



(A Study of Philippians 4:6-7)

Pastor Kelly Sensenig

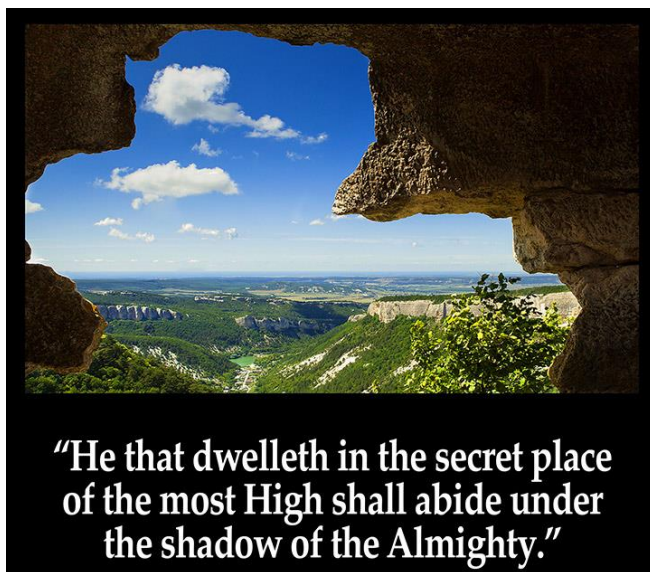
When I was in Bible College, I would often retreat to a place nearby that was like a haven or sanctuary of forest and water in the middle of the city of Grand Rapids Michigan. It was a place called Reed's Lake. It was here that I could take walks and find a secret place apart from the rapid pace of city life. All of us at one time or another have wanted to flee to a secret place where we could get away from it all. We may have dreamed of an island that we could sail to where there would be no cell phones, pagers, or computers. Perhaps we wanted to go on a vacation to get away from the hectic pace in life, which was taking us in endless circles. Maybe we wanted to find a secret garden where we could retreat to, and sit on some old tree stump, to quietly relax and look at the squirrels and watch the birds fly through the air. Maybe it was a fishing hole where we could just sit and relax while fishing in serene surroundings. All of us have likely dreamed of some secret place of retreat where we could put everything on hold for a while, find some breathing space to enjoy the simple things of life, and smell the roses once again.

In this study, I want to take you to this secret place! The Bible talks about such a place. It's not a fairytale place. It is a spiritual retreat in life where the wind is blowing through the meadow. It is a place where the water is trickling in a stream. It is a place where the sunshine is sparkling on a cobblestone path. It is a place where the lilies are blooming and the scent of honeysuckles and flowers fill the air. It is a place of serenity, calmness and solitude. Do you want to go here?

The secret place is the hiding place and shelter of God's peace. God's peace is comparable to a secret hiding place that shelters us from the anxieties, worries, and fears which can overtake our hearts and rule our lives. God's peace in the heart is the antibiotic for anxiety and fear. It's a place where the toils and trials of life cannot cause us spiritual harm. God's peace is the getaway when we can't get away! It's God's protective hiding place or haven for our daily lives that brings serenity into our souls.

What is God's peace anyway? The Hebrew word for peace is "shalom." The Greek word is "eirene" (i-ray-nay). Both words suggest a state of tranquility and calmness. Peace can be defined as a quiet calmness within, or inner tranquility, which can be experienced regardless of circumstances, people, or things. Hendrickson defined God's peace as "the smile of God reflected in the soul of the believer." God's peace is the calmness of heart and serenity of soul that his children experience when they lean upon Him for help and strength.

There is a secret hiding place where we can experience peace in the midst of the raging storms of life. There is a peaceful getaway that God has prepared for you and me in the midst of our fast-paced lives and busy schedules. In the time of testing, trial, trouble, and turmoil God has prepared this hiding place of protection and peace for our lives.



Psalm 91:1

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

The secret place that the Psalmist spoke about can be defined as a place of protection and peace that we receive from God. The next verse actually explains the secret place.

Psalm 91:2 says, "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust."

The secret place is a place that provides spiritual refuge for our lives. It's a fortress of spiritual protection where we can find inner peace and rest for our souls. The psalmist expressed great confidence in the fact that whoever trusts in the Most High God can find security and serenity in what he calls "the secret place" (Ps. 91:1). This secret place is actually a Biblical expression that refers to a hiding place where someone could secretly dwell. It consisted of a shelter or covering that would shield a person from the outside elements of cold, wind, rain, and the sun. The image of a "secret place" or shelter vividly portrays a place of divine protection and the peace or solitude that a person experiences who dwells within this hiding place. For God's children it is more than a physical hiding place. It is a spiritual hiding place where we find God's inner tranquility and peace.

