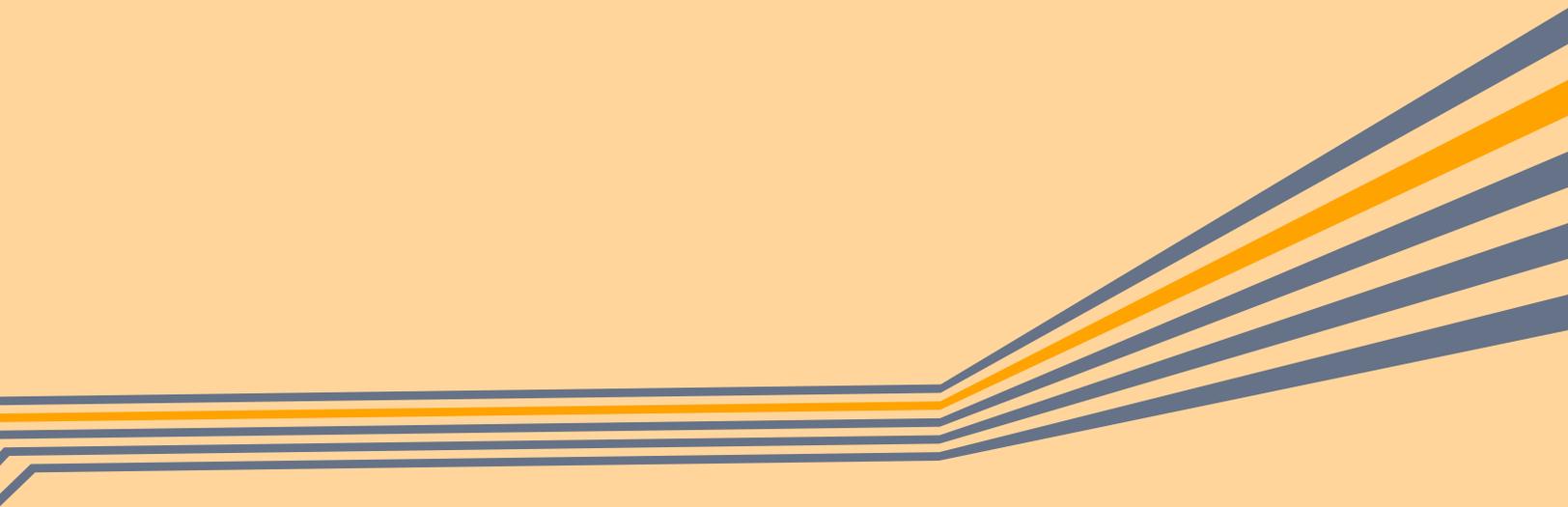
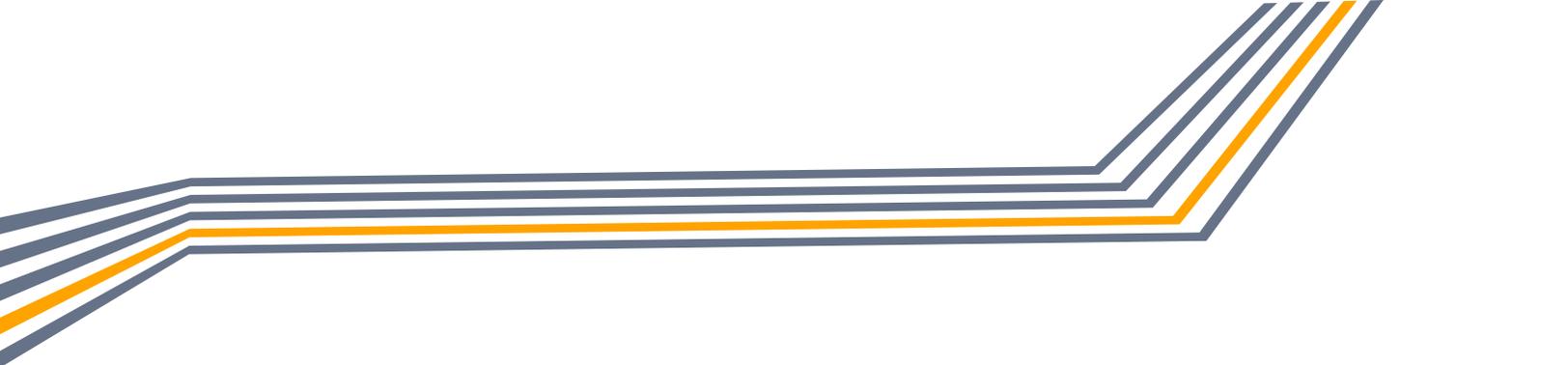


SESSION FIVE





A PEACEFUL LIFE **Session 5**

In our culture of fear and worry, wouldn't it be nice to experience peace? This week, that is exactly what you can receive. A right-now peace. Peace beyond your understanding. Peace that doesn't come from our circumstances, but Christ Himself.

