



LOOKING TO DEVELOP YOUR FAITH?

Gather is a monthly resource from IPHC Women to help you connect women in your local church to Jesus Christ and each other.

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PEACE, YOUR REFEREE

by Karlene Arthur

There's an old church hymn that says, "Peace, peace, wonderful peace, coming down from the Father above!" Maybe you have heard the song, or it may pre-date you by several decades. Either way, you have undoubtedly found yourself hoping for peace from our Father in heaven at least once or twice in this life we are living.

It is easy to get caught up in the frustration or anxiety of a moment, even for Christians. This could happen while conversing with a friend over coffee and realizing you have differing political views. On the job, you may find yourself pressured to confirm to a mindset that does not line up with your faith beliefs.

In situations like these and many more, circumstances swirling about or the actions of others toward you may

have you searching for peace. Occasionally, the need for peace develops because our own bad decisions have landed us in a less than ideal situation. In these times we often pray, "Father, give me peace!"

Now, keep in mind we are not talking about world peace here. This is the peace which transcends all understanding, that will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4.7). He is our peace.

In the New Testament, we find a beautiful verse that brings clarity to the work of God's peace in us. Colossians 3.15a says, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts..." (NASB) This word rule is from the Greek word *brabeuo*. The Apostle Paul, writer of Colossians, chose this word to describe a referee, as in the athletic competitions of his day.

In an athletic competition, when an infraction occurs, the referee or umpire blows their whistle. This is a signal that all game activity must cease until both parties are brought to a peaceful resolution.

The peace of God is available to you to act as a referee in the circumstances of your life if you will allow it. His peace already resides in us, His daughters, thanks to the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is up to us, however, to allow this peace to be activated in our lives.

When external situations or your own emotions try to move you toward frustration, anxiety, or fear, you can choose to allow the referee (God's peace) to rise and take control. In those moments you can pray, "Father, activate Your peace within me! I submit to the rule of the divine referee in my life."

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." John 14.26-27 (NIV)

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1) Are there moments when you notice your emotions reacting to circumstances around you, causing you to lose control of your peace?
- 2) In what areas of your life do you struggle to remain at peace?
- 3) How have you learned to calm your emotions and regain your peace? If so, how?
- 4) Talk about a time when you've experienced the faithfulness of God to give you peace in a difficult time.

CALL TO ACTION:

- 1) Consider what steps you can take to allow God's peace to rule in your life. Write these down or make a note in your phone. Practice using one or more steps when you feel peace slipping away.
- 2) Write down the Scriptures shared in this lesson and turn them into a prayer (Col. 3.15, Phil. 4.7, John 14.26-27). In moments of anxiety, confusion, or fear, pray and meditate on the Scriptures.
- 3) Join with a friend and commit to making peace the referee in your lives. Pray for each other. Humbly admit your weaknesses. Celebrate together your progress in letting God's peace rule.

