

LIVING
IT OUT



**DAILY
BIBLE
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

BE FREE INDEED! - Finding Peace

October 5, 2020

For three weeks, Lead Pastor Ben Snyder unwrapped the life-giving series *Finding Peace* during a time when peace has been in short supply. He explained that God's love is not circumstantial but provisional. He spoke about how, without God's love at the center of our lives, our actions and reactions can be motivated by fear instead of love. The great news is that God's love has the ability to drive out all fear, in every event, circumstance, and uncertainty.

Ben pointed out how our inner anxiety—based on our fears of not being in control, not getting what we want, and not knowing what to do—not only has a damaging effect on us but also on those around us. Anxiety is contagious ... just check your news feed.

Here's the good news—**There is no need to fear.**

We have a choice: we can accept fear as our motivator or embrace love as the center of all our responses. Not just any love but God's unconditional love in all circumstances.

How? We accept the gift of salvation through the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our perfect Savior. Because of our faith, we become recipients of his perfect, unconditional love. In Greek, "God's love" is called agape. Without it, we are running on empty.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

Never forget that "... **God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them**" (1 John 4:16). No need to fret. We who love the Lord are children of the King of kings. He promises that all things work for our good, even the scary, painful stuff. Isaiah 26:3 promises, "*You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!*" Thank you, Lord!

Over the weekend, Perrysburg Campus Pastor Josh Whitlow completed the series by explaining how we can live a life of peace at all times. Remember, God's peace is provisional—it doesn't go away when times are tough. But the noise in our heads can separate us from that peace. Josh explained how to stay in the rhythm of living out God's peace every minute of every day. Over the next four days we will be taking a closer look at Numbers 6:24-26 and how we can live in a rhythm of non-anxiousness. I invite you to journey along with us as we look at practical steps we can take to create a rhythm of peace.

Questions:

How peaceful are you? What do you spend your time thinking, talking, and worrying about? Do you know Jesus as your Lord and Savior?

Next Steps:

Pray. Bring your concerns and anxieties before the Lord multiple times a day. Recite **Numbers 6:24-26** while remembering this is God's special blessing for you:

"May the Lord bless you and protect you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you his favor and give you his peace."

Purposefully read [1 Corinthians 13:1-13](#). Substitute the word "agape" where it reads "love." When we learn to turn down the noise and pray, this love saves us and keeps us in peace all the days of our lives.

Prayer:

Thank you, Lord, for blessing me with your perfect peace through my relationship with Jesus Christ who is my Savior, and the only one who is truly righteous and brings me before your throne to hear and answer every prayer I pray. Lord help me to live a peace filled life by making good noise canceling decisions in good times and in hard times. In Jesus' precious name I pray. Amen

This post was written by Martha Smith, a regular contributor and editor of the LivingItOut.

Start with Gratitude - Finding Peace

October 6, 2020

Think back to your childhood. Remember how your parents taught you to say “thank you” from a very young age? Showing gratitude makes others feel appreciated, and it reminds us of our dependence upon them. Saying “thank you” formally recognizes the good in another person and brings it to the surface. In the weekend message, Perrysburg Campus Pastor Josh Whitlow noted that we should start with gratitude, glorifying God rather than grumbling, because gratitude paves the way to peace.

The same can be said about God. We need to recognize that God is good, faithful, and loves us very much. He answers our prayers in the way we would want him to, if we knew what God knows.

Many times, we find ourselves more interested in the things that God can provide us rather than in experiencing God *himself*. Or, in other words, we’re more focused on the creation than knowing the Creator.

Proverbs 19:21

Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.

This weekend, Perrysburg Campus Pastor, Josh Whitlow, used the example of preventing his daughter from placing her finger in an electrical receptacle to illustrate how God protects us from things we might ask for in our prayers.

God loves to bless you. He is a good father, who wants good things for his children, but often, we think that God is withholding from us what *we think* we want. Because of his love for us, God wants to bless us, and this blessing reflects his heart.

1 Chronicles 16:34

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever.

