

# “Being Attractive Without Having to Look Good - Peace”

God’s Extreme Makeover

Philippians 4:4-9

July 26, 2009

We’ve been talking about God’s Extreme Makeover, the makeover that’s found in Galatians 5: *“When the Holy Spirit controls our lives He will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.”* God wants to change us from the inside out so we can move a little closer to who God created us to be, for we want the fruit of God’s Spirit to be the very same fruit that is found in us. Last week we started to look at one of those fruits that many of us want and need - PEACE. We looked at the picture of peace that God would like us to live, the enemies of peace, like stress, noise, and informational overload among others. We looked at how we try to cope with the enemies with things like worry, control, consumption, procrastination. But those coping mechanisms just keep us playing the game with the issues, without any thought or consideration of the deeper issues. Below it all, deep in our heart and soul we find fear, anger, and guilt.

Have you been dealing with the real issues or simply playing the game of trying to cope with the enemies of peace that come bouncing into your life? Most of us have become pretty good at playing the game. It keeps our mind off the real issues and we move on. But our coping mechanisms aren’t working. It is said that it is insane to continue doing the same thing while expecting different results. The western version is, if the horse is dead, get off. It is time for us to get off the horse we have been riding and find some new way, some effective way of dealing with these enemies of peace. We need to find a way to FIX the problem that prevents our peace.

That FIX is found in Philippians 4:6-9. *“Don’t worry about anything. Instead pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank Him for what He has done. If you do this you will experience God’s peace which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. And now dear brothers and sisters let me say one more thing as I close this letter. Fix your thoughts on what is true and honorable and right. Think about the things that are pure and lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you’ve learned from me and heard from me and saw me doing and the God of peace will be with you.”* This week I encourage you to read this passage over and over again. Meditate on it, and think about the steps we need to take, to apply this FIX to your life.

## **F - Filter the Noise.**

I didn’t say get rid of all the noise because that’s not possible, unless we go live in a cave somewhere. But we can filter the noise. But what is noise, because my music might be your

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noise. So I want to define it this way, noise is the sound we hear in the busyness of our life. We need to filter the noise of the busyness in our life so we can focus on God.

I can’t focus on God when I’m always surrounded by noise. I can’t focus on God when I’m always on the run. The scripture tells us to *“Fix your thoughts on what is true.”* (Philippians 4:8) I can’t do that when I’m busy, when I’m always surrounded by noise. *“What is true, honorable, right. Think about things that are pure, lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.”* (Philippians 4:8) We filter so we can focus. The more time we spend with God, the more we allow God’s presence and truth to flow through our life. And when God’s presence and truth are a part of us, the more peace we can have in our life.

How do we filter the noise? Two ways. First, UNPLUG. Unplug some of the noise. Every week, sometimes throughout the week I get solicitations from Comcast, Verizon, Direct TV, and others. They try to tell me how many ways they can bring noise into my life. Over 100, 130, 150 channels. Have you ever spent a night spending more time looking for something to watch than you actually spent watching? Society tries to convince us that we can’t live without it, but that’s not true. We can. Now don’t get me wrong. They are some shows that I love to watch, mostly comedies. I don’t need much drama because I have enough drama in my life as it is. But much of what we do in front of a screen is just wasting our time. *“There’s nothing to do. What’s on television?”* One network would talk about Must See TV. There is no Must See TV. But there is a Must Be. If we want the fruit of the Spirit in our life, *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control*, we Must Be in the presence of God. Psalm 46:10 *“Be still and know that I am God.”* That speaks not of the zombie like couch potato stillness of this world, but the stillness and awe of standing in the presence of God. For that, we need to unplug.

So Unplug and then Lighten Up. Sometimes that’s a matter of attitude, to just not take things so seriously. But more so, I’m talking about our schedules. We get so busy taking care of everything on our lists and calendars that we don’t have the time or energy to focus on God. It sounds strange but this is often a big problem for pastors. We get so caught up doing church business that we stop being the church. When we start praying more publically than privately, when we only look at scripture to prepare for Bible Study or sermons, we know we’re in trouble. Most of you aren’t pastors, but the same temptations are there. We get so busy rushing around that we forget to connect to the One who gives us life. Some work so many hours in the hope that they can buy peace, that they have no time to be at peace. If we want to live in peace before we rest in peace, we need to unplug, and we need to take a hard look at our schedule and lighten up. We need to find some quiet time where we can connect with God. We must filter the noise, and then,

## **Investigate for Truth.**

*“Keep putting into practice all you learned from me and heard from me and saw me doing, and the God of peace will be with you.”* (Philippians 4:9) Paul is saying, “Continue to investigate God’s ways. Check them out personally. Put into practice what you find and the God of peace will be yours.” But what are we to investigate? This: Is it true that Jesus is the Prince of Peace? He said, *“I’m going to leave you but My peace I give you.”* Is that true or not? We are told that when the Holy Spirit controls our life, we will produce peace. Should we believe that? And how can we believe that? We can believe it when we know it’s true. And we can only know it’s true when we investigate for truth.