"The Lord's our Rock, in Him we hide,
A shelter in the time of storm;
Secure whatever ill betide,
A shelter in the time of storm.

Oh, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land,
A weary land, a weary land;
Oh, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land,
A shelter in the time of storm."

The "shadow" ("the shadow of the Almighty" – Ps. 91:1) is God's protective shadow that covers us when hiding in the crevice of His secret place, or this place of spiritual shelter, peace, and comfort.

"A shade by day, defense by night,
A shelter in the time of storm;
No fears alarm, no foes afright,
A shelter in the time of storm."

The believer can dwell in the secret place of God's shelter or protective care and experience the Lord's inner peace, rest, tranquility, and comfort. We are both sheltered and shadowed by God's Almighty hand which protects our lives from worry and anxiety. God's secret place and protective shadow brings solitude and security into our lives. These metaphors of a shelter and shadow of God express the Lord's protection, provision, and peace, the inner tranquility and rest, which

God's children can experience during their trials and troublesome times of life. Have you discovered the secret place? Have you found the haven of rest?

“I've anchored my soul in the haven of rest,
I'll sail the wide seas no more;
The tempest my sweep,
O'er the wild, stormy deep,
In Jesus I'm safe evermore.”

Dear friend, we need to find and experience this wonderful haven and secret place of God's provision and peace. We can receive God's protective comfort, consolation, and calmness when we dwell in the secret place. There is a secret place that we can experience daily. It is a place of God's protective care, comfort, and calm which is far away from the rapid pace of this world. Let's go there!

“There is a quiet place far from the rapid pace,
Where God can sooth my troubled life.
Sheltered by tree and flower,
There in my quiet hour with Him my cares are left behind.

Whether a garden small or on a mountain tall,
Your strength and courage there I find.
Then from this quiet place I go prepared to face,
A new day with love for all mankind.”

Yes, there is a secret place! There is shelter of God's protective care that brings inner calmness and peace to our souls. It's a place of comfort and consolation. It's a most blessed place to dwell. “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty” (Psalm 91:1).

Have you found this secret place? Have you discovered the secret place of God's spiritual provision and peace which can be experienced during the raging storms of life, when the winds are howling around you, and when the rains are pelting against you? When the cares of this world weigh heavy upon your heart there is a secret place that you can retreat to, a place of quiet rest, a place of sweet comfort, a place where you can find God's care and calmness, a place of God's provision and peace. Are you ready to go there?

Dwight Lyman Moody said:

“A great many people are trying to make peace, but that has already been done. God has not left it for us to do; all we have to do is to enter into it.”

When we enter into the secret place of God’s provision and peace for our lives, we can be assured that we will not be overcome by worry and anxiety. How often have we found ourselves overcome with anxiety due to our busy schedules, an illness, lack of money, or some trying circumstance? Many difficult problems can cause anxiety to capture our hearts and overtake our lives, unless we remain in the secret place, where we can find God’s spiritual provision of protection and peace. We all need this secret place.

Philippians 4:6-7 reveals to us the importance of peace:

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

In these verses, we discover that God’s peace, the secret place, can keep our hearts from being overcome with worry and anxiety. These verses remind us about God’s requirements for possessing peace and also the blessed results that come from experiencing God’s peace in our life.

How can we find the secret place of God’s peace?

I. We must follow the requirements for peace (Phil.4:6).

Philippians 4:6

“Be careful for nothing (*don’t worry about anything*); but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

If we are ever going to find the secret place of God’s peace and quiet rest, we must follow the requirements for peace.

Two requirements are necessary.

A. We must stop worrying (Phil. 4:6a).

Philippians 4:6

“Be careful for nothing” (don’t worry about anything).

The word “careful” means to be anxious or experience worry and distress which is related to life’s problems and circumstances. The Old English root from which we get our word “worry” means “to strangle.” If you have ever worried, you know how it does strangle a person! In fact, worry has definite physical consequences: headaches, neck pains, ulcers, even back pains. Worry affects our thinking, our digestion, and even our coordination. Most importantly, there are spiritual consequences attached to worry. It robs us of God’s joy, peace, and rest which He wants us to experience on a daily basis.

