



Peace Pursued

To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. For, "THE ONE WHO DESIRES LIFE, TO LOVE AND SEE GOOD DAYS, MUST KEEP

HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL AND HIS LIPS FROM SPEAKING DECEIT. HE MUST TURN AWAY FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD; **HE MUST SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT.** FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE TOWARD THE RIGHTEOUS, AND HIS EARS ATTEND TO THEIR PRAYER, BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL." (1Peter 3:8-12)

Peter reminds Christians that attitudes of heart must be proper to be the heir of a blessing from God. He reinforces that inspired thought with a quotation from another inspired statement. He quotes from the thirty-fourth Psalm. David wrote this Psalm while on the run from Saul. He was also dealing with avoiding confrontation with the Philistines. He was certainly in a position to understand the difference between conflict and peace. He was also one to know the importance of trusting God if peace is to be found. This is the very core message of the Psalm and of the portion Peter quotes—the one who desires life and good days **must seek peace and pursue it** by turning from evil and trusting God is favorable to the righteous. Peter's message is the same: never return evil for evil, seek peace and pursue it since God's eyes are toward the righteous.

These Christians were told to "seek" peace and to "pursue" it. To "seek" is to search for. To "pursue" is to be active in attaining or accomplishing something—in this case, peace. This is a timely verse for our consideration today, as so many seem to treat peace—and its pursuit—with so much disregard.

There are some very important reasons to seek peace. Plainly, it is a requirement (**1Peter 3:11**). Jesus taught that those who would be citizens of His kingdom as peacemakers are promised the blessing of Being God's children: "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God*" (**Matthew 5:9**). Peace is of the fruit of the Spirit: "*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law*" (**Galatians 5:22**). Certainly, God is a god of peace (**1Corinthians 14:33**) and Christ is the prince of peace (**Isaiah 9:6**). There is much reason for Christians to seek peace.

Remember, Peter is writing to those who are already suffering as Christians (**1Peter 4:16**). This shows that they had already made peace with God through Christ (**Ephesians 2:15-19**). Now, as Christians, they were to be at peace with one another (**1Thessalonians 5:13**). As Christians, they were to be at peace with all men so far as that was possible (**2Timothy 2:22; Romans 12:18**). As Christians, let *us* take this matter to heart!

There are things which made for peace (**Romans 14:19**). Following the right standard is a prerequisite for peace (**1Corinthians 1:10**) We will all follow the same one if we follow the right one. Being of an unselfish spirit contributes greatly toward peace (**Philippians 2:2-4**). Developing a spirit which seeks God's wisdom makes for peace (**James 3:13-18**). Being ready to forgive makes for peace (**Colossians 3:13**). Are you truly pursuing peace?

There are things which hinder peace. If you are missing any of the aforementioned things, that hinders peace. Selfishness is one of the greatest hindrances to peace, even for those who are trying to follow the right standard. The spirit of vengeance is another hindrance to peace (**Romans 12:19-20**). Bitterness, which comes out of these, is another hindrance to peace (**Ephesians 4:31**). Truly, the tongue can be a great hindrance to peace: "*A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger*" (**Proverbs 15:1**).

As Paul noted in **Romans 12:18**, it is not always possible to be at peace with others. There are times when some will refuse to be at peace because they choose their own standard instead of God's. They will not be at peace with any who follow truth. In these cases, truth must take priority over peace—be ready with a defense: "*But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame*" (**1Peter 3:14-16**). The one who provides peace is the one who is glorified when we speak His words. "*Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen*" (**1Peter 4:11**).