

Unforgiveness. **Mark 11:26** states plainly that refusing to forgive affects our own forgiveness. **Matthew 6:12** places forgiveness inside daily prayer, indicating it is ongoing rather than once-for-all. **Matthew 18:21-22** answers Peter's "seven times" with seventy-seven. **John 20:23** shows that sins retained remain retained — the one holding them stays bound.

Draining relationships. **2 Thessalonians 3:6-8** commands withdrawal from believers living idle lives; **2 Thessalonians 3:10** states the unwilling to work should not eat. The chapter's seven markers each rest on a verse: idleness (**Proverbs 26:14-15**), fault-finding while ignoring one's own log (**Matthew 7:3**), unteachableness (**Proverbs 26:12**), demanding without reciprocating (**2 Thessalonians 3:10**), overusing others' time (**Proverbs 25:17**), bitter jealousy masked by boasting (**James 3:14**), and unresolved sin, since bad company corrupts good morals (**1 Corinthians 15:33**).

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Rest. **Psalm 127:2** says God grants sleep to those He loves and calls anxious toil vain. **Proverbs 3:24** promises sleep will be sweet and without fear; **Psalm 4:8** joins lying down in peace with dwelling in safety.

Sin. **James 5:16** joins confession and mutual prayer to healing. **Proverbs 28:13** contrasts concealing sin with confessing and turning from it to receive mercy. **Galatians 6:1** directs the godly to restore a fallen believer gently and humbly while guarding themselves. **John 8:1-11** shows Jesus extending rescue to the woman caught in adultery before instructing her to sin no more. **2 Peter 3:13-14** urges diligence to be found in peace, without spot and blameless.

Finances. **Proverbs 11:25** promises the generous prosper and those who refresh others are refreshed. **Isaiah 41:13** has God holding our right hand and saying He is here to help. **Matthew 6:33**, in the context of **Matthew 6:25**, ties seeking the Kingdom first to provision. **Proverbs 11:1** contrasts dishonest scales with accurate weights. **Matthew 3:8** calls for fruit consistent with repentance — fruit that matures over time.

Health. **Exodus 15:26** identifies the Lord as the One who heals. **Mark 5:37** shows Jesus admitting only Peter, James, and John into Jairus' daughter's room. **Matthew 10:8** commissions freely giving what was freely received. **Mark 5:36** says be not afraid, only believe; **Luke 4:39** records Jesus rebuking a fever, and it left. **Hebrews 11:1** defines faith as certainty of what is hoped for and proof of what is not seen.

Unbelief. **Hebrews 3:18-19** states that those who disobeyed did not enter God's rest because of unbelief. **Mark 9:23-24** distinguishes the father's fearful unbelief — "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief" — from a hardened refusal. **Mark 6:6** records unbelief at Nazareth that astonished Jesus.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. **2 Corinthians 13:5** commands self-examination. Of the four self-inflicted thieves named — quick negative reactions, imagining the worst, drawing others into negativity, habitual complaining — which is most yours?
2. **James 3:2** ties maturity to not stumbling in speech. Recall one recent conversation where holding your tongue would have preserved peace. What drove you to speak?
3. **John 20:23** says sins retained are retained. Whose wrong are you still holding, and what has holding it cost you?
4. **Psalm 127:2**, **Proverbs 3:24**, and **Psalm 4:8** all present rest as God's gift. Is a simple lack of sleep currently contributing to what feels like a spiritual battle?
5. **Hebrews 3:18-19** links unbelief to missing God's rest. Where has fearful unbelief in your life started hardening into a settled refusal to believe?

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. **Ephesians 5:11** calls us to expose unfruitful works rather than merely avoid them. What is the difference between exposing something and simply complaining about it?
2. **Luke 21:26** and **Matthew 24:4** were spoken of the last days. How should they shape a believer's media habits without leading to willful ignorance of the world?
3. **Matthew 18:21-22** commands unlimited forgiveness. How does that coexist with the boundaries **2 Thessalonians 3:6-8** clearly permits?
4. **Galatians 6:1** requires gentleness and humility toward a believer overtaken by sin, plus watchfulness over ourselves. Why does the verse include that second warning?
5. **Mark 9:23-24** shows a father honest about his own unbelief. Why might naming our unbelief out loud be more productive than pretending confidence we do not feel?

PRAYER & SPIRITUAL ACTIVATION

Prayer

Father, **Ephesians 5:11** tells me not to take part in the unfruitful works of darkness but to expose them, and I ask You to expose what has been stealing my peace. Begin with me. **2 Corinthians 13:5** calls me to examine myself, so search my reactions, my imaginings, my complaining, my words. Where I have been my own peace thief, show me plainly and give me the humility to change.