Josh encouraged us to create a “Life-Giving List.” Recognizing and remembering the blessings in our life is something we can do every day, at bedtime or in the

morning, to help us to stay in rhythm with a non-anxious life. Remember to include:

- **People:** Who are the people who give you life? Your spouse, a parent, a group of friends? As you identify these people in your life, thank God for them. Also, share with them how thankful you are for them.
- **Places:** What are your favorite places? Take time and identify the places that give you life—a vacation spot, a reading chair, or a park. Thank God for these places and for all he has provided around you.
- **Activities:** What activities do you enjoy, look forward to, and find peace in? Perhaps a walk, playing a sport, watching a movie, or being alone. Thank God for this opportunity, for this time.

Numbers 6:24 (NIV)

“The Lord Bless you and keep you.” He is the Creator of the universe, the Mighty One, the King of kings, and the Father.

James 1:17

“Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow.”

Questions:

Have you expressed your gratitude to God? How did you feel afterward?
How can a spirit of gratitude help you live in a rhythm of non-anxiousness?

Next Steps:

Be willing to let God interrupt your schedule and change your plans as he sees fit. It’s easy to get bent out of shape when things don’t go as planned (I’ll be the first to admit that I do at times), but you need to consider that, maybe, things are going exactly according to plan—just not yours. Give gratitude to God today, be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger.

Prayer:

Abba, Father, I am so thankful for the relationship that I have with you. You know the times I have been ungrateful and the times I’ve held ill thoughts toward you

and others. You know the times I've complained and grumbled about life and its circumstances, but you love me regardless—even when I don't deserve it. I am thankful for the decisions that you allow me to make, and the life lessons that come from those decisions. Thank you for showing your love for me. Amen.

This post was written by Gary Schnabel, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Held in His Hand - Finding Peace

October 7, 2020

I don't know about you, but I worry a lot! And in this season, it feels like I am worrying overtime. There is just so much more to worry about. When I put my faith in the probability that something will (or won't) happen, my health, or even my family's support, I only walk away feeling more anxious.

On those nights when I lie awake, panicking when I should be asleep, I have to remind myself that worrying will get me nowhere. I know that I need to give my worries to God. But relinquishing my fears is harder than it sounds.

Over the weekend, Perrysburg Campus Pastor Josh Whitlow's bottom line was, "If you want peace today, pray." Sometimes, it is helpful to take it a step further by memorizing or writing down God's Word. This imprints God's truth on your heart—for when you need it most.

I love to write my prayers down. It helps me to make the time that I'm praying more intentional. (And it keeps my thoughts from drifting!) It is also truly amazing to look back and see how my prayers have been answered. Writing centers me in the one who loves me most, God. It helps me, literally and figuratively, "write away" my fears.

Josh also said, "Who you are kept by will determine your peace." Being "kept" means to be held. God is holding you now, and you can find peace in that truth.

Isaiah 41:10

Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.

God is strengthening us. He is holding us up. When we let money, our jobs, or even our families strengthen us and take God's place, we are only opening our hearts to more anxiety.

Who you are kept by will determine your peace.

Isaiah 26:3

You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!

Let God keep you today.

Questions:

What or whom do you typically turn to when you are anxious? How has that worked for you?

In which areas of your life do you need to relinquish your fears and trust God?

Next Steps:

Take some time today to write down your fears, your prayers, or an encouraging Bible verse. Consider memorizing a verse, like Isaiah 41:10, Isaiah 26:3, or Joshua 1:9 to imprint God's truth on your heart.

Prayer:

Father God, thank you for offering me your peace. Help me trust you to keep me. I know you are holding me now. When I am afraid, remind me that you are always with me. In Jesus' name, amen.

This post was written by Lydia Snyder, a first-time contributor to the LivingItOut.

Engage Daily with God - Finding Peace

October 8, 2020

I am amazed that the God of the universe wants to spend time with us. He longs to bless us, love us, and give us his peace. He is such a loving Father that he turns his face toward us with love in his eyes. He yearns to have a personal relationship with us.

Perrysburg Campus Pastor Josh Whitlow spoke on Numbers 6:24-26 during the weekend services.