By diving into the wisdom of Isaiah and Paul, you'll discover that this profound peace isn't just a fleeting emotion—it's a steadfast promise from God. Together, we'll learn about the strength in praise, the comfort of prayer, and the impact of positive thinking. You'll see that so many worries stem from our limited perspective, not reality!

The key to it all? Trust. Trust in the One who gives a peace unlike any other. Let's take this journey hand in hand, stepping into a peace that's truly beyond words.

SESSION 5

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL



DAY 29:

THE SOUNDTRACK THAT BREAKS CHAINS

But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.

ACTS 16:25-26

To the people in charge, Paul was a troublemaker. He was arrested multiple times, chased out of towns by angry residents, and was even the subject of a riot! All of this was in response to Paul's goal in life—sharing the Gospel.

In today's Scripture, we again find Paul in prison—this time with Silas. They had been dragged before Roman magistrates, falsely accused, beaten by an angry mob, had their clothes torn, and then thrown in jail.

Imagine yourself in their place for a moment. What would you be thinking about? What would you be talking about? How angry or afraid would you be? Remarkably, in the middle of the night, they were singing praises to God! Paul and Silas had every reason to despair. Yet, they understood that praise isn't just an emotional response, it's an act of the will.

Praise and worship shifts your focus off your problems onto God and His promises. Praise it isn't just for Sunday morning; it's the soundtrack that should fill our lives. Unlike silent forms of worship, praise is vocal and expressive.

Consider it like this. If your child achieved something great, you wouldn't quietly applaud. You'd celebrate loudly, sharing the good news with anyone willing to listen. The same goes for praising God.

Today, take a moment to vocalize your praise. Whether it's through a spoken prayer or a song, let it be heard. List three things you're grateful for and intentionally praise God for them. Then watch how this small act shifts both your perspective and the atmosphere around you.

REFLECT

Memory Verse

*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***

To aid in your memorization, write out this week's memory verse:

What situations in your life are weighing you down and how can praising God change your perspective?

How can you make praising God a consistent part of your daily life?

What are some ways you can vocalize your praise, rather than keeping it inward?

Are there specific blessings you've overlooked that deserve your vocal praise?





DAY 30:

THREE TYPES OF PRAYER

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

Anxiety has a way of chaining our hearts and minds, doesn't it? Imagine if you had the key to unlock those chains. According to Paul, that key is in three types of prayer—devotion, supplication, and intercession.

The act of prayer is more than just a wish list to God; it's an intimate conversation that releases you from the grip of anxiety. It's not just you talking to God, but also pausing to listen to Him. Prayer is a transfer station where we unload our worries and receive God's peace in return.

Scripture introduces us to various types of prayer—devotion, supplication, and intercession. In devotional prayer, you commune with God, basking in His love. Through supplication, you present your needs before God, trusting Him to provide. Intercession is where you stand in the gap for others, lifting their needs to God.

One significant step towards peace is understanding 'supplication.' Here, you are not just wishing away problems; you're actively releasing them to God. The moment we do this, an incredible emotional and mental weight lifts, replaced by a peace that transcends understanding.

Today, engage in a three-part prayer cycle—start with a devotional prayer to connect with God. Proceed to supplication, where you list your concerns and surrender them to Him. Lastly, practice intercession by praying for someone else's needs. Note the sense of peace that envelops you afterward.

REFLECT

Memory Verse

*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***

To aid in your memorization, write out this week's memory verse:

What specific anxieties have you been holding onto that need to be released in prayer?

How often do you pause to listen to God during your prayer time?

How can you incorporate various types of prayer like devotion, supplication, and intercession in your daily time with God?

Who can you intercede for today, and what are their specific needs?

DAY 31:

OVERCOME THE ANXIETY CYCLE

Casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

1 PETER 5:7 (NIV)

Researchers define anxiety as “apprehension, tension, or uneasiness that stems from the anticipation of danger.” So when we’re anxious, we’re scared. Anxiousness produces fear. From there, it propels through an unending cycle:

1. Anxiety influences our thought life.
2. Our thought life creates our emotional state.
3. Our emotional state influences our words and actions.
4. Our words and actions create our outcomes.
5. Our outcomes define the quality of our lives—peace or anxiety.

