



PEACE

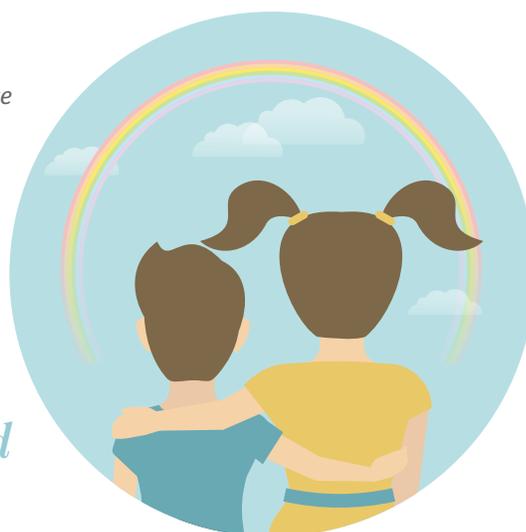
Being in harmony with God and His plan

“Shalom.”
 “Peace to you.”
 “May you have peace.”

In various forms throughout many cultures around the world, the word *peace* is a common greeting and a courteous farewell. It’s been the subject of many songs, books, and global summits throughout human history. Some noble individuals have made it their life’s purpose and have actively promoted living a life of peace.

But what is it, really? Is peace something that can be found in the human heart? Can we actually have peace of mind? Is there really a possibility for world peace? And on the home front, is peace something that can be put into practice regularly in the family?

Peace is a blessing from God, offered to those who are actively pursuing it and applying it in their lives.



What is peace?

Peace is one of those words that can mean different things to different people based on context. It can be a sense of tranquility and calm, a feeling of safety, deep contentment, and the list goes on. A biblical definition reveals an essential layer of meaning: “To be spiritually minded is life and *peace*” (*Romans 8:6*, emphasis added).

So to understand and teach God’s version of peace, we must be able to think like He does and be spiritually-minded. A helpful way to explain and define this concept to our children is this: **“being in harmony with God.”** We can think of the analogy of musical instruments as we teach this principle to our children. If we are the musical instrument, we must be “in tune” with God—or in agreement with Him. When we’re “out of tune” with Him and His purpose, we are no longer harmonious but discordant—in direct conflict with Him.

Peace is a blessing from God, offered to those who are actively pursuing it and applying it in their lives. “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” is a frequent greeting found in the New Testament epistles. This was much more than just a way of saying “hello.” It was a heartfelt expression of a prayerful request that God’s people experience unity and a special blessing.

Explain to your children that godly peace is a gift of God’s Spirit (*Galatians 5:22*), one that can be multiplied in our lives (*1 Peter 1:2*; *2 Peter 1:2*).



We can't control what happens on a global or national scale, but we can control the barriers to peace that exist within our own homes and hearts.

Barriers to peace

Most people are more familiar with the opposites of peace in life. Our human history is a sad collection of wars and conflicts, which continue to this day. Breakdowns in peaceful communication lead to problems in relationships, readily evident in divorce statistics and domestic disputes. Even our hectic, fast-paced lives contribute to a lack of peace. How recently have you or someone in your family experienced overwhelming stress, for example?

We can't control what happens on a global or national scale, or even what's going on down the street, but we can control the barriers to peace that exist within our own homes and hearts.

When events in our homes feel out of control and discord is flaring, it can be helpful to assess the following:

Is everyone getting enough quality sleep?

Has the family routine been disrupted by travel, illness, death in the family, job or house transfer, or any other unexpected or traumatic event?

Does someone in the family have a major project, performance, or exam deadline approaching?

Is everyone in the family getting enough regular exercise?

Is everyone eating consistent, healthy meals?

Have you and your spouse been arguing often and in front of the kids?

Has the family recently experienced significant financial strain?

Any one of these issues can create an upheaval in the security and stability of the family structure. Multiple disruptions in these areas can cause great distress, uncertainty, and fear.

Physical methods of coping with stress and anxiety can be helpful in promoting peace and tranquility within the home. Some practical coping methods may include:

Establishing a regular daily routine or rhythm.

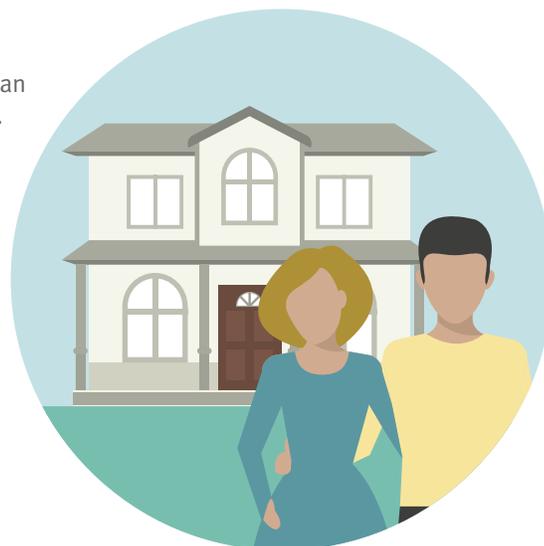
“Unplugging” from electronics and minimizing screen time.

