

“IN” Pursuit of Peace and Happiness

by Laura L. Shaw

For me, peace and happiness have always been directly linked. This can be a good or a bad thing, of course, but it is true just the same. When someone is upset with me, my stomach hurts, I am on my knees, and I am thinking constantly about what I can do to make it better. The same is true when I’ve hurt someone else. Also, when I see someone else in disharmony with another, it has the equal effect. Not everyone experiences this sensitivity to discord I am learning, but many do, so it is nice to have others which with to mull through this. Let’s take a stab at it...

1st Peter 3: 8-12 grabs the essence of the Lord’s heart on this subject:

“Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing. For, Whoever would love life and see good days Must keep his tongue from evil And his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good; He must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, And His ears are attentive to their prayer...”

Now I give the “I don’t have a theology degree” disclaimer, but here is how the Lord applied this Scripture to my heart as I read it~

- Pursue peace INtentionally.
- Pursue peace INtuitively
- Pursue peace INstinctively

As we are IN pursuit of INtentional peace, the Truth will be applied in the midst of conflict. When someone seems angry with us or argumentative, we can choose a kind tone or a gentle word or even a silent tongue instead of repaying the insult. By blessing them over their good qualities, some of the bad ones can be extinguished. We can pray for them if they do not desire peace in return (ugh, don’t like that thought). We can take all the stewing thoughts toward that person in our quiet moments and make those thoughts “obedient to Christ.” The Lord can INstill in us His good INtentions.

As we are IN pursuit of INtuitive peace, the Truth will be applied before the conflict. Again, we pray for what to do when the confrontations come, we keep our tongues from evil through the power of the Holy Spirit, which keeps many conflicts from coming in the first place. Relying on the Lord’s great wisdom and foreknowledge to lead us, we see disharmony before it even pushes its way into our relationships. The Lord can INstill in us His perfect INtuition.

As we are IN pursuit of INstinctive peace, the Truth will be applied to avoid conflict in others. Sounds strange, I know, but it’s kind of the whole “pay it forward” sort of philosophy. Just a kind smile or a thank you to the person at the drive-thru restaurant can bring peace to someone else’s heart. Putting the grocery cart in the designated spot in the parking lot can save someone the frustration of a car dink. It’s thinking in every cognitive moment, *How would it make me feel if someone acted out of the motive to make my life easier?* A compassionate, humble and sympathetic heart is contagious to others, and that is what it looks like when Jesus is a part of every move we make—it begins to come naturally as we act out of His nature instead of our own. Our considerate Lord can INstill in us His perfect INstinct.

When verse 9 & 10 speak about us inheriting the blessing of loving life, it helps me to understand why I so desperately long for peace in my life. Not the superficial kind, but that which comes intentionally, intuitively and instinctively from my Lord. Will you examine the pursuit of this peace in your own life today?