Lord, **James 3:2** shows me that maturity is measured by my tongue, and I confess how often mine has broken peace rather than made it. Bridle my speech. **Mark 11:26** and **John 20:23** press me on forgiveness — I release those who have wronged me, and I ask You to keep releasing them from my heart as often as the memory returns.

Proverbs 28:13 promises mercy to the one who confesses and turns, so I bring my sin into the light rather than concealing it. Give me the gentleness of **Galatians 6:1** toward others who are struggling, and keep me watchful over myself. **Psalms 4:8** — let me lie down in peace and sleep, for You alone make me dwell in safety. And where fear has begun to harden into unbelief, I pray as the father did in **Mark 9:24**: Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Activation Step

Name your thieves in writing. Go through the categories in this chapter and mark the two or three that are actively at work in your life right now. For the single most active one, take one

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concrete arresting action this week — a media boundary, a spoken word of forgiveness (**Matthew 6:12**), a confession made to God or a trusted believer (**James 5:16**), an act of generosity (**Proverbs 11:25**), a room set in order, or a protected bedtime (**Psalms 127:2**). Then review your list in seven days and note what changed.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECEIVE DIVINE PEACE

CORE BIBLICAL THEME

After all we are commanded to do, peace is finally something God supplies supernaturally. Scripture holds two truths together: we act in faith and command peace, and we release our cares and receive a peace God alone can give — through Christ's rest, the Holy Spirit's comfort, a thankful heart, and hope for what lies ahead.

SCRIPTURE USED IN THIS CHAPTER

- Philippians 4:7
- Psalm 103:13-14
- 2 Corinthians 12:8-10
- James 5:11
- Zechariah 4:6
- Ephesians 6:10
- Isaiah 40:29
- 2 Timothy 2:3
- Proverbs 18:10
- Isaiah 41:10
- 1 Corinthians 10:13
- John 15:5
- Psalm 61:1-2
- John 14:27
- Colossians 3:15
- Matthew 11:28-30
- Isaiah 30:15
- Galatians 6:9
- 1 Peter 5:7
- 2 Corinthians 2:14
- Matthew 23:37
- Hebrews 12:2
- Romans 15:13
- 1 Peter 5:9

- 2 Corinthians 4:17-18
- John 14:26-27
- John 14:18
- Acts 9; Acts 9:1-9
- Acts 9:31
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
- 2 Corinthians 2:6-8
- Romans 1:12; 2 Corinthians 2:7; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 2:1; Colossians 2:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11; 5:14

BIBLICAL INSIGHT

Peace that surpasses understanding. **Philippians 4:7** describes a peace that surpasses all understanding guarding heart and mind — divine in origin, not manufactured. **Psalms 103:13-14** shows a Father tender and compassionate who knows our frailty and remembers we are dust. **2 Corinthians 12:8-10** records Paul's discovery that strength arrives in weakness, and **James 5:11** points to Job's endurance and the Lord's kindness at the end.

Both sides of the truth. Scripture commands action: be strong in the Lord (**Ephesians 6:10**), endure hardness as a good soldier (**2 Timothy 2:3**). It equally insists the victory is not ours: not by might nor power but by the Spirit (**Zechariah 4:6**), He gives strength to the weak (**Isaiah 40:29**), the Lord's name is a strong tower to run into (**Proverbs 18:10**). **Isaiah 41:10** gathers it up — fear not, I will strengthen, help, and uphold you.

Postures that open the heart. **1 Corinthians 10:13** promises God's faithfulness and a way of escape we are able to bear. **John 15:5** states plainly that apart from Him we can do nothing. **Psalms 61:1-2** is David's cry from an overwhelmed heart to be led to the rock higher than himself.

Receiving Christ's peace. **John 14:27** presents peace as given, with the corresponding charge not to let the heart be troubled or afraid. **Colossians 3:15** says to let the peace of Christ rule — a peace permitted to govern. **Matthew 11:28-30** invites the weary and burdened to come, take His yoke, learn from Him, and find rest for the soul.

Making room. **Isaiah 30:15** locates salvation in returning and resting, and strength in quietness and confidence.

Not giving up. **Galatians 6:9** warns against weariness in well doing, promising a harvest in due season if we do not faint. **1 Peter 5:7** directs us to cast all our cares on Him because He cares for us.

