

# The Fruit of the Spirit Is Peace



## SABBATH—JANUARY 16

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Matthew 8:23–27; Matthew 11:28, 29; Romans 5:1–11; Romans 12:9–21; Hebrews 12:14; Colossians 3:13–15.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “ ‘I leave my peace with you. I give my peace to you. I do not give it to you as the world does. Do not let your hearts be troubled. And do not be afraid’ ” (John 14:27, NIV).

**AS A CHAMPION<sup>1</sup> OF PEACE**, Paul wrote to the church: “The Holy Spirit makes you one in every way. So try your best to remain as one. Let peace keep you together” (Ephesians 4:3, NIV). The Greek for the English word *endeavoring*<sup>2</sup> is a strong word. It means we must try very hard. We must be totally involved in trying our best. Suppose we fight and quarrel in our homes. Suppose we divide into quarreling groups in church. Suppose we refuse to love and honor others. Then we are denying the peace of God in Jesus Christ. This is the kind of peace He established on the cross.

How strange that you have to fight for peace. In a *Voice of America* radio broadcast, Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of President Franklin Roosevelt, said, “It isn’t [is not] enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. It isn’t [is not] enough to believe in it. One must work at it” (adapted). The peace that Christ won for us also requires hard work and constant self-examination.

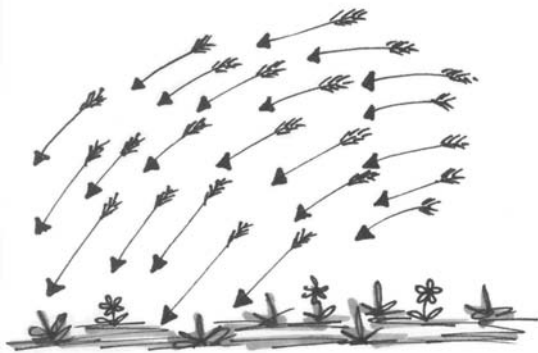
As we study this week, we should ask ourselves: How can I have the peace that Jesus won for me on the cross? How can I cooperate with the Holy Spirit as He puts that peace into my daily life?

1. champion—a person, animal, or thing that wins first place or is judged to be best in a contest or sport or battle.

2. endeavoring—trying.

**SUNDAY—JANUARY 17****PEACE WITH GOD (Romans 5:1)**

To have peace with God is more than to feel comfortable around God. At one time we were “separated from God. You [we] were enemies in your [our] evil ways” (Colossians 1:21, NIV). But now we have been brought back into fellowship with God. Once we were at war with God. But by His death on the cross, Jesus has made it possible for the fighting and quarreling to stop and for us to be God’s friends and not His enemies.



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In a way, this peace is not something we grow in, such as in starting out with just a little bit of peace. Instead, we are brought back to God forever through the cross of Christ. And we grow in peace with God. The more clearly we see God’s ways and

walk in them, the more we make use of His power to live as His sons and daughters. In this way, peace with God is a fruit of the Spirit.

As we grow up as children of God, we experience more and more the blessings of living in His kingdom. This growth continues until we can say, “Those who love your law enjoy great peace. Nothing can make them trip [lose footing] and fall” (Psalm 119:165, NIV).

Colossians 1:20–22 shows that sin did not cause God to be merciful and forgiving. Instead, it showed that God always has been that way from eternity (forever). The plan of salvation<sup>3</sup> showed that God loved us and was willing to forgive even from the beginning.

**Write a summary of what you believe the important points are in Romans 5:1–11.**

**Think about what Jesus has done for you. Think how His perfect life (holiness) is given to you by faith. Because of His gift, think how you can stand forgiven and accepted before God, no matter who you were in your past. Why is this teaching so important to us if we are truly to know peace?**

**MONDAY—JANUARY 18****FINDING PEACE: PART 1  
(Matthew 11:28, 29)**

From 1 (most peaceful) to 10 (least

3. plan of salvation—what God has done and is doing to save us from sin.

peaceful), how would you judge your life? People are very frustrated in their search for personal peace. In Matthew 11:28, 29, Jesus makes an invitation. Jesus does not use the word *peace*. But He does use a word that means to give rest, to refresh, to give one's self rest, and to take a rest.