Worry is a powerful force that leaves us frustrated, puzzled, baffled, and bewildered in life. Sometimes you hear the expression: “sick with worry,” and anyone who has experienced this knows it is not an empty expression. You can be literally sick with worry. Paul’s summons us, “Be careful for nothing” (don’t worry about anything). This is not some kind of unrealistic dream or unreachable goal that Paul sets before us. We can learn to overcome worry by praying to God and casting our troubles and cares upon Him. The truth is this. We will never experience God’s true inner peace until we are free from anxiety or worry. The Bible says worry is a sin and Paul says - stop it!

I find that many people justify their worry and find excuses for it. However, Paul clearly says that we must stop worrying for it’s a sign of unbelief and it calls God a liar. God says we don’t have to worry, so when we do worry and try to justify our worry, we don’t have faith in God or His promise of peace. Scripture says we should not possess anxiety over anything when God’s peace is reigning in our hearts.

Jesus spoke about worry in the Sermon on the Mount when He said in Matthew 6:25: “Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?” Jesus pointed to the *fowls* (“Behold the fowls of the air” - Matt. 6:26) and the *flowers* (“consider the lilies” – Matt. 6:28), and *fields* (“if God so cloth the grass of the field” – Matt. 6:30) as evidence that He providentially cares for His children. The point is obvious. God’s creation has no need to worry since God provides for the needs of His creation. In a similar way, we don’t have

to worry as God's children since He has promised to meet all our needs. Therefore, we should rid ourselves of worry and anxiety and experience God's peace.

“Said a robin to a sparrow:
'I should really like to know
Why these anxious human beings
Rush about and worry so.’

Said the sparrow to the robin:
'I suppose that it must be
That they have no heavenly Father
Such as cared for you and me.’”

Of course, neither Jesus nor Paul is suggesting that we live a carefree life. To care and be genuinely concerned about the details of life is one thing. But worry is an altogether different matter. God wants us to be concerned about our jobs, our children, our church, and prepare for the future. But when we step over the threshold of concern we move into the room of worry and our heart becomes flooded with the spiritual malady called anxiety.

Worry is a sin! When we worry we are sinning against God (Ps. 51:4). Why is this? It's because we doubt God's power and promises for deliverance and we live in defeat instead of victory. The last time I looked I did not find “worry” in the list of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). Worry or anxiety is more comparable to the “such like” (Gal. 5:21) works of the flesh. If we are not living victoriously over anxieties, it's because we have chosen to live in spiritual defeat instead of allowing the fruit of the Spirit to be operative and bloom in our lives. God has not called us into the room of worry! He has called us to the secret place of peace! Are you living in this secret place?

Dr. Walter Cavert reported a survey on worry that indicated that only 8 percent of the things people worried about were legitimate matters of concern! The other 92 percent were either imaginary, they never happened, or involved matters over which the people had no control anyway.

Here is another survey:

- ✓ 0% of worries regard unchangeable deeds of the past
- ✓ 12% focus on the opinions of others that cannot be controlled

- ✓ 10% center on personal health, which only worsens as we worry about it
- ✓ 40% never happen
- ✓ only 8% concern real problems that we can influence.

A sign on an old country church said:

“Worry is when we pay the interest on trouble before the bill comes due.”

Worry pulls the clouds over today’s sunshine. Worry is like a rocking chair. It will give you something to do but it won’t get you anywhere! So, why worry, when you can pray? This leads into our next point.

B. We must start praying (Phil. 4:6b).

Philippians 4:6 goes on to say: “... but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” We must not only be careful but prayerful. So how do I get rid of worry and plaguing anxiety and experience God’s peace? Some take antidepressants while others drink alcohol to try and escape the anxieties related to life. Others try Transcendental Meditation and Yoga. Others take the psychological approach and read books dealing with the human psyche. Man’s theories try to give worldly answers to spiritual problems. However, the Bible gives spiritual answers to worldly problems. How can we truly rid our lives from worry or anxiety and have God’s peace? The answer is simple. We must pray! Release from anxiety can only come through prayer. Our cares must be turned into prayers! We must bring God into our circumstances and problems through the means of prayer.

Roy Laurin said:

“Peace is born and nourished by prayer.”

There are three truths to learn about prayer.

1. The importance of prayer

Philippians 4:6 once again says:

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

The conjunction “but” gives a strong contrast between the person who worries and the person who prays! Paul was now explaining the way to rid ourselves of worry. In other words, instead of worrying, we should give ourselves daily to the ministry of prayer and find God’s peace and freedom from anxiety. If we want to “be careful for nothing” (not be anxious about anything) then we must start praying about “every thing.” Prayer is the sure cure for anxiety and the promotion of God’s peace in our hearts. Prayer promotes peace. Prayer takes us into the secret place! Prayer drives away worry and opens the door for us to experience God’s inner peace.