Thankfulness and receptivity. **2 Corinthians 2:14** joins thanksgiving to God's causing us to triumph. **Matthew 23:37** shows the tragic alternative: God willing to gather, and a people who would not.

Looking ahead. **Hebrews 12:2** shows Christ enduring the cross for the joy set before Him.

Romans 15:13 is a prayer that the God of hope fill us with joy and peace in believing. **1 Peter 5:9** reminds us that believers worldwide undergo the same sufferings. **2 Corinthians 4:17-18** weighs present troubles as light and brief against eternal glory, directing our gaze to what is unseen.

The Comforter. **John 14:26-27** names the Holy Spirit as Comforter and immediately follows with the gift of Christ's peace; **John 14:18** promises we will not be left comfortless. **Acts 9** and **Acts 9:1-9** record Saul's conversion, and **Acts 9:31** the result: the churches had rest and were edified, walking in the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

Comfort given away. **2 Corinthians 1:3-4** identifies God as the source of all comfort who comforts us so that we may comfort others. **2 Corinthians 2:6-8** urges the Corinthians to forgive, comfort, and reaffirm love toward a man who had sinned, lest he be overcome by discouragement. Paul's broader pattern appears throughout **Romans 1:12**, **2 Corinthians 2:7** and **13:11**, **Philippians 2:1**, **Colossians 2:2**, and **1 Thessalonians 4:18**, **5:11**, and **5:14**.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. **2 Corinthians 12:9-10** says strength comes in weakness. Where are you still trying to be strong enough rather than admitting weakness to God?
2. **Matthew 11:28-30** includes the phrase "learn from Me." What might Christ be teaching you about receiving that you have not yet learned?
3. **1 Peter 5:7** commands casting all cares on Him. Name the one care you have not actually handed over, and consider why you are still carrying it.
4. **2 Corinthians 2:14** ties thanksgiving to triumph. What small victories in your current trial have you overlooked because they weren't the breakthrough you asked for?
5. **Isaiah 30:15** locates strength in quietness. When was the last time you were deliberately quiet before God, and what has been crowding it out?

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. **Ephesians 6:10** commands strength while **Isaiah 40:29** says He gives strength to the weak. How do we live in both without swinging into either passivity or self-reliance?
2. **James 5:11** points to Job's endurance and the Lord's kindness at the end. What does that account teach about the gap between faithfulness and outcome?
3. **Matthew 23:37** shows God willing to gather a people who would not be gathered. How does a heart become unreceptive, and how does it recover?
4. **Hebrews 12:2** says Christ endured for the joy set before Him. What does it look like practically to fix your gaze on what is ahead while still in the middle of hardship?

5. **2 Corinthians 1:3-4** and **2 Corinthians 2:6-8** both make comfort something passed on. Why might comforting someone else be a means of receiving peace ourselves?

PRAYER & SPIRITUAL ACTIVATION

Prayer

Father, You are the God described in **Psalms 103:13-14** — tender and compassionate, who knows my frailty and remembers I am dust. I stop pretending strength I do not have. **2 Corinthians 12:9** tells me Your power rests on the weak, so I bring You my weakness honestly and ask You to be strong in me.

Search my heart, Lord. Where I have tried to earn Your peace by getting everything right, correct me. Where I have grown weary in well doing (**Galatians 6:9**), renew me and keep me from quitting. Where I have hardened into unreceptivity, soften me — I do not want to be like Jerusalem in **Matthew 23:37**, whom You were willing to gather and who would not come.

I come as **Matthew 11:28** invites me to come, weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I lay them down. Teach me, Lord, as that passage says — teach me how to receive. According to **1 Peter 5:7** I cast every care on You, because You care for me. I let the peace of Christ rule in my heart (**Colossians 3:15**). Fill me, God of hope, with joy and peace in believing (**Romans 15:13**), and let the Holy Spirit comfort me as He comforted the churches in **Acts 9:31**. Then use me to comfort someone else with the comfort You have given me (**2 Corinthians 1:3-4**).

In Jesus' name, amen.

Activation Step

Do two things this week. First, make time for peace as **Isaiah 30:15** describes — set aside one unhurried, quiet block of time with God, phone and noise off, not to accomplish anything but to receive. Name your heaviest burden aloud and hand it over per **1 Peter 5:7**. Second, comfort one other person: call, visit, pray with, or serve someone who is struggling (**2 Corinthians 1:4**). Then write down what you noticed about your own peace afterward, along with every small victory you can identify in your current trial (**2 Corinthians 2:14**).