



The Gift of Peace and a Grateful Heart

By Marilyn Dominick, Chair of Nazarene Educators Worldwide

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful” (Colossians 3:15, NIV).

There are many precious Bible verses about thankfulness and peace. Colossians 3:15 is one of my favorites, because it reminds me that the peace of Christ is such a fantastic gift to all believers. Since this is true, why do so many Christians lack this peace? Perhaps they fail to reflect on the blessings God has provided, and therefore a lack of gratitude in their hearts leads to the absence of peace. In the above verse, Paul gives us a message that gratitude is not an option. We are to let peace be the empowering standard (not the exception), and we are to be thankful!

Life Experiences Affect Our Sense of Peace

You may think your life is far from perfect, full of stress and problems. You may have trouble focusing on things for which you can be thankful as you deal with way too much on your plate. Stop right in the middle of that thought and reflect on God’s goodness. You will gain access to God’s peace. It is in the middle of life’s hassles that we need His presence the most. He is calling us to go deeper with Him, and the reward for walking closely with Him is His peace.

The ocean is sometimes very tempestuous on the surface. However, several feet below the surface, the ocean can be serene. Our stormy lives could be like the ocean! We need to dive deeper and reach out to God. He is waiting there for us. The best thing is that He loves us so much, and He wants His best for us. Too often, we settle for less. The Holy Spirit will show you more of God’s heart for you, no matter what you are experiencing.

My Challenge to You

During this holiday season, I would like to challenge you to reflect on God's goodness to you. I will get you started with my top five list of gifts from God for which I am thankful:

1. The awesome gift of salvation through Jesus Christ! Wow! The God of the universe loves me enough to send His beloved Son to die for me. I am precious in His sight, and He walks through every day with me!
2. My family is a constant stream of joy in my life. I married my absolute best friend 47 years ago, and together we have a tremendous life—interesting and full of challenges, but tremendous. We have two adult sons who serve Christ, and they have established wonderful Christian homes with Christian women. And, they have produced three AWESOME grandchildren for us!
3. The blessing of good health, after a bit of a rocky road, causes my heart to overflow with thanks to God!
4. My church family blesses me constantly as we work together to further the kingdom of God!
5. God, my provider, meets all my needs in every way!

The peace of Christ! Wow – now, that is something for which to be grateful! In this tumultuous world where we sometimes see less than peaceful things around us, Christ offers us His peace. During the holiday season, students may be more rowdy and less attentive! After COVID-19, the uncertain situations all around, and frequent news about school shootings, it can be difficult for students to focus and be patient. They may not experience peace and tranquility. It can be challenging for students and staff to stay calm and be patient with each other because of the busyness of the holidays.

However, God is our best source of peace and gratitude. To experience God's peace, one must take time to quiet one's heart and mind and think about the goodness of God. When we remember how good He has been to us, we can be more grateful.

I wish you His peace and a grateful heart as you meet the challenges and enjoy the blessings of this joyful season.

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