We must let our prayers “be made known unto God” or actively engage in the ministry of prayer. We must share our petitions and praises with God through the ministry of prayer if we are going to drive-out worry and find the secret place of peace and rest. Prayer is the answer to ridding our lives of worry and finding God’s peace. When we pray to God, worshipping Him, committing our way to Him (Prov. 4:5-6), and asking for His abundance strength and peace, then we can be sure that peace can be ours. Peter reminds us of this truth.

1 Peter 5:7

“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”

When we cast our woes and worries upon the Lord through prayer, He will take care of them. Dear friend, we don’t need some New Age remedy, a course on self-esteem, or some do-it-yourself kit that will patch us up. We need a bona fide spiritual solution to the problem of worry and anxiety. Your left-brain psychology will not free you from anxiety of heart. It’s God who takes away anxiety from within our hearts. Peter and Paul make this very simple. They put the cookies down on the shelf where all God’s children can grab them. If we want to be relieved from distress and anxiety, then we must pray to God and cast our worries upon Him. The reason why we possess anxiety instead of peace is because we don’t pray to God and turn our troubles over to Him. We don’t throw our anxieties upon His shoulders.

“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”

What a wonderful provision! When we cast our worries on the Lord, we can discover the secret place of His peace and inner tranquility of soul.

“If the world from you withhold of its silver and its gold,
And you have to get along with meager fare,
Just remember, in His Word, how He feeds the little bird;
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.

If your body suffers pain and your health you can't regain,
And your soul is almost sinking in despair,
Jesus knows the pain you feel,
He can save and He can heal;
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.

When your enemies assail and your heart begins to fail,
Don't forget that God in heaven answers prayer;
He will make a way for you and will lead you safely through.
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.

When your youthful days are gone
And old age is stealing on,
And your body bends beneath the weight of care;
He will never leave you then, He'll go with you to the end.
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.

Leave it there, leave it there,
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.
If you trust and never doubt, He will surely bring you out.
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.”

2. The illustrations of prayer

Paul gives some illustrations of the prayer life that will enable us to live free from worry and experience God's peace. They are mentioned right here in Philippians 4:6. Let's make it simple. We must pray to get rid of worry and experience God's peace. Prayer defeats worry and promotes peace.

There are four illustrations of the prayer life that defeat worry and promote peace.

➤ Prayers of worship

This word “prayer” (Phil. 4:6) speaks of a general invocation to God where the believer gives His heart to worship God and adore Him for who He is and what He has done. This word is referring to a prayer related to worship. Whenever we find ourselves worrying, our first action ought to be to get alone with God and worship Him. Worship is what is needed to free us from anxiety and bring peace into our hearts. Worry and worship cannot coexist together. We must see the greatness and majesty of God! We must realize that He is big enough to solve our problems and grant us His peace. In the midst of wreckage Job worshipped and found God’s peace.

Job 1:20

“Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped.”

This was Job’s response to God after losing his family, fortune, and fame. He found himself worshipping God to rid his heart from anxiety and depression. Anxiety and worry cannot thrive in an atmosphere of worship.

Luke 10:41 reminds us what Jesus told Martha:

“And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things.”

Are you like Martha? Are you full of anxiety and distress? If so, you should learn the secret of overcoming worry and finding God’s peace and rest through prayerful worship.

The Lord went on to say in Luke 10:42:

“But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

Mary chose to sit at Jesus’ feet and worship Him. Mary was not worrying because she was worshipping. However, Martha was filled with anxiety as she was banging around in the kitchen. The point is this. When we sit at Jesus’ feet and worship Him, we will dispel the anxieties that are plaguing our lives. Prayerful worship drives away anxiety, depression, and fear. Worshipping God through prayer defeats anxiety.

➤ Prayers of supplication

We pray with “supplication” (Phil. 4:6) when we cry out to God and say, “Oh God, help me!” Peter used this type of prayer when he was sinking and about to go under the water (“Lord, save me” – Matt. 14:30). Most of us are rather good at this. We know how to cry out to God in the time of need. Of course, there is nothing wrong with this type of prayer.

Psalm 3:4-6

“I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah. I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about.”

Psalm 18:6

“In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.”

Psalm 107:13

“Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses.”

When we learn to cry and cast our burdens upon the Lord we can be freed from anxiety. The Lord wants us to receive help and strength from Him, through supplication, so we might experience His peace and calmness of heart.

