

God of Peace

By Mary Kane

Shalom. Peace of mind. Peace of heart. Peace on earth. Peace like a river. What brings you peace? Before I knew Jesus I had no peace; my heart was always restless. No matter what I tried,



not find the peace I constantly longed for. In order to escape the tumult in my heart, I had to keep constantly busy. But once the day was over and the quietness of night closed in upon me the unrest and emptiness would return. Quietness became an enemy. After I accepted Christ for my

Savior, I was freed from the vast emptiness that had previously consumed me. My heart was finally peaceful. Because the peace of Christ which surpasses all understanding now fills my heart, I am able to find great peace in the quietness of a summer morning, in walking silently through the woods, in swinging lazily on my porch swing in the evening and in floating down the river with my husband in our canoe. Quietness is now a welcome friend. The older I get, the more I appreciate everyday ordinary peaceful days, when my family is at home together. Peace is a beautiful gift from God.

*The Lord will give strength to his people,
The Lord will bless His people
With peace.
Psalm 29:11*

Please take a few moments to confess to God whatever is on your heart and then ask Him to fill you afresh with His Holy Spirit.

Now please read Philippians 4:9 two or three times out loud.

Please list the 4 verbs found in the first half of verse 9.

If you are using the NKJV, you probably listed *learned, received, heard* and *saw*. Let's take a look at each of these concepts in their original language and see if we can discover any truths hidden in their meanings!

The original Greek word for *learned* is *manthano*. At first glance, *manthano* means what you think it might mean "to learn, be appraised, to increase one's knowledge, to hear, to be informed." But, it also implies a type of learning that goes beyond just head knowledge; it also means "to learn by use and practice, to be in the habit of, accustomed to." *Manthano* learning means that the learner was actively involved in the learning situation and their behavior has been affected by the information that has been taken in; the student now has a new habit or has acquired a new method in which to accomplish a task.

When my boys were little and I was teaching them to write their names, I would position the pencil in their hand and place my hand directly over theirs, guiding them to properly form the letters of their name, until they could do it themselves. That's *manthano* learning!

This word is the same word that is used for *learn* in Matthew 11:29, where Jesus said "Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me." Think for a moment about a *yoke*. How many creatures are usually hitched in a yoke? In my limited scope of farm knowledge I'd have to say *two*. Usually a young untrained animal was hitched side by side to an older experienced animal so the younger could learn from the older. When Jesus invites us to, "Take my yoke upon you..." it means that He will be standing right along side us, hitched into the same yoke, teaching us to follow Him. Since Paul used the same word in Philippians 4:9 we can assume that when he *taught* the believers in Philippi, he was standing right along side of them step by step, teaching them to follow Jesus.

Please name something recent, that God has been patiently teaching you, step by step.

How are you progressing with this concept or skill?

Now let's turn our attention to the word *received*. In Greek, the original used for *received* was *paralambano* which means to take to, to

take with one's self, to join to one's self. It also means "to claim, to procure, to receive a person and give him access to one's self, and to seize and not let go" (*BLB*).

Why do we need to be careful about *who we receive* into our circle of friends?

Why do we need to be careful concerning the teaching we *receive*?

Please describe what you have been *receiving* from God lately; what He has been teaching you.

The next verb in our list is *heard* which transliterates from the Greek as *akouo* which means "to attend, to consider, to understand, perceive the sense of what is said, to perceive by the ear what is announced in one's presence, to find out, to learn" (*BLB*). As we gather from the original Greek definitions of this word, this type of hearing is more than "in one ear and out the other." *Akouo* means to *understand* as well as hear; it is an assimilating of pieces of information into a coherent whole with an intention of acting upon what was learned. In short, *akouo* is an active type of listening which brings change, as opposed to a passive type of listening which has no effect on the learner. As Christians it is not enough just to *hear* God's word. Hearing in itself will never bring changes in our character. We will become like Him only when we *put into practice* what we have heard from Him.

As a teacher, I observe both types of hearing (the *akouo* type and the "in one ear and out the other" type) on a daily basis; one is very frustrating and one is very rewarding. I have also observed both types of hearing in myself as well! I can imagine Jesus saying to Himself,

“Isn’t she listening? I’ve already taught her this concept several times!”

How about you? Is there a lesson that God has been trying to teach you over and over because you haven’t been *akouo listening*?

How can you act on what God has been saying to you?

Now, please fill in the missing word in our verse:

“The things which you learned and received and heard and _____ in me, these do...”

The word *saw* used in this text is the Greek word *eido* which means “to see, to perceive with the eyes, to perceive by any of the senses, to notice and to discover.” The definition can also mean “to turn the mind, the eyes or the attention to anything... to observe...examine...inspect...to have regard for one, cherish, pay attention to.” Again, we see that this is not a passive observation on the part of the observer; the observer is actively engaged in the learning situation. Often this word is translated in English as *knowing*. Frequently when someone is explaining to me how to do something I will respond with “I see what you are saying.” This is an example of Philippians 4:19 type of *seeing*.

Now we need to take a little time for reflection and ask ourselves a few questions. (I’m going to ask myself the same questions-ouch!)

What are your children, coworkers or friends *learning* from you?

What are they *receiving* from you?

What are they *hearing* from you?

What are they *seeing* in you?

Why do we need to be careful about what we are teaching, saying, and showing others around us?

Because others will do as we are doing, especially our children and coworkers who are under our authority!

If you are like me, you probably wrote down a mixture of positive and negative things in answer to the above questions. As the old say goes, "No man is an island." We will affect those around us for good or evil, therefore we need to think seriously about what we are passing on to those who are within our realm of influence!

Please name something that you want your children, family, friends or coworkers to learn from you.

Please read our verse again.

What is the reward for learning, receiving, hearing, seeing and doing as God instructs us?

The reward is a greater measure of His presence! Please consider the following quote from Blue Letter Bible;
"Not only will the "peace of God" be with you, but the "God of Peace" Himself will be with you."

What does this quote mean to you?

The Greek word for *peace* used in this passage is *eirene* which means oneness, rest and quietness. It also means "security, safety, prosperity, felicity, (because peace and harmony make and keep things safe and prosperous)" (*BLB*).
Aren't you glad that we have a God in whom we can be safe, secure and at rest?

In closing, please read and be blessed by the following observation from Matthew Henry:

"Observe, Paul's doctrine and life were of a piece. What they saw in him was the same thing with what they heard from him. He could propose himself as well as his doctrine to their imitation. It gives a great force to what we say to others when we can appeal to what they have seen in us. And this is the way to have the *God of peace with us*—to keep close to our duty to him. The *Lord is with us while we are with him.*"

Shalom. Peace be with you.

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