

**Is the “Peace of God that surpasses all understanding”
... available to me?**

Peace, something everyone desires be present in their lives. Before looking at what the Bible tells us about God’s peace that surpasses all understanding, let’s start by defining what peace means to you.



Peace with God? _____

Personal peace of mind? _____

Peace within the family? _____

St. Paul wrote: “*And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*” {Philippians 4:7} What do you think he was trying to convey to us?

Peace is not a new concept. God's message has been clear since Old Testament times. The Psalms frequently state the source of peace. “*Those of steadfast mind you keep in peace, in peace because they trust in you. Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.*” {Psalm 85:8} And “*The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.*” {Psalm 23:1}

The New Testament makes this message even clearer. St. John wrote, “*But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit ... will remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.*” {John 14:26–27}

Reflecting on what God’s “peace” means has been a theme of many popes, including Pope Francis. He recently shared his thoughts about “Peace” when he said, “What is this peace that the world does not know and the Lord gives us? ... This peace is the Holy Spirit. It is the presence of God in us, it is God’s ‘power of peace’. It is He, the Holy Spirit, who disarms the heart and fills it with serenity. It is He, the Holy Spirit, who loosens rigidity and extinguishes the temptations to attack others. It is He, the Holy Spirit, who reminds us that there are brothers and sisters beside us, **not** obstacles or adversaries.” <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/251322/pope-francis-ask-the-lord-for-the-spirit-of-peace>

Stephen Altrogge, a husband, father, lay person, like many of us, and also a writer, wrote, “I’m convinced that the peace that passes all understanding is almost NEVER a feeling. The faithful believer will know peace, his heart and mind are “guarded” by it, despite the tempest raging without. To most [even the faithful] it will remain a mystery how Jesus could be so serene in the midst of turmoil surrounding his final days on earth. It sounds like a commercial for an anti-anxiety drug. Like the peace of God that passes all understanding is a pill you swallow when you’re having a panic attack.” <https://theblazingcenter.com/2018/08/peace-that-passes-all-understanding.html>

But that's not the case. Let's look at St. Paul again. Did he always experience the peace he talked about? Seemingly not, but at a deeper level ... the answer was always, YES. Let me explain. In Second Corinthians, after detailing the incredible pain and persecution he experienced for the sake of the gospel, Paul wrote, "*And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.*" {2 Cor 11:28}

What? St. Paul, didn't you command the Philippians not to be anxious about anything? Didn't you say that they would have peace as long as they made their requests known to God? Are you having some memory issues in your old age? Or maybe, just maybe, St. Paul meant something else when he talked about the peace that passes all understanding. (<https://theblazingcenter.com/2018/08/peace-that-passes-all-understanding.html>)

Looking at Paul's statement once more lets focus on the underlined words as the essence of his message and meaning. "*And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*" {Philippians 4:7}

The peace that passes understanding is a strong, resolute faith and confidence, that no matter what circumstances you encounter, God is faithful, God is good, God will keep you, God will provide for you, and God will bless you. It's a faith that looks past circumstances to the God who works all things for your good and his glory. It's faith that allows you to say, "*It is well, it is well with my soul.*" no matter what circumstances you are facing. {Song *It is well with my soul*, by Horatio Spafford}

Despite the times when anxieties seemed to get the better of St. Paul, he lived his life with the faith and assurance of the peace of God. So can you.

Reflective questions:

1. How can you experience the peace of God you would like to have more fully? _____

2. How can you achieve a greater internal peace of mind? _____

3. Just as St. Paul had to deal with the daily anxiety for all the churches, how can you achieve the same sense of "peace" St. Paul had when it comes to your family? _____