Psalm 142:1

“I cried unto the Lord with my voice; with my voice unto the Lord did I make my supplication.”

Psalm 142:5

“I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.”

Leonard Ravenhill often said:

"No man is greater than his prayer life. I never know a man until I hear him pray."

Do we know how to cry out to God in prayer and find His blessed peace? We must swallow our pride and cry to Him in our times of difficulty and despair, so we might rid our lives of anxiety and allow God's peace to overtake our souls.

➤ Prayers of thanksgiving

The Bible reminds us that we are to pray "with thanksgiving" (Phil. 4:6). This is the kind of praying which revolves around a thankful heart. We are to praise and thank God for what He has done in our lives. God's children are to pray thanking Him for answered prayer, for God's loving concern over their lives, and the privilege to have access to God's throne and presence. There is so much to be thankful. So, praise when you pray! We must thank God for our salvation, our wife, children, health, home and multitudes of other blessings. Prayers of thanksgiving promote freedom from anxiety and generate peace in our hearts. Praise and thanksgiving are the opposite of worry and anxiety.

If we are not careful many times our prayer life can become unbalanced or lopsided. We can begin to do a lot of crying out to God during our prayer time but give little thanksgiving to God.

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 says:

"Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

We can even thank God for trials because we know that He is in charge of them (Rom. 8:28) and is conforming us to Christlikeness through them (Job 23:10). When we learn to thank God for our trials during our time of prayer and what they are accomplishing in our heart and life, this will keep us from worry and despair. Prayer is the antidote for worry or anxiety.

➤ Prayers of petition

When the Bible speaks of our "requests" (Phil. 4:6), it's speaking about our prayers of petitions. These are things that we directly ask God for during our time of prayer. We all know how to ask. Again, there is nothing wrong with asking God for things. God said that He wants our "requests to be made known unto Him." Can you imagine that? The God who has created every star in space, every

molecule in the universe, every cloud in the sky, and every raindrop is the same God that says, "Talk to me. Pour your heart out to me. Let me know what is going on in your life. I want to help you!" Certainly, this aspect of our prayer life also promotes peace in our hearts. Petitioning God about our needs and finding His cure for anxiety brings peace and rest into our souls.

"Thou are coming to a King;
Large petitions with thee bring;
For His grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much."

Daniel gives us a wonderful illustration of how to find peace through prayer. When the announcement was made that none of the king's subjects were to pray to anyone else except the king, Daniel went to his room, opened his windows, and prayed before God as he always had done (Dan. 6:1–10). Note how Daniel prayed. He "prayed, and gave thanks before his God" (Dan. 6:10) and he made "supplication" (Dan. 6:11). There you have it - prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving! Daniel was committed to prayer and the result was peace. He really did find perfect peace in the midst of great trial and difficulty by taking time to pray.

You will remember that Daniel had to spend the night in the lion's den. It's interesting that Daniel was able to spend the night with the lions in perfect peace, while the king in his palace could not sleep (Dan. 6:18). When God children pray, He grants them peace and stillness, when the lions of life surround them on every side. Prayer rids our lives of worry and promotes peace.

"Why worry when you can pray?
Trust Jesus He'll be your stay.
Don't be a doubting Thomas,
Rest fully in His promise,
Why worry, worry, worry, worry
When you can pray?"

3. The inclusiveness of prayer

Philippians 4:6

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

So what do we pray about? Everything! The Bible says we are to pray about “every thing.” The reason we are not to worry about anything is because we are to pray about everything! This means we are to talk to the Lord about everything in our lives. Nothing should be left out. When we talk to the Lord about our problems and commit them to Him through prayer, we can be freed from anxiety and experience God’s blessed peace. We can find the secret place of God’s haven and rest.

Some years ago, a woman from Philadelphia came to Dr. G. Campbell Morgan with this question, “Dr. Morgan, do you think we should pray about the *little* things in our lives?” Dr. Morgan in his characteristically British manner said, “Madam, can you mention anything in your life that is *big* to God?” When we say that we take our big problems to God, what do we mean? They are really all little stuff to Him. And what we call little He wants us to bring to Him also. As believers we need to get in the habit of bringing everything to Him in prayer—nothing excluded.

One preacher said:

“When I go on a trip in my car and it involves several hours of driving, I invite the Lord Jesus to go along with me. I talk to Him and tell Him everything about me, things I wouldn’t tell you or anyone else. I tell Him everything. I think we ought to learn to do that. We ought to pray about everything (Phil. 4:6).”