Then, repeat!

Do you see how anxiety shapes your life? The good news is, God doesn’t merely point out this problem—He tells us what to do about it.

The Greek term for “anxiety” – merimna – implies a “divided mind.” Imagine your mind as a pie divided into slices of distractions, worries, fears, and burdens. The result is not just a lack of focus, but a loss of “traction” towards your God-given purpose. Think of distraction as “dis-traction”—losing grip and traction on your destiny.

This is where God steps in. He invites us to cast, or throw forcefully, our anxieties onto Him. By doing so, we can experience an inner harmony that aligns our divided mind. What results is an integrated mind, undivided and focused, no longer distracted by anxieties but empowered by God’s peace. When peace and focus partner together, they create an effective antidote to anxiety and distraction.

Today, set aside ten minutes to sit quietly and list down all the things causing you anxiety. Now, physically cross them off and mentally cast them upon God in prayer. Declare His peace over your life and make a conscious choice to remain focused on your purpose.

REFLECT

Memory Verse

*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***

To aid in your memorization, write out this week's memory verse:

Which common anxieties are currently fragmenting your mind and focus?

How have these anxieties disrupted your pursuit of your God-given purpose?

What practical steps can you take to remain focused amid life's distractions?

After casting your anxieties on God, what changes do you observe in your level of peace and focus?



DAY 32:

A POWERFUL POSITIVITY “CHECKLIST”

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

PHILIPPIANS 4:8 (NASB)

Positivity helps our spiritual hearts. Did you know it also helps our physical hearts?

A Johns Hopkins study found that positive thinking reduces the risk of a heart attack by 33 percent in people with a family history of heart disease! Our mindset truly changes everything. Which is exactly what today’s guiding verse helps us do. Paul provides us attributes of godly thinking we can use as a quick “checklist” to guide our thought life:

True: *Does this align with God’s Word?*

Psalm 19:7; John 16:13; 2 Timothy 3:16–17

Honorable: *Does this bring respect to yourself and others?*

Proverbs 22:1; Romans 12:10; 1 Peter 2:12

Right: *Is it just and fair?*

Micah 6:8; Romans 12:2; Proverbs 21:3

Pure: *Is it free from moral fault?*

Psalm 51:10; Philippians 4:8; James 3:17

Lovely: *Does it promote love and compassion?*

1 Corinthians 16:14; Colossians 3:12–14; 1 John 4:7

Praiseworthy: *Is it deserving of admiration and respect?*

Psalm 145:3; Ephesians 1:12; Philippians 2:3

To Paul, who is writing to the Philippians from jail, these aren’t abstract ideals; they are the practical means of a peace-filled life! So, my friend, what thoughts are guiding your life?

I encourage you to write these attributes down, print them out, jot them in a note on your phone, put them on sticky notes to place on your computer! Take a simple step to keep them in front of you. “Dwell on these things” daily as an exercise to begin shifting your thought life (and even help your heart in the process).

REFLECT

Memory Verse

*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***

To aid in your memorization, write out this week's memory verse:

What are the predominant thoughts that guide your life?

How might you practically incorporate Paul's checklist into your day?



Is there a particular area from the checklist where you feel you're lacking?

What Scripture can you memorize to help anchor your thoughts?

DAY 33:

PRESS YOUR WORRY-REMOVAL BUTTON

*Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me and know my anxieties;*

PSALM 139:23

What if you could press a button and remove over 90 percent of your anxiety? How often would you press it? I'll be honest, some days, mine would be worn out!

Statistics suggest that 92 percent of stress and fear is based on our mental perceptions—things that will likely never happen or can't be changed. Here's the breakdown:

Future events that will probably never happen | 40 percent

Past events that can't be changed | 30 percent

Criticism from others, mostly untrue | 12 percent

State of our health, which worsens with stress | 10 percent

Real problems we must face | 8 percent

We spend so much energy *worrying* when we could be *trusting* God, Who knows and provides for all our needs. So, here are your worry-removal buttons to press:

Self-Awareness: Psalm 139:23 urges us to ask God to reveal our anxious thoughts. A moment of prayer can illuminate your underlying worries, most of which are irrational.

Fill your mind with Truth: God's Word is full of truths that can replace these anxieties. The Bible offers peace that transcends understanding, guidance on how to live, and wisdom on what truly matters.

