

Pursuing Peace—June 2018

“There is no greater wealth in this world than peace of mind.” ~ African Proverb

In Vietnam, there is a tradition called “*the way of the open palm.*” When a person approaches another with his palm up, similar to the pleading gesture of a beggar, it is considered a non-threatening gesture; universally used in that culture to indicate that the person is approaching in peace.

Unfortunately, we don’t have a universal gesture to let others know that we come in peace, or that we are experiencing peace within. However, that old adage of ‘actions speak louder than words,’ can certainly let others know when we are pursuing or experiencing peace. We see examples of people pursuing peace every day. For example, the recent spotlight that was shed on two young African American men who were waiting in Starbucks for a meeting when the police showed up, handcuffed them and escorted them out. They didn’t get rattled, curse or escalate the situation; they *pursued peace*. We see people pursuing peace as they seek employment without becoming frustrated with rejection after rejection. We see caregivers to aging parents lovingly tending to their parents as they watch them become helpless and fragile, or individuals facing dire medical issues, yet trusting God for the outcome.

According to Webster’s Dictionary, “*peace is a state of tranquility or quiet, freedom from disquieting thoughts or emotions, and harmony in personal relations.*”

Peace is a choice. We make a conscious decision that we will not allow anyone or anything to take it away from us. We put our faith and trust in God. We replace worry with prayer. This does not mean that the outcome will always be favorable or what we desire, but it does mean that we trust God—no matter what! Therein lies the paradox; this is often easier said than done. We give it to God, but in our moments of weakness, we take it back out of our fear or impatience.

God does not want us handcuffed to mediocrity. He is calling each of us to be ‘movers and shakers’ in the spiritual realm, and we can’t do that if our peace is in shackles. Free your mind. Instead of spending time worrying about things over which you have no control, spend time in prayer, fasting and listening to God.

I encourage you to pursue peace—mentally, spiritually and physically. Remember that you serve a God who— if it’s His will—can calm the raging storms of life (Mark 4:39), and even if He doesn’t, He will be with you *through* the storm.

Peace and power,

Dr. Melvin Marriner

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