Numbers 6:24-26 (NIV)

²⁴ "The Lord bless you and keep you; ²⁵ the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; ²⁶ the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."

Today, I will focus on the importance of spending time with Jesus every day. It is how we build a relationship with him. I have personally been changed through my daily quiet time with Jesus. I pray, meditate on verses, study his Word, repent, praise him, and thank him. During this time, I know that Jesus is changing me. He is giving me the ability to love others and filling me with his joy and peace. I have learned I can get through anything with him by my side. Conversely, on the days I don't spend time with him, I'm a "hot mess" and a little crazy!

Josh stressed that attending a weekend service is not enough to build a relationship with God. If you want to experience his peace and love, you have to engage with him daily. I am sure some of you are wondering, "How will I find the time?"

I suggest you pick a time of day when you are focused and find a cozy, quiet, and peaceful place. Light a candle and have your favorite cup of coffee or tea nearby. Take a few relaxing deep breaths to quiet yourself. Say a prayer, read the Bible, journal, listen to worship music, or read the LivingItOut.

Start with 5 or 10 minutes. I think you'll find that pretty soon, you will want to spend more time in his presence. You may find yourself taking a quick walk or grabbing lunch and praying. Or, maybe you will have index cards with verses posted around your home, in your purse, or at the office. You will crave this

special time with Jesus more than you crave your morning cup of coffee. I challenge you to try it. You will be amazed and deeply grateful you spent time with our Savior.

Questions:

Are you regularly spending time with God? If so, how? How has your quiet time brought you peace?

If not, what's holding you back?

Next Steps:

Plan a time to spend with Jesus every day. Choose a chapter in the Bible and read a few verses each day. Meditate on it. Pray about it. Ask God to teach you what he wants you to learn. Journal about what he is teaching you.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, I am overwhelmed with gratitude that you, the God of the universe, wants a personal relationship with me. You long for me to spend time with you, and you want what is best for me. I am your beloved child. Help me to always make you my top priority. Help me to love others as you have loved me. Change me, Lord. Amen.

This post was written by Marsha Raymond, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Look Up - Finding Peace

October 9, 2020

Once upon a time, I was on the Junior Varsity volleyball team. After each game, a varsity jersey was awarded to a player, who was permitted to dress “varsity” for the next game. The coach would always give a speech about how performance is rewarded. I really wanted that jersey! For the first few games, I could see the stats were close, and handing out the jersey was likely a judgment call.

So I kept working hard.

Eventually, the day came when I dominated the game in hits and blocks. The proof was in black and white on the stats sheet. The coach walked toward me with the jersey—it felt like everyone was watching—and she handed it to another hitter. The same one who had dressed for the previous game. I remember being so mad at how unfair it was. And then I actually had the thought, “I will never be good enough.” Anxiety followed me onto the court for many games after that.

As an adult, I can look back and clearly see that my eyes were fixed on that jersey. When it was taken away, my peace went with it. My mom gave me some advice during that hard time, and here it is ...

Life is not fair, so get used to it!

If our peace is dependent on whether things in our lives are fair, we will never achieve a non anxious presence. The good news is we were never meant to live a life dependent on the “things” in this world. When we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, we are promised peace—regardless of what the world throws at us! Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be with us and remind us of this truth that we can stand on.

All you have to do is, “ask (for peace) and it will be given to you; seek and you will find (peace); knock and the door will be opened to you” (Mathew 7:7 NIV). You are never alone.

Isaiah 26:3

You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!

Questions:

What anxious thoughts are showing up in your life? Are you holding onto something because you feel it is unfair? Is there something in your life that you are trying to control, but you know you need to let it go?

Next Steps:

Journal about the above questions and surrender those things to God, asking him to restore your peace.

Spend time praying for people who have hurt you or are difficult in your life. Ask God to take your hurt and exchange it for peace.

Prayer:

God, we need your help to reclaim our peace. Please search our hearts and show us what is standing in the way of the peace you have for us. Help us with our thought life! Replace our anxious thoughts with the truth that you have for us. Help us surrender all to you! Amen.