Again, when praying about everything, it keeps us from worrying about anything. This is because as we pray, we cast our cares and anxiety upon God (1 Pet. 5:7) and commit our days and way to Him (Ps. 37:5).

Here is a good summary of what we have studied. If we want peace, we must worry about nothing, be thankful for anything, and keep prayerful about everything. We need to learn to talk to God. “Now I lay me down to sleep” praying will not free us from anxiety and give us peace. We need to pray unloading to God and depending upon God to free us from anxiety and give us His peace.

A. T. Pierson said:

"The peace of God is that eternal calm which lies far too deep in the praying trusting soul to be reached by any external disturbances."

When we start to pray in faith, we can find the antidote for anxiety and allow God's peace to permeate our soul. God answers knee-mail and will provide us with peace when we cry out to Him in prayer.

Helen Steiner Rice wrote:

"Whenever I am troubled
and lost in deep despair,
I bundle all my troubles up
and go to God in prayer,
I tell Him I am heartsick
and lost and lonely too,
That I am deeply burdened
and don't know what to do.
But I know He stilled the tempest
and calmed the angry sea,
And I humbly ask if in His love
He'll do the same for me.
Then I just keep quiet
and think on thoughts of peace,
And as I abide in stillness
my restless murmurings cease."

Peace is not the result of chance but choice. Peace is not a matter of good luck or fortune. Peace is related to following God's spiritual laws and conditions. The condition that must be followed to rid our hearts of anxiety and obtain peace is earnest prayer.

Philippians 4:6

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

In days of tension and trouble, in days of frustration and failure, instead of worrying, take it to the Lord in prayer. This is what Paul is saying.

“What a Friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear;
What a privilege to carry
Ev’rything to God in prayer.

O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Ev’rything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged,
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Can we find a friend so faithful,
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our ev’ry weakness;
Take it to the Lord in prayer.”

II. We must experience the results of peace (Phil. 4:7).

Philippians 4:7

“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

The connective word “and” (vs. 7) indicates the result that comes into our lives when we learn to pray and not worry. The blessed result is this. We find the secret place; we find God’s peace in our lives. It is that place of solitude and inner quietness with God.

“Far away in the depths of my spirit tonight
Rolls a melody sweeter than psalm;
In celestial like strains it unceasingly falls
O’er my soul like an infinite calm.

What a treasure I have in this wonderful peace,
Buried deep in the heart of my soul;
So secure that no power can mine it away,
While the years of eternity roll!

Peace! peace! wonderful peace,
Coming down from the Father above;
Sweep over my spirit forever, I pray,
In fathomless billows of love."

We experience God's peace in a four-fold way:

a. Through God's supply

The text says it's the "peace of God" (Phil. 4:7). This means God is the source and supplier of all true peace. God provides peace and rest in our souls when we trust in Him. We experience God's inner peace through His gracious provision. Isaiah 26:3 gives the Old Testament parallel. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

When we trust in God's provision, power, and promises we can receive the peace that He wants to bestow upon our lives. God is the source and provider of all true peace. Peace is not merely a psychosomatic effect, nor do we achieve true inner peace through psychology, or any artificial methods created by man.

Colossians 1:2 reminds us where peace originates:

"To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Peace comes from God! True peace does not come from Transcendental Meditation. It cannot be found through pills, pop-psychology, and popular programs. You will not find peace through alcohol, money, clothing, position, fame or fortune. In fact, for the most part, you will only find more frustration and anxiety in these things. Peace only comes from the presence of God. You will only find peace in the "God of all peace" (Rom. 15:33). The Lord is the One who grants peace and provides us with calmness of soul.

J. Oswald Sanders said:

“Peace is not the absence of trouble, but the presence of God.”

Peace comes from God and His divine presence who is “the God of peace” (Hebrews 13:20). Once again, we see that the answer to effectively living the Christian life is God. The solution to all of our problems and perplexities in life is God and His abundant supply of peace. Stop searching for peace. Find it in God!

“Drop thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of thy peace.”

b. Through God’s secrecy

God presents His peace, which He offers to His children, in a unique fashion. The text says that God’s peace “passeth all understanding” (Phil. 4:7). This means that God’s inner peace is beyond human comprehension (intellectual faculties) or calculation. There is an element of mystery or secrecy that surrounds God’s peace. The peace that God gives in the darkest night is a peace that excels and surpasses all our own human understanding and reasoning. However, we can perceive that God has granted something to us that we cannot explain.