Getting out into nature and admiring God's creation.

Listening to relaxing music.

Spending quality, one-on-one time with your child, engaged in a favorite activity or quality dialogue.

Expressing yourself through art or completing a craft project.





Removing excess clutter from the home.

Getting regular exercise.

Eating well.

Going to bed at a reasonable time each night.

While these methods are all beneficial and can certainly help alleviate some amount of tension and distress, alone they will not get to the root issue of a lack of peace. Why? Because when we are lacking in peace, it is ultimately an issue of the *heart*—a spiritual matter.

Perhaps the greatest barrier to the pursuit of peace may be from placing trust in ourselves rather than in God. This kind of wrong focus is certainly a spiritual issue.

Help your children use the imagery of these verses to visualize besieging a powerful fortress that simply crumbles into dust when we put these weapons to work.



The war in the mind

Scripture describes our natural state of mind as the “carnal mind” which regularly wars against God ([Romans 8:7](#)). The apostle Paul aptly described this internal war in which our minds are the battleground ([Romans 7:14-23](#)).

Jesus’ half-brother James explained that wars and conflicts arise among us because of our own internal battles, selfishness, and envy, which make us enemies of God ([James 3:14-16; 4:1-4](#)). Other aspects of the carnal mind, or “works of the flesh,” likewise prohibit us from seeking God’s will ([Galatians 5:17, 19-21](#)).

Such an internal, spiritual battle requires a spiritual solution. Reassure your children that though this great spiritual battle is being waged in our minds, God has mercifully provided us with the weaponry capable of winning each battle—and ultimately the entire war: “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” ([2 Corinthians 10:4-5](#)). Help your children use the imagery of these verses to visualize besieging a powerful fortress that simply crumbles into dust when we put these weapons to work.

The armor of God

A full suit of spiritual armor is described in Scripture ([Ephesians 6:11-17](#)). We can regularly put on this spiritual armor and outfit ourselves with the weaponry necessary to fight and defend against any spiritual attack.

When we are experiencing a lack of peace in our lives, it can be helpful to determine where our spiritual armor might be weak and where it might need repair. A lack of peace in our lives can mean we are



losing an inner battle somewhere: our great enemy, Satan the devil, has found a weakness and gained a foothold. Perhaps we have lost our focus on truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace itself, faith, salvation, or the word of God.

Again, we can use imagery to make this analogy vivid and real in our minds and to engage our children. Armor is meant to be worn into battle. Our spiritual armor has already seen war; it is not pristine. It is dented, burned, dusty, and stained from regular use—or it should be.

Where our armor has been breached, we have patched and repaired it. The quality of our repair work is a reflection of our relationship with the Manufacturer of the armor itself. Ideally, after a battle that we have lost, our patched armor should be stronger and more resilient in that area—because we have learned from our mistakes or trials, appealed to God for the solution, and are better prepared for the next encounter with the enemy. Regular strife, anxiety, or discord in our lives means it's time to patch our armor again.

Our spiritual armor is dented, burned, dusty, and stained from regular use—or it should be.

The gospel of peace

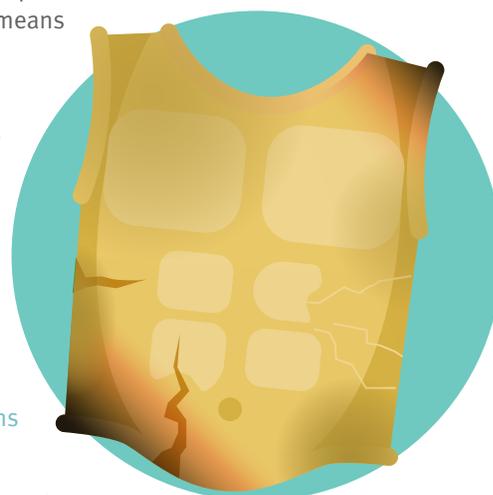
Peace might seem like a counterintuitive component of that spiritual armor: “having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace” ([Ephesians 6:15](#)). Just how does one go into battle with peace? And why feet?

Simply put, a well-equipped soldier needs stable footing to be most effective. And we are soldiers ([2 Timothy 2:3](#)). When at war, a soldier must have reliable footgear, ready to march into battle at any moment. Compromised footgear, or worse—no gear—will leave a soldier particularly vulnerable to attack, an easy target to immobilize.

