

Hearts of Love

Tom & Debbie Tillman "to touch the world for Jesus Christ"

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bless you!**

Tom & Debbie

I Just Want a Little Peace

Just because it is quiet and calm all around us, it does not necessarily mean that we will have peace within our hearts and minds. By the same token, even though it is chaos, bedlam and pandemonium all around us, we can have complete peace within.

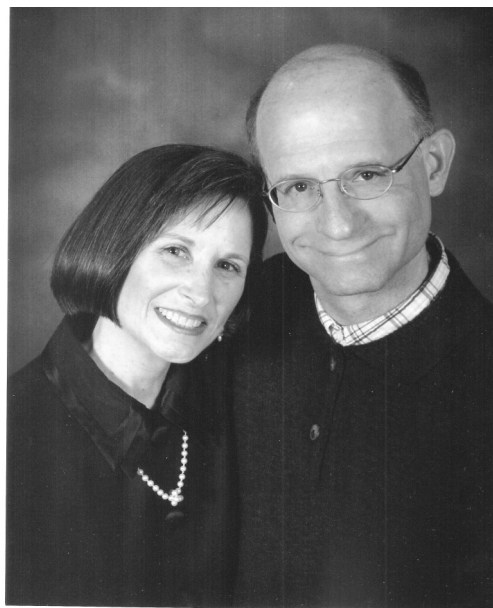
In the later part of his letter to the Philippians, Paul writes: 'Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. Those things, which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.'

Are you in turmoil? Are you restless? Are you worried or anxious? Just prior, Paul wrote: '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 understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.'

Paul is making sure we know how to have God's Peace but it doesn't just happen by chance or by accident; there are things we must do in order to have real Peace.

Whatever things are true: not, whatever things seem true, or feel true, or might be true but, rather, whatever things really are true... not mostly true but, truer and even truest.

As example: I could set my mind on this truth: 'I could have made it in Christian music but God kept me from it.' If that was all I set my mind upon, rather than resting in



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2 Corinthians 5:19,20

peace, my mind would become a breeding ground for all manner of bitterness and resentment.

Or, I could set my mind on this, even truer truth: 'I could have made it is Christian music, but God, in His all knowing Wisdom, knowing that I, as a successful singer/songwriter, would have fallen into far greater sin and disgrace than I ever did.' If that became the thing that I set my mind upon, I might feel relief that I had 'dodged a bullet' but it wouldn't really give me hope or peace.

Or, I can set my mind on this truest truth: 'God, in His love, grace and mercy, has, throughout my life, been preparing me for the incredible plans He has for me, throughout eternity.' He specifically planned my DNA, both my parents, my family and all my ancestry, all the way back to Adam and Eve. He planned where I would be strong and where I would be weak; He planned my victories and my failures. And through it all, He has been at work, within me, to accomplish all He has planned for me in this life and especially all He has planned for me after we leave this part of life and go into Eternity. I am being trained, now, through all my victories and all my failures, to be prepared for

the unbelievable task of ruling and reigning with the Lord Jesus Christ, first, for 1000 years on Earth and then for all Eternity throughout all the vast, far flung Universe. God is in complete control and He has my very best at heart. God will be glorified and He will glorify Himself through all the vast and incomprehensible plans he has for me.'

That is the absolute, most truest truth we can set our hearts and minds upon. I say, 'we,' because that is the same 'truth' we can all set our hearts and minds upon; for me, it involves my giftings in music but the principle holds, no matter what our own specifics happen to be.

That's what Paul means when he writes that we are to 'set our minds on things above, not on things of the Earth.' Col 3:2

Something to always remember when studying God's Word: the Bible is not, even though some study and teach it as such, a disconnected, disparate collection of random thoughts and verses. In reality, It all meshes together into one complete integrated revelation of God, from God. It may not have all been written

to me, but it has all been written for me and is 'profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that I might be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' 2 Tim 3:16

When Paul writes to the Philippians, and to us, to think and meditate upon that which is true, just, pure, lovely and praiseworthy, we should pay attention to what came directly before that. He had written to Euodia and Syntyche, that they should go beyond their disagreement and to be of the same mind. He had instructed Epaphroditus to help them to walk in unity. Now, Paul is telling us how to be of the same mind and spirit: first, to think, together, on what is pure, true, praiseworthy, etc. If we are, together thinking on the same things, then we will be of the same mind. But beyond that, as we think of each other, as Euodia and Syntyche thought of each other, they, and we, are told to think about those aspects of each other that are, in fact, true, noble, just, pure, etc. When we concentrate on the character qualities of each other that do reflect God and truth, then we will not leave room for thinking about each other's qualities that are less than true, noble, just, etc.

Paul is telling all of us, down through the centuries, to think on the same things: things true, noble, just, pure, etc. and to set our hearts and minds on things above and not on things of the Earth, so that we will be thinking the same things and so, to be walking in unity.

'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!' Psa 133:1

'... being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' Eph 4:3

'Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.' Col 3:14

We are commanded to love each other in order to better walk in unity. Instead of focusing on each other's faults, we are to love: 'Love is patient, love is kind, love does not act unbecomingly, love does not keep an account of wrongs

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suffered, etc.' 1 Cor 13

Once again, all through the unified tapestry of God's Word, our command is, love and unity, but only unity that is based on truth, purity, etc. We are never unified around lies or false teaching.

Again: 'The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.' Phpps 4:9

Paul says, 'think like I do; set your heart and mind on Jesus Christ. 'Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.' 1 cor 11 'Be still and know that I am God.' Ps 46:10

Then you will have the peace that the World seeks but never finds.

Why do we so desperately need God's Peace? Every one of us knows that we could navigate through this life without peace; many of us have done it for our entire lives. So, peace is not necessary for salvation and it is not necessarily a fruit of salvation. Then why is it so important and why does Paul stress our need of peace? Because peace is how we can discern God's will in our lives. Peace is how we hear God's voice and consequently understand what He is telling us to do or not to do.

In Col. 3:15, Paul writes: 'And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

The Amplified Version better explains

what Paul meant: 'Let the peace of Christ [the inner calm of one who walks daily with Him] be the controlling factor in your hearts [**deciding and settling questions that arise**],' while the 'Classic Amplified Version explains even better still: 'And let the peace (soul harmony which comes) from Christ rule (**act as umpire continually**) in your hearts [deciding and settling with finality all questions that arise in your minds, in that peaceful state] to which as [members of Christ's] one body you were also called [to live].'

Do you see it? When we have questions, when we ask God for direction or answers... first, if our hearts aren't peaceful and calm, we will never hear His still voice but even deeper, it is His peace that is the answer to our questions. When we ask Him something, He will give us peace according to the direction He wants us to go. For example: 'Lord, should I turn left or should I turn right?' If He is leading you to turn right, then He will give you peace as you think or plan to turn right and He will give you a discernible lack of peace as you think or plan to turn left.

This level of discernment does not come naturally; we must practice by asking questions, at first, to which we know the answer, and to then pay close attention to what it *feels like*

inside when we are receiving the answer that we already know.

God wants us to peacefully rest in Him and He wants us to be able to discern His will in our lives but both are things we must be faithful to seek after. If we seek Him, we will find Him when we search for Him with all our heart and we will find His Peace the same way.

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