**What is Jesus saying to us in Matthew 11:28, 29? How can we experience for ourselves how real this wonderful promise is?**

What is Jesus saying in these verses? Is He promising to give us peace as a gift? Or does He mean to show us how to get it? Is not Jesus teaching that personal peace is a result of some cause? And is He inviting us to learn that cause from Him?

"It is the love of self that brings unrest. . . . Those who accept Christ's word, surrender their souls, and lead their lives according to His teachings will find peace and quiet. Nothing of the world can make them sad when Jesus makes them glad. In perfect surrender, there is perfect rest. 'Lord, you will give perfect peace to anyone who commits himself to be faithful to you. That's [that is] because he trusts in You.' Isaiah 26:3, NIV."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 330, 331.

**How does love of self lead to personal unrest and unhappiness?**



Nothing in the world can make us sad when Jesus makes us glad with His peace.

**How can we learn to die to self and to rest in Jesus? What daily choices would make the promise of peace in Christ real? What things are we doing, or not doing, that keep us from having the peace that Jesus offers us?**

## TUESDAY—JANUARY 19

### FINDING PEACE: PART 2 (John 14:27)

There is a story about two painters. Each painted a picture to show his idea of rest. The first chose a picture of a quiet, peaceful lake among the far-off mountains. The second painter painted a thundering waterfall with a weak birch tree bending over the foam. At the fork<sup>4</sup> of a branch, almost wet with the waterfall's spray, a robin sat on its nest.

Which picture best showed the true meaning of rest? It is not often in this world of trouble that we find the rest of a lone mountain lake. More often we must find our rest in the midst of trouble in real life.

4. fork—the place on a tree where one big branch divides into two smaller branches.



More often than not we must find rest in the midst of the trouble and danger in real life.

Read the story in Matthew 8: 23–27 of Jesus and His disciples (followers) on the Sea of Galilee (read also Mark 4:35–41; Luke 8:22–25). The situation is unusual, but what can we learn from this story for ourselves? What is the message for us? How can we use this lesson in our lives, no matter what our situation is?

Why do you think Jesus was concerned that His disciples have peace? Jesus left us with a beautiful promise about peace: “I leave my peace with you. I give my peace to you. I do not give it to you as the world does” (John 14:27, NIV). How is the peace of the world different from the peace of Jesus?

This is one thing we must not do. We should not try to think of peace as a life without problems. It is very rare for even the most faithful Christian

to go through life without troubles, pain, and suffering. Some people have more than their share of suffering. Peace depends on the deepest trust in a loving and caring God who knows how much you suffer and has promised not to forget you.

**What kinds of things make you upset? Talk to God about your deepest fears. Call them by name. Ask the Lord to help you get in touch with the fear and know it. Then take time to let Him speak peace to those fears.**

### WEDNESDAY—JANUARY 20

#### PEACE AT HOME (Hebrews 12:14)

“Try your best to live in peace with everyone. Try to be holy. Without holiness no one will see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14, NIV). “If possible, live in peace with everyone. Do that as much as you can” (Romans 12:18, NIV). What can we learn from the life and example of Jesus that can make these lessons real in our lives? What are we doing that makes them difficult, if not impossible, to become real for us?

The most difficult place to be a Christian is at home. How sad, because home should be the one place in all the world where we should all have peace.

Two young men were in a battle during the days of the Vietnam

War. The bullets were flying, and the bombs were exploding. All of this did not seem to scare one of the soldiers. When his friend asked how he could be so calm, he answered that it reminded him of home!

**List the principles (rules) in Romans 12:9–21 that would help to bring peace to the home. Give examples of how you can do these things in your own life.**

As Christians, we are asked to keep high standards. These are the standards presented by Jesus Himself. All of us have fallen short of that goal. But it does not mean that we cannot still show the principles shown in the life of Jesus. These are the high principles of love and self-sacrifice. In following these principles, we need to avoid evil and sin.