To avoid becoming immobilized, then, we must establish our foundation. That foundation is the message of peace and salvation described throughout the gospel accounts and several New Testament epistles as the “kingdom of God” or “kingdom of heaven.” It is a message full of good news and hope for all humanity! This message began with Jesus Christ Himself ([Matthew 4:17](#)) and reflects a Kingdom of God that will be established for all eternity ruled by Him ([Daniel 2:44](#); [Luke 1:31-33](#); [Revelation 11:15](#)). (For a clearer picture of how this Kingdom begins, you and your children may wish to review the study “[Feast of Tabernacles](#)” in our [Word of God](#) section.)

Ask yourself before reacting to a person or situation, Will my response reflect that Kingdom? Am I seeking peace?

To be established in our preparation of that gospel of peace, we must make that Kingdom our base of operations—that which keeps us grounded as we encounter all obstacles in our daily lives. In that light, you and your children may enjoy making [Matthew 6:33](#) a special memory verse to keep that focus sharp: “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”





God's Kingdom is described as "righteousness and peace and joy" ([Romans 14:17](#)). Ask yourself before reacting to a person or situation, Will my response reflect that Kingdom? Am I seeking peace?

Spending time talking with God in prayer is always the right place to start when we are encountering a specific challenge.

Getting "self" out of the way

Explain to your children that to truly pursue God's version of peace—which is a spiritual state of mind—we must remove our self-will and seek God's will instead. Jesus Christ beautifully demonstrated this total submission to God the Father's will when He prayed, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done" ([Luke 22:42](#)).

Pursuing reconciliation first with God is of primary importance for the individual seeking peace. Spending time talking with God in prayer is always the right place to start when we are encountering a specific challenge, whether that challenge be an internal war of the mind, an external conflict with another individual, or a self-assessment to ensure we are truly in harmony with God.

In the context of pursuing spiritual character, the apostle Paul wrote, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts" ([Colossians 3:15](#)). The use of the command "let" is of special notice since it denotes an active involvement on our part: we have to get our natural selfish state out of the way to let God's Spirit work in us (if we're baptized) or with us (if we're not yet baptized).

Help your children understand that peace is first a choice and then an action. Peace doesn't just happen; it must be pursued.

A peaceful person does not seek revenge or look to provoke another individual, but instead seeks a spiritual solution: "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy" ([James 3:17](#)).

A peaceful person seeks resolution, reconciliation, and harmony in all relationships: "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men" ([Romans 12:18](#)). This means that even in difficult situations and even when dealing with difficult people, we should be actively trying to promote peace as much as we possibly can.

This kind of peace involves taking on the mind of Christ: "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" ([Philippians 2:3-5](#)). Multiple uses of the word *let* once again signify the need for our active participation in the process.





Help your children understand that peace is first a choice and then an action. Peace doesn't just happen; it must be pursued ([Psalm 34:14](#); [Romans 14:19](#); [Hebrews 12:14](#)). Pursuing peace is often the more challenging option, but well worth the effort.

They can unburden their hearts to Him in prayer, casting their whole burden on Him.

Peace of mind

There is a beautiful calm and peace of mind that pervades when an individual is truly in harmony with God. King David wrote, "Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble" ([Psalm 119:165](#)). This doesn't mean we won't experience trials or failures, but it does mean that we can experience a sense of calm during them.

A study of [Psalm 119](#) in its entirety reveals why David was described as a man in harmony with God's own heart ([1 Samuel 13:14](#)). David knew that God's ways are perfect and provide real, lasting solutions to life that work. He allowed himself to be led by God's word and even described God's testimonies (laws) as a "delight" and his "counselors" ([Psalm 119:24](#)).

When we are in need of counsel, we can have full assurance that the solution to our problem is in the pages of the Bible. We can go to God in prayer to petition Him for guidance and comfort. He is the "Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation" and makes it possible for us to comfort others ([2 Corinthians 1:3-4](#)). He is our Counselor ([Isaiah 9:6](#)). He is the God of peace ([Romans 15:33](#); [Philippians 4:9](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:23](#)).

When your children encounter a problem, explain to them that this is the God they can talk to in prayer to seek a solution. They can unburden their hearts to Him in prayer, casting their whole burden on Him, because He cares deeply and wants the best for all of us ([Psalm 55:22](#); [1 Peter 5:7](#)).