Try this whenever you feel anxious, panicked, or stressed this week—pause, press, and trust God to bless the rest!

REFLECT

Memory Verse

*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***

To aid in your memorization, write out this week's memory verse:

What are the most common worries that occupy your mind?

How often do you turn to God when you feel anxious?

What thoughts can you "pause and press" right now?

DAY 34:

GOD'S COVENANT OF PEACE

"..For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has mercy on you.

ISAIAH 54:10

Imagine a world where Mount Rushmore vanishes into thin air. Sounds impossible, right? Yet, God assures us that there's a higher chance of that happening than losing His kindness and peace!

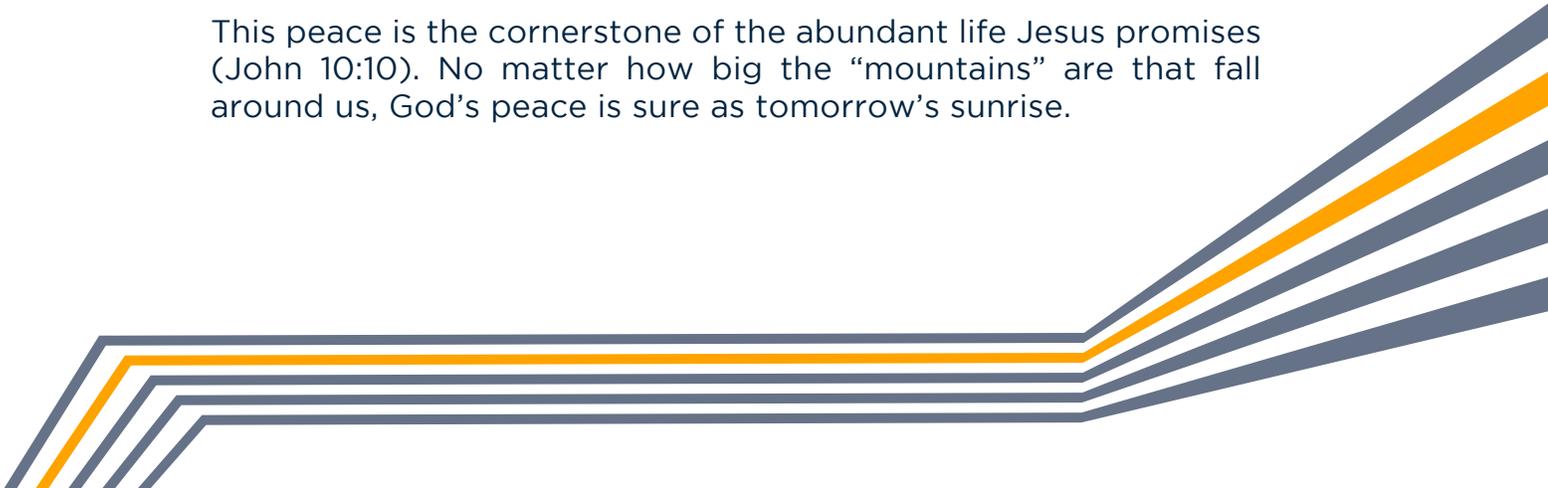
In a world built upon quicksand, God's promise stands firm: He offers us an unbreakable covenant of peace. This is so important to Him, His peace is mentioned over 350 times in Scripture!

The word *peace* is our best translation of the Hebrew word *shalom*. It means "nothing broken, nothing missing." It's complete and perfect peace, safety, prosperity, wellness, and health.

Shalom assures us that in God's Kingdom there's provision for lack or brokenness. So when you're grappling with financial worries, family conflicts, or business challenges, remember that God's covenant of peace is with you. Even when the world around us is in chaos, His peace remains steadfast. What's happening outside does not have to steal what God is doing inside.

In John 14:27, Jesus informed the disciples He would be crucified. To them, it felt like a final defeat. But Jesus offered a perspective shift: *"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."*

This peace is the cornerstone of the abundant life Jesus promises (John 10:10). No matter how big the "mountains" are that fall around us, God's peace is sure as tomorrow's sunrise.



REFLECT

Memory Verse

*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***

To aid in your memorization, write out this week's memory verse:

In what areas of your life do you need to invite God's covenant of peace today?

How can you actively remind yourself of God's promise of "shalom" in challenging times?

Will you commit to reading or memorizing Jesus' promise in John 14:27 this week?

WEEKLY REFLECTION

What are the top three realizations you had this session?

What is the main thing you believe God wants you to apply?
