



Women Building Godly Lives

*The wisest of women builds her own house,
but folly with her own hands tears it down. Prov. 14:1*

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Website: <http://www.womenbuildinggodlylives.com/>

Contact: editors@womenbuildinggodlylives.com

Peace

By Wilburta Arrowood

What does peace mean to you? The dictionary says peace is freedom from disturbance; quiet and tranquility. Many people seek peace in good health, good family and friend relationships, or financial security. All of these things are indeed blessings when we can obtain them, however they each require a commitment. Good health requires eating well and caring for our bodies appropriately, but sometimes illness finds us in spite of all our good efforts. Good family and friend relationships require we participate and nourish those relationships, but relationships can and often do change. Financial security requires we work to earn our money and then be good stewards of what we earn, but emergencies can arise and sweep it all away in a blink of the eye.

Sometimes what we see as a blessing can be a true burden. A good friend of mine was widowed and her husband had been a very successful farmer and business man. This woman had large bank accounts and her financial future was quite secure. One day she received a letter from Publisher's Clearing House stating, "You have won one million dollars . . ." She immediately laid the letter aside and prayed and worried for several days before she wrote a letter in response. Since she had not understood she had won if she met certain qualifications she told them she had all she could manage, and she just could not handle any more stress, so please award the million dollars to someone else! She had money in excess, but she had no peace for trying to decide how best to use it. So, if true

peace does not come from these things, where can we find it?

Romans 8:6 tells us, "For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace," and John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

If we believe in Jesus and what the Bible says, we know we must follow God's guidelines for living, which means following His commandments. When we do that, we are promised eternal life. When we examine the scriptures closely in love we do not see arbitrary demands for rote compliance, but rather principles that make life easier here on earth, and they prepare us for eternal life. When we follow God's will, we can rest in the assurance that we will be able to enter heaven and abide with God.

When illness or death comes, when friends and family forsake, and when finances disappear we can still be at peace, free from disturbance, quiet and tranquil, resting in the assurance of God's promise of something better to come.

Philipians 4:6—"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

May God's peace rest upon you as you go about your day.

Living in Peace with Others

By Amanda Stephanus

In Romans 12:18 Christians are given the following command: “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.” I’d like to take a moment and break this verse down into three phrases and talk about what they mean.

First, we as Christians are to “live peaceably”. The Greek word for peaceably means “to be at peace, live in peace or act peaceful” (Strong’s Dictionary). God desires for us to experience peace in our lives. We see this in other verses, including Hebrews 12:14 and Romans 14:19. We can see a benefit to this command in the Sermon on the Mount when Jesus proclaimed, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

Second, we are to “live peaceably with all”. This command does not allow for us to pick and choose who we live in peace with. If we are honest with ourselves, this is challenging. I know from personal experience that it is easier to live in peace with some more than others.

Third, we are to live peaceably with all “so far as it depends on you”. Paul, speaking by inspiration, is telling Christians to be catalysts of peace. At the end of the day, we will be held accountable for our actions (Ezekiel 18:20). God is not asking us to force a peace that others do not desire. We all have those in our lives who are not interested in peace. Regardless, we must keep on keeping on and always strive for peace on our side.

When striving for peace with all, we must be careful not to adopt a “peace at any cost” mentality. As Christians, we cannot compromise the truth just to have peace with others. If you find yourself in a situation where peace cannot be found, may it be said it was because the other person would not allow it.



**If it costs you your peace it
is too expensive.**

The Peace of Forgiveness

by Elizabeth Turner Beall

Emotional baggage of every kind weighs us down and steals our peace. But, ladies, it does not have to. We can rid ourselves of this unnecessary load and find true peace.

Unforgiveness is some of the heaviest baggage we carry. There is too much bitterness, resentment, hate, and vengefulness on our shoulders and in our hearts. This is not our load to carry. God, through Paul, tells us “vengeance is mine, I will repay” (Romans 12:19). Let’s allow God to take care of that in His way, in His time.