**Imagine what our homes would be like if we truly followed these principles! Imagine what our homes would be like if we would learn to think of others before ourselves. Imagine if we showed others full love, even when people did not deserve it. Imagine if we forgave those who hurt us. Imagine if we were as thoughtful of others as we were of our own selves. Following these principles would not solve all our family problems, but, no doubt, they would greatly help!**

## THURSDAY—JANUARY 21

### PEACE IN THE CHURCH (Matthew 5:23, 24)

**What important principle is Jesus teaching us in Matthew 5:23, 24? Why do we find it so hard to follow this principle in our lives?**

It is clear that Jesus takes more seriously our relationships with one another than we do. It is not unusual for members of a church to be bitter and unforgiving against others. Imagine how different things would be if we all followed this teaching.

**What is the trait<sup>5</sup> of the children of God as shown in Matthew 5:9? What does it mean?**

**According to Colossians 3:13–15, what are three ways we can relate with one another as fellow members of the church? What does each one mean?**

Notice the flow of Christian graces<sup>6</sup> in James 3:17: “But the wisdom that comes from heaven is pure. That’s [that is] the most important thing about it. And that is not all. It also loves peace. It thinks about others. It obeys. It is full of mercy and good fruit. It is fair. It doesn’t [does not] pretend to be what it is not” (NIRV). What would our churches be like if we let the Holy Spirit make these traits of character<sup>7</sup> grow sweeter in

5. trait—the thing, or quality, that makes you who you are.

6. graces—heavenly traits (qualities) of character (who you are).

7. traits of character—qualities, such as being honest and faithful, that make up your character, or who you are.



our fellowship? What things would be missing?

**Think about the last time you had a problem with a fellow church member. Did you follow Christ's words in Matthew 5? Most likely, you did not (right?). Study your reasons why you chose the "easy," worldly route instead of the righteous (holy) Christian path. How can you learn to choose to do what is right in such situations?**



The flow of Christian graces in James 3:17 begins in purity (being pure) and ends in mercy and fairness.

### FRIDAY—JANUARY 22

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** Psalm 4:3; Psalm 119:165; Isaiah 26:3; Romans 8:6; Philippians 4:7.

“Shortly before Christ was crucified, He had given to His disciples a gift of peace. ‘I leave my peace with you. . . . I do not give it to you as the world does. Do not let your hearts be troubled. And do not be afraid.’ John 14:27, NIV. This peace is not the peace that comes from following the

world. Christ never purchased peace that comes with evil. The peace that Christ left His disciples comes from within their souls instead of from the outside. And this peace always would remain with His witnesses [followers] through hardships and struggles.” —Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*,<sup>8</sup> page 84.

“Working hard for worldly greatness will shut out the kingdom of God from those who wish to enter it. The peace of Christ cannot remain in the mind and heart of a workman who criticizes and finds fault with another workman. The Lord never blesses him who criticizes and accuses his brethren, for this is Satan’s work. Manuscript 21, 1894.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*,<sup>9</sup> page 102.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What are ways you can work in your local church to help keep peace among members when quarrels and disagreements happen?
- ② What are the common situations we face in our daily lives that spoil our peace? What Bible promises can we claim when each problem arises?
- ③ Of course, it always is easy to talk about trusting the Lord no matter what our situations are. But at the same time, what useful steps can we take to change the situations that

8. *Apostles*—the disciples (followers) of Jesus who preached and taught the gospel (the good news about Jesus) after Jesus rose from the dead and returned to heaven.

9. *Evangelism*—the act of spreading the good news about Jesus to the world.

make peace difficult? In other words, how often might our uneasy feeling and fear be the result of choices that we make?

④ What useful things can we do to

help others going through situations that make peace difficult to have?

⑤ How much peace should we expect to have in a world filled with such troubles, hardships, violence, confusion, and suffering?