

## What Does Peace Look Like?

Peace means one thing in the world: **peace with each other**. Or to state it negatively: we're not knocking heads with each other.

- "Peace is a full-time job. It's protecting civilians, overseeing elections, and disarming ex-combatants. Peace, like war, must be waged." —George Clooney
- "The more we sweat in peace, the less we bleed in war." —Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Indian diplomat
- "I believe it is peace for our time." —A statement by the British prime minister, Neville Chamberlain, after meeting with Adolf Hitler. Less than a year later, Hitler kicked off World War II.

No one would dispute the value of peace with each other—a world where we may not be exchanging Valentine's Day cards, but at least we're not bombing each other. **But that's a limited view of peace.** In fact ...

**We can't have peace with each other until we have peace within ourselves.** Now we're getting to the kind of peace Jesus was talking about when He said, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Don't let your heart be troubled or fearful" (John 14:27).

The Hebrew idea behind peace is so much broader than ours. Peace, or *shalom* as they would say,

refers to completeness, wholeness, well-being, and even health. When you experience *shalom*, you are at ease and comfortable with ... well, everything.

When Jesus told His disciples He would leave them with peace, they understood this Jewish idea of peace. Their hearts would not be troubled because they were experiencing this sense of well-being—even if the world around them was not at peace.

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That's an inviting idea, isn't it? *So how do I get me some of this shalom-peace?*

**We can't have peace within ourselves until we have peace with God.** We were created to live in relationship with God; as long as we live apart from Him, we miss out on the peace we were created to experience. Let me resort to a little T-shirt theology: No God, no peace. Know God, know peace.



In his short letter James wrote that we have desires battling inside us (not a very peaceful image), and those desires are rooted in pleasing ourselves.

"What is the source of wars and fights among you? Don't they come from your passions that wage war within you? You desire and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and wage war. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and don't receive because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures" (Jas. 4:1-3).

We focus on ourselves—which is nothing less than sin—and we miss out on the greater things God has for us. Like peace.

James also pointed us to the solution just a few verses later: submit to God (v. 7) When we surrender our lives to Jesus Christ, we come to One who knows a few things about peace.

After all, He is the Prince of Peace.