When a believer experiences God’s peace and presence, he cannot verbalize what has happened. Christians possessing God’s peace find a wonderful element of mystery about it. The peace of God is much more than a doctrine on a piece of paper. It’s a secret place of solace that one experiences but cannot fully explain. We can perceive that we have peace, but we know that it defies all human explanation. This is because the fathomless billows of God’s peace are too wonderful to explain (Eph. 3:20). We cannot rationally perceive or understand how it works or functions. We just know that it’s wonderful and works to still our hearts.

The peace of God transcends all understanding. It is beyond man’s ability to comprehend. It’s beyond the reach of our mind but not beyond our experience. We can experience God’s true peace in the midst of a disturbing and distracting

world. Yes, our Lord still “maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters” (Psalms 23:2). Now this is a secret place!

Hermann Lange, facing execution, wrote from his prison cell in Hamburg on July 11, 1943: "Personally, I am perfectly calm, facing steadfastly what is to come. When one has really achieved complete surrender to the will of God, there is a marvelous feeling of peace and sense of absolute security. The gift we receive is so unimaginably great that all human joys pale beside it."

c. Through God's safety

Philippians 4:7 concludes by saying that God's peace “shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” This is an amazing truth that needs to be experienced by God's children. Peace defends our lives from worry as we allow it to guard, rule, or umpire our hearts. The word “keep” is actually a military term which means to garrison or guard. It speaks of safety. Just as a sentry or guard would patrol a particular area and keep invaders from entering, so the peace of God patrols our heart (the human control center of our lives) and keeps worry from entering. God's peace provides us with a wonderful security and haven of safety. It keeps worry out of our lives.

This study has revealed that God's peace can be viewed as a secret hiding place which provides safety and seclusion from the pressing problems and heartaches of life (Psalm 91:1). God's secret place, the place of peace, is the antidote for worry. It keeps us safe from overcoming and debilitating anxiety or fears.

The mention of our “hearts” in Philippians 4:7 has reference to *emotional stability* and our “minds” refers to *mental stability*. God's peace controls our emotional flare-ups and also controls our mind, giving us mental stability. When my life is out of control, it's normally because my mind is out of control. Therefore, I need both emotional and mental stability to live free from worry or anxiety. What a wonderful and needed combination this is for the hour in which we live. When we experience emotional and mental stability, we are allowing God's peace to rule our lives. God has promised to patrol both the heart and mind of His children with peace, as they face life's trials and challenges, in order to keep worry out.

The possession of peace does not mean our removal from the world of reality or escape from the struggles of life. No believer is exempt from the troubles and difficulties that are associated with life. God's peace is the citadel or fortress that guards our heart from worry and anxiety as we face life's demands and difficulties. When we have God's peace dwelling and ruling in our hearts we will not be emotionally or mentally distraught. God says, "let the peace of God rule in your hearts" (Col. 3:15). The word "rule" means to govern or umpire. When peace is governing (Col. 3:15) and guarding (Phil. 4:7) our hearts fear and anxiety do not stand a chance!

There is a painting titled "Peace." It depicts waves crashing against the jagged rocks. It portrays the violence of a crushing storm. It seems anything but peaceful. But down in a small corner of the painting, tucked away in the rocks, is a little bird sitting on her nest, totally oblivious to the raging storm all about. This is the kind of peace that we can have during the midst of the storms of life. God has promised us a secret hiding place and shelter in the time of trial which provides us with peace and stillness.

"At the heart of the cyclone tearing the sky
And flinging the clouds and the towers by,
Is a place of central calm;

So here in the roar of mortal things,
I have a place where my spirit sings,
In the hollow of God's palm."

d. Through God's Son

God distributes His peace to our lives "through Jesus Christ" (Phil. 4:7). The second person in the Godhead is Jesus Christ and we receive God's peace as we experience the indwelling presence of His Son. Peace comes into our lives "through Jesus Christ" which means that we experience peace because Christ lives within us (1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Phil. 1:2) and works on the inside of us to communicate God's peace to us.

John 14:27

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

The worldly type of peace (“not as the world giveth”) rests upon circumstances and good times (bulging bank accounts and good health). But the peace that Jesus gives is not like the world’s false sense of peace. It’s a peace that we can possess during the raging storms of life. It’s a peace that we can have when the bottom drops out of our life.

When I was taking voice lessons, I was instructed to sing the beautiful words to a song which are written below. It speaks about the precious peace that Jesus gives. I have never forgotten this song. It has left an indelible mark or imprint upon my heart and soul that will last a lifetime.

“Like the sunshine after rain,
Like a rest that follows pain,
Like a hope returned again,
Is the peace that Jesus gives.