This week we celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first moon walk. And it brought out the old conspiracy theory that it never happened, that it was all staged. And when we look at things that can be done digitally with photographs and films, enabling us to see things that couldn’t possibly have happened, that are faked and forged, it is easy to believe that it could have been a movie set. There are many times in these times when we cannot believe what we see or hear. So how can we investigate for truth? There is only one way: experience it. Invite Christ into your life. Allow God’s Spirit to take charge and see the results. I’m not talking about a test drive like we would do with a car, where we drive it around the block, maybe a few miles down the road, and make decision. No! We make the commitment to look at what Jesus says, not what we want Him to say, not what we think would make sense, but what God tries to teach us, and look for the truth in what He says, and where He leads. Pray this prayer: *ALord Jesus, I want to investigate Your ways. I want to know more about You because as I know more about You, as I know more about Your truth, my life will be changed. Show me that You can and will change my life for the better.”* For me, that investigation into Christ Jesus has led me to peace even in times of trouble and tension, in seasons of sorrow and grief. The peace and joy of Christ has remained in me.

Filter the noise. Investigate the truth. And ...

## **X- X-out the Enemies of Peace.**

We get rid of those enemies and not just those on the surface. We’ve got to deal with the enemies that lie deep within our heart and soul. We deal with the anger, guilt, and fear. But how? I’ve used the letter X here to fit the acronym >FIX’. But it is more than that. X, or rather the Greek letter >Chi’ was the first letter in Christos, Christ. And as such, it was a symbol for Jesus. It is only Jesus who can X out our fear, anger, and guilt. Only He can do it. No counselor can. No pastor can. No self-help book. Not a high salary or perfect grades. It is only Jesus. Only by the supernatural power of God can Jesus X out, or eliminate the deeper issues that are keeping peace from us. That’s what it means in verse 7 when it says, *“Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all he has done. If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand”*

Romans 5: “*Therefore since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.*” We might ask, “Just what has Jesus done for us?” By taking my place on the cross, by dying to sin for me, my sins have been forgiven. The guilt that I feel, the shame that I live with was nailed to the cross. It no longer has a home in me. Because Jesus died in my place and rose for my sake, I can have hope for the future. He has taken my fear of what is to come, so I can look forward with joy. It will be alright because I will be in Christ. Fear has no place in me. And because He has shown me the amazing love of God for me, going to such lengths to re-connect to me; accepting me just as I am, I know that God has a plan for me. I don’t have to get angry and frustrated over daily situations we face because I know that it is God’s hands, because I am in God’s hands. And He will take all that happens to me and bring something good out of it. By hanging on the cross, Jesus took away my old nature, that old nature filled with anger, guilt and sin has been taken away, so I might live my life in joy and peace.

For all of us, when we accept Jesus as Lord, the old nature is gone, replaced with something new. 2 Corinthians 5: “*He included every one in His death so that everyone could also be included in His life, a resurrection life, a far better life than people ever lived on their own. Because of this decision we don’t evaluate people by what they have or how they look. Now we look inside. What we see is that anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created new. The old life is gone. A new life burgeons. All this comes from the God who settled the relationship between us and Him and then called us to settle our relationships with each other.*” New life burgeons. New life springs forth, and we grow closer to God.

Right now, where are you spiritually? Have you experienced this new life in Christ? Has God done this for you? And if He has, do you feel His peace? Is He producing peace in your new life right now? If not, what does that mean? It means that we are continuing to play games with these enemies of peace rather than destroying them. Chances are, we are still playing games. And we do that because deep down we don’t trust God to do what He says He can do, what He will do. So if we’re going to get it done we have to do it ourselves. How long must we continue to trust in our own ways before we admit that our ways do not work? And they will not work? We need another way. And God has laid out that way for us. Filter the noise. Investigate the Truth. X-out the enemies of peace. And that is our choice. We can keep playing games and avoid peace or we can pursue God’s fix and exchange our restlessness, our fear, anger, and guilt, for His rest.

There is one more promise I want to lift up today. From Matthew 11: “*Are you tired, worn out, burned out on religion. Come to Me. Get away with Me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with Me and work with Me. Watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill fitting on you. Keep company with*

*Me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.*” That’s what I want. I want to learn that from Him. I want to accept that gift from Him. And it’s available to me. And it’s available to you.

Today is the day to choose where your life will go tomorrow. Even in this most chaotic world we can dwell in peace if we will simply choose the Prince of Peace to come into our life; to direct our life. It is the promise of God, and in your life may it be so. Amen.