



**STUDY ONE: The Problem of Lacking Peace of Mind:** At the very center of the galaxy of challenges and difficulties that swirl around the unconverted sinner is his profound absence of “peace”. Haunting fears, paralyzing anxieties and physically-draining worries are the lot of those who trudge through life without a relationship with the Savior. On the other hand, the children of the King have perfect tranquility under the same trying circumstances which cause most people to feel stressed. God’s children have cheerfulness where others have discontent; calmness in place of agitation, faith instead of doubt. Heaven longs to see this deep, beautiful experience flow through every human heart like a gorgeous, crystal-clear river. Isa 66:12 says: “For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend **peace to her like a river**, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream...” See what the Bible says about the problem that lies at the root of every soul who lives for themselves by answering the questions below.

- 1) To whom does the Bible direct the solemn declaration: “there is no peace...”? What are the people lacking peace compared to? Isaiah 57:20, 21

**Note:** It is the people who the Bible describes as “wicked” who are lacking peace. The Hebrew word for wicked here is: **rasha`** (7563); which Strong’s concordance defines as “morally wrong... an (actively) bad person”. Besides “wicked” this Hebrew word **rasha`** is also translated in the KJV as: condemned Job 32:3, guilty Num. 35:31, ungodly 2Chron. 19:2, wicked (man), that did wrong Ex.2:13. In Isaiah 57:20,21 the prophet likens the agitation and restlessness of the un-renewed heart to the rolling ocean whose waves never stop crashing upon the shore. Often when individual’s minds are in this agitated state they avoid silence so they will not be alone with their own thoughts. Their homes (and vehicles) are always filled with some kind of music. Their living rooms echo with the chatter of television.

- 2) Read Isaiah 59:1-8. What do the wicked create that makes it difficult for them to find the path of peace? **Isa. 59:8**

**Note:** In Isaiah 59:1-8 the Bible describes the most common manifestations of a selfish life. Here the prophet lists the deeds of violence, the lies and mischief of those who are separated from God. The Bible points out that even their thoughts are consumed with iniquity and destruction. Unable --in this unconverted state-- to walk or even find the high, straight path of righteousness, the disobedient carve crooked paths through the jungle of this world. These crooked paths are the unsuccessful attempts of the disobedient to pacify the inner longings of their heart. Carnal nature naturally seeks to fill the heart’s spiritual void with inadequate substitutes. Jeremiah comments on how the wicked, being estranged from God, create their own unsatisfactory replacements Jer. 2:13. Jeremiah says: For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, **and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns**, that can hold no water. This passage in Isaiah 59:8 climaxes with the statement that those who follow in these crooked paths “shall not know peace”.

- 3) What does the man, woman or family that departs from the Lord often tell themselves? What will be the result if they persist? **Deut. 29:18-20**

**Note:** The unspoken, sentiments of the disobedient are recorded in Deut 29:19 "...I shall have peace though I walk in the stubbornness [see margin] of mine heart..." but this unconscious mindset is but a false hope. The Bible teaches that the Lord --though great in mercy-- will not spare the guilty forever. If they sinner does not repent, they will eventually reap what they sow and the calamities recorded in this book --often called curses (See Deut 28:15-68)-- will overtake them. Self deception is a natural, ever-present symptom of rebellion. The carnal mind is an expert at pacifying, justifying and making false promises to its self. For the stubborn sinner, each new day brings a new excuse for postponing the yielding of the heart and life to Christ. Like the Bible character Felix, the rebellious tell themselves that everything will be all right, while they tell the Holy Spirit: "...Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." Acts 24:25

4) What will be the lot of those who pursue a path of disobedience? **Lam. 3:1-18** (Note verse 17)

**Note:** Often in the Scriptures the evil that is the natural consequence of the sinner's wicked course, is portrayed as coming directly from God. In Lam. 3:1-17 the Bible describes how God afflicts the sinner, opposes his progress and removes his blessings. Yet this unsettled state of mind, the anxiety and uncertainty that torments the unconverted person, is actually a good thing. Heaven intends that this disquieted mental condition be resolved by surrendering to Christ. Unfortunately, it often takes years for the rebellious sinner to learn that "...the way of transgressors is hard Pro. 13:15. Verse 17 of Lamentations chapter 3 says that God has removed the transgressor far from His peace.

5) What misleading message is often given by well meaning people to those who are estranged from God?  
**Jer. 6:2,7,13,14**

**Note:** When God's people were disobedient in OT times, the false religious leaders often extended assurances of peace. This was like putting "a band-aid on a broken leg". It only made the problem worse. Today the enemy is careful to place around the unconverted soul people that will try to console the mind which God is troubling. We should **never** tell the unconverted individual that "he or she is okay" or that "it's going to be alright" or that he can have "some measure of peace" while they are separated from God. The rebellious person's inadequate attempts to sooth his troubled conscience only give temporary, faulty relief. Jeremiah says that it only heals "slightly". It will not restore in the fullest sense. The sinner needs Christ and all of the wonderful provisions that true righteousness brings.

6) What can those who have made peace with God truthfully declare? Copy **Acts 24:16** below.

**Note:** After being beat up by the enemy for a while the sinner may finally recognize that it is impossible to do what is right of their own power. Accepting the reality of their own weakness they can turn to Christ who has never lost a battle! The repentant sinner who has surrendered his life to Christ should be able to truthfully say that they have put forth their best effort to have their conscience clear of any offense toward God or his fellow man. No area of their life will they withhold from their King. Because they love God, they will choose to forgive others. They now recognize that their relationship with their fellow man reveals what their true relationship is with God 1John 4:20,21. Thus those who have Heaven's peace will not harbor ill-will toward their fellow men.

**Questions for Personal Meditation and Decision:** (Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.)

A) Do you avoid silence, by always needing background noise, like having music or a TV playing?

- B) Make a list of 2 or 3 habits or practices that you believe are destroying your peace of mind. Take time to pray earnestly that God will cleanse you from these practices at least three times a day.
- C) Make a list of any people you now spend significant time with, who have been telling you --in words or by their lifestyle-- that you are going to “be alright” while you are separated from God. What would the Lord have you do about these “friends”? (This last question may require some time for prayer and meditation.)
- D) Do you get frustrated, irritated, impatient or angry when trials and difficulties come your way? Can you honestly say that you possess the Peace that comes from completely surrendering your heart to Christ?
- E) If you answered “No” to the previous question, would you like to pray right now and accept Christ the Prince of Peace? Would you make a commitment to complete these studies no matter what trials come?