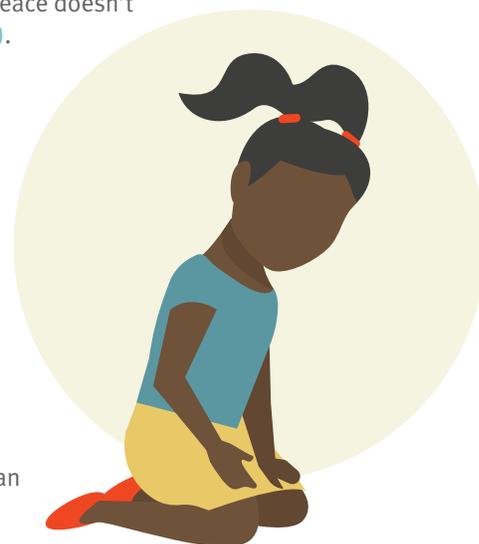
Encourage your children to talk regularly with God in prayer about all of their concerns: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" ([Philippians 4:6-7](#)).

Taking all of our concerns to God in prayer shows a willingness to yield to His will and seek Him for solutions. When we give Him our burdens and implement His solutions, that peace "which surpasses all understanding" is the result. It is unquantifiable and surpasses our human understanding because it is a spiritual gift and a component of the fruit of God's very Spirit ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)).

Under His government, the implements of war will be so useless they won't even exist!

Rest assured

Jesus Christ said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" ([John 14:27](#)). This is not humanity's version of peace but God's. And God is the only viable solution to true and lasting world peace ([John 16:33](#)). Under





His government, the implements of war will be so useless they won't even exist ([Isaiah 2:4](#))!

Be encouraged that when you experience discord, anxiety, stress, trials, or even persecution in your life, there is a solution that results in peace. You can feel settled ([1 Peter 5:10](#)). You can feel refreshed ([Acts 3:19](#)). You can have harmony with God.

May the God of peace be with you and your family.

TAKING THE FIRST STEP

Here are a few suggestions to promote more peace and harmony in your home and in your heart:

Write out a clear, workable **definition of peace** and display it prominently.

Write out one or **two key scriptures** that will promote peaceful thoughts, words, and actions within your family.

Brainstorm and write down a list of your **barriers to peace**. Take the list to God in prayer, asking Him to help you overcome each barrier. Put into effect any practical coping methods that apply.

Review the **armor of God** ([Ephesians 6:11-17](#)) with your child and discuss how each section helps us fight a spiritual battle.

Study Psalm 119 and, like King David, reflect on what you love about God's ways.

Be a family that actively **pursues peace, unity, and harmony**.

Review the armor of God with your child and discuss how each section helps us fight a spiritual battle.



GUARD AND GUIDE SCRIPTURES

Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. —Romans 14:19

Teach your children the wisdom of avoiding disputes based on differences of opinion or contentious subjects. Some people thrive on arguments and debate. As representatives of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom, we instead need to choose to pursue peaceful relationships with others. We can set the example by focusing instead on what we have in common with others, or if we have little to nothing in common, we can be kind and courteous and reflect God's Spirit. If necessary, we should walk away from an argument that is clearly not reaching resolution so that we can regroup, achieve calm, and strive to reconcile later when the timing is right.



We should also look for opportunities to encourage others, to uplift and build them up. Being this kind of person is refreshing to others in need and an excellent way to show love for neighbor ([Proverbs 12:25; 16:24](#)).

*For God is not the author of confusion but of peace.
—1 Corinthians 14:33*

This is a great memory scripture to teach your children about God's nature. Instruction and understanding of God's ways happen much more effectively and deeply when chaos is not a factor. We are much more able to learn about Him and His plan when we are receptive and have the ability to focus. God's very nature is consistent, reliable, and methodical ([Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8](#)). His Spirit is not one of confusion, disorder, or contention. Teach your children that following His way and trusting in Him truly does result in clarity and peace of mind.

Encourage your children that God offers us the gift of His Spirit to calm these storms.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. —2 Timothy 1:7

Life is uncertain and brings many doubts and fears. Encourage your children that God offers us the gift of His Spirit to calm these storms. We can have assurance that if we take our concerns to Him and ask for His help, He does hear and answer us. He has a plan. He is in control. And He is merciful.



FURTHER RECOMMENDED READING

We also recommend these additional (but certainly not exhaustive) scriptural passages that are relevant to the topic of peace:

Melchizedek, King of Salem ([Genesis 14:18-20; Hebrews 7:1-4](#))

Esau and Jacob reunite ([Genesis 33](#))

The mountain of the LORD ([Isaiah 2:1-4](#))

A psalm of comfort ([Psalm 23](#))

Blessed are the peacemakers ([Matthew 5:9](#))

The early Church experiences relief from persecution ([Acts 9:31](#))

The bond of peace ([Ephesians 4:1-6](#))

No more sorrow ([Revelation 21:3-4](#))