Oh the peace that Jesus gives!
Never dies it only lives.
Like the music of a psalm,
Like a glad eternal calm,
Is the peace that Jesus gives,
Is the peace that Jesus gives.”

Dear friend, God gives to His own children peace for every trial and in every valley that they pass through, even “the valley of the shadow of death.” God gives dying peace to His children who are resting in Him and His unchanging grace.

The beloved Psalm 23:4 says:

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”

God’s comfort, rest, and peace can be claimed and experienced when we are passing through the valley into the next life. Yes, we can experience the secret place of God’s peace as we pass from this life into the next. I have witnessed God’s saints dying with incredible peace and tranquility that no doctor or nurse could ever understand. This is because God’s peace “passeth all understanding” (Phil. 4:7), as we have seen, and because God lavishly bestows His peace upon His dying children.

“There will be peace in the valley for me someday,
There’ll be peace in the valley for me, I pray.
No more sorrow and sadness, no trouble will be.
There will be peace in the valley for me.”

At a recent church dinner, one mother took her three young children through the food line. As she juggled everyone's plate and drink, she told the kids to be on their best behavior. When finally seated, the mother sighed with relief and told them they were doing great - that we hadn't had any catastrophes yet. At that moment, the mother's 3-year-old, Dawn, looked around and said, "Where are the catastrophes, Mommy? I'll go get them."

My friend, we don't have to go get them! The catastrophes will eventually come into our lives. Sooner or later, they will find us. What are we going to do when they come? How are we going to react when the trials and hard times invade our lives? As God's people, we must pray and claim the blessing of God's peace. We must pray and enter the secret place. There are no human solutions for peace. It can only come through simple child-like prayer and trust in God's provision.

We may need to earnestly pray right now these words: “Lord, I need your peace. Lord, I need your inner tranquility in the midst of all that is happening around me. Lord, it's out of my control! I need your divine calmness. I need the getaway. I need the secret place! Take me, oh God, into this secret place of Your presence and let me experience the still waters and green pastures and pleasant places. Oh dear Lord, please guard my heart and mind from worry. Give me emotional and mental stability and rest through Your peace, as You have promised. I long to find the secret of Your presence and peace, that I might have a fresh outlook on life, and experience this new inward calmness of soul. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”

Psalm 91:1

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”

The secret place! It's the place of God's protection and peace for His children. Nothing ever changes in the secret place. It's always calm and still in this haven of rest. What a blessing this is to realize as we face life's changes and uncertainties.

“Blessed quietness, holy quietness,
What assurance in my soul!
On the stormy sea, He speaks peace to me,
How the billows cease to roll.”

The other day I remembered about an old fishing hole that I used to fish when I was younger. Out of curiosity, I went to check out the fishing hole. To my surprise, the fishing hole was the same as when I left it many years ago. There was a big rock that I stood upon and a little stream that wound through the pasture. Cows would come down to the water and drink. Nothing seemed to change. The same is true about God’s secret place of peace and rest. Nothing ever changes in the secret place. It’s always the same for God never changes and His peaceful provision is always available to us.

Malachi 3:6 says,
“For I am the LORD, I change not ...”

Hebrews 13:8
“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”

Several years ago, a submarine was being tested and had to remain submerged for many hours. When it returned to the harbor, the captain was asked, "How did the terrible storm last night affect you?" The officer looked at him in surprise and exclaimed, "Storm? We didn't even know there was one!" The sub had been so far beneath the surface that it had reached the area known to sailors as "the cushion of the sea." Although the ocean may be whipped into huge waves by high winds, the waters below are never stirred.

In a similar way, when we find the secret place of God’s peace, we will find a cushion, a soft pillow in life, where we can rest in God’s abundant provision. Have you found the secret place? (“the secret place of the most High”). Have you found this special hiding place? Maybe you need to retreat to this secret place right now and claim God’s protection and peace in your life.

“In a time of trouble,
In a time forlorn,
There is a hiding place,
Where hope is born.

In a time of danger,
When our faith is proved,
There is a hiding place,
Where we are loved.

In a time of sorrow,
In a time of grief,
There is a hiding place
To give relief.

In a time of weakness,
In a time of fear,
There is a hiding place,
Where God is near.

There is a hiding place,
A strong protective place,
Where God provides the grace to persevere.
For nothing can remove us from the Father's love,
Tho' all may change, yet nothing changes here."



Nothing ever changes in the secret
place!

"Now the God of peace *be* with
you all. Amen" (Romans 15:33).