Jesus told the Apostles to forgive “seventy times seven (Matthew 18:22). Not that He means for us to keep a record of how many times we forgive someone, but that we forgive as many times as people ask. When asked to forgive, do so with patience, compassion, mercy, and love. Then let it go.

But what about offenses done to us, for which forgiveness is not asked? These could be small misunderstandings blown out of proportion, or weightier matters with serious consequences (as in death) and repercussions (as in imprisonment). No one has to come to us in tears of repentance begging our forgiveness. Most probably never will. And many of us ask why they should be forgiven anyway.

Look at our Savior’s example on the cross. Roman soldiers crucified the Holy Son of God, innocent of any wrong-doing. The Jews could not legally crucify anyone, but they certainly arranged for it to be done, and the Romans did as the Jews wanted. While on the cross, Jesus asked God to forgive all of them (Luke 23:34). He did this out of mercy and love. True, we are not Christ, but we are His followers, His children, and should also show love and mercy towards those who wrong us (James 2:13), even when forgiveness is not asked.

Christ may not have carried baggage around regarding the Jews and how they treated Him, but we see in Matthew 23:37-39 that He was definitely concerned about them. Then on

the cross He asked Father-God to forgive them—Romans and Jews alike.

As Jesus forgave, we can do no less, not only because Jesus gave the example of showing the Christian way to be, but also because it frees our hearts and minds and keeps us healthier. Forgiving others calms us, lowers our blood pressure, and relieves the dangers of stress we place on ourselves.

Giving unasked-for forgiveness is not always easy and is certainly a choice we make. We must seek God's help and strength to be able to do this. Because our hurts are so deep, we may be stubborn about making the decision to forgive. But once we decide and begin to work through it, joy and peace find a way into our hearts. No, it's not easy, but it can be done. It took me eight years to work through hurt, bitterness, distrust and suspicion to a complete and total forgiveness of someone. The peace I found was free-ing, unlike anything else except for one last forgiveness I gave.

Part of the baggage we need to unload is what we carry against ourselves. How many times do we do and say things we regret? Or take on false guilt over circumstances we are in, or for something done to us beyond our control? We carry this around with us for however long, then ask God and our church family to forgive us, and forgive us, and forgive us. We must let go of that.

God forgave us the first time we asked. All the other times is because we haven't forgiven ourselves. One of the hardest things I have ever done was to stand eye-to-eye with myself in front of the mirror, confessing to myself, tears streaming down my face. How odd it felt to ask myself for forgiveness, and then to tell myself "I forgive you." Tears of hurt then became tears of release and joy. And with that I found total freedom in my heart and peace in my soul, a peace that is still with me today.

Forgiveness is something we do because God has told us to through His word, and taught us by example on the cross. As stewards of the bodies God has blessed us with, we must forgive (others and ourselves) to keep our bodies physically, mentally, and spiritually healthy. I urge you, ladies, to find your way to the peace

that forgiveness brings. With God's help, it can be done.

After writing the previous two sentences, I had to pause. I felt a need to pray, to ask God to bless all who read this with strength to forgive and thereby gain peace in heart and mind, and grow close to God.



Questions:

- 1)What is your definition of peace?
- 2)Where do you find peace in your life?
- 3)What seemed like a blessing in your life that turned out to be a burden?
- 4)What are some things that have helped you gain peace with others?
- 5)How does forgiveness of others bring you peace?

Application Ideas:

- 1)Look at the relationships in your life. Focus on one to encourage peace.
- 2)If there is anyone in your life who needs your forgiveness, begin a plan for that process.
- 3)In stressful situations, remember that a soft answer turns away wrath (Proverbs 15:1)
- 4)Be careful with whom you make friends; choose those who are peaceful (Proverbs 22:24-25).
- 5)Be a Christian example to those around you; shine the light of peace (Philippians 2:14-15; Matthew 5:16).

Prayer Considerations:

- 1)Pray for help, wisdom, and strength in being the peacemaker.
- 2)Pray for those you know who do not desire peace. (Matthew 5:44)
- 3)Pray for help in forgiving someone who has wronged your or upset you.
- 4)Pray for help in forgiving yourself.

