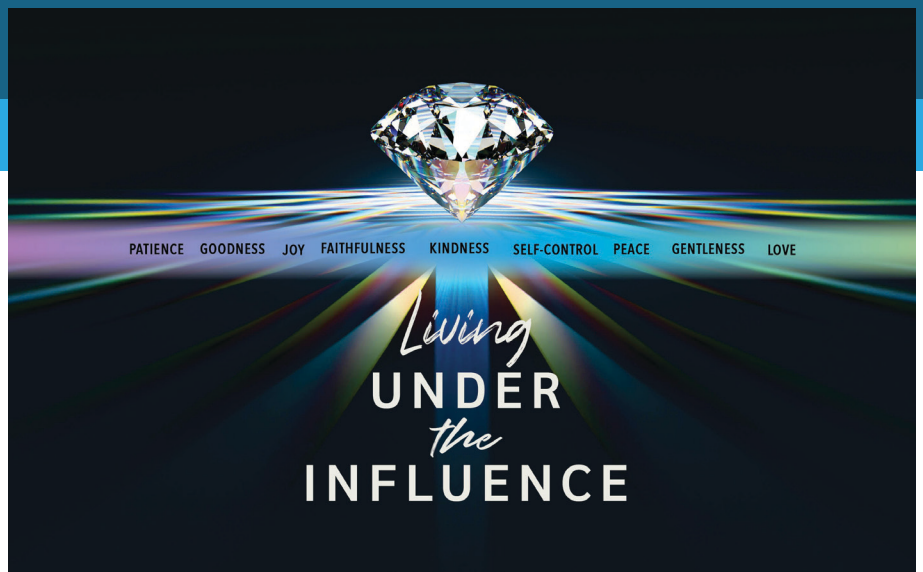


DAILY DEVOTIONAL

A 5-Day Reflection Guide

Joy



SERMON SERIES:
LIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

WEEK & TOPIC:
WEEK 7 / PEACE

DATES:
AUGUST 17–21, 2026

This Week's Big Idea

Peace isn't the absence of problems. It is the settled confidence that God is in control because Jesus is present. The world's peace depends on circumstances. The peace of Christ depends on connection. As we remain under the influence of the Holy Spirit, His peace guards our hearts, steadies our minds, and anchors our lives—even in the middle of life's storms.

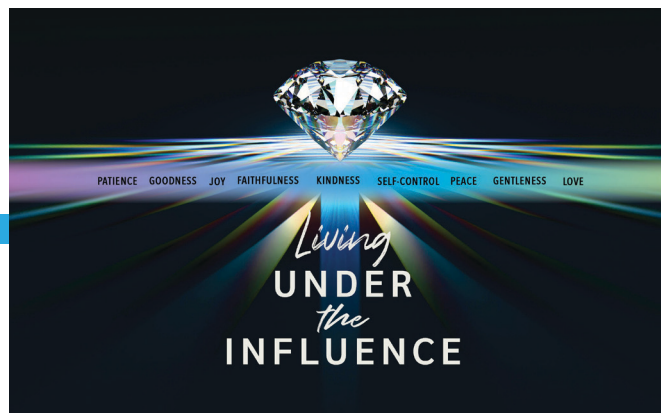
LIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Day 1: God Gets to Define Peace

TODAYS SCRIPTURE

John 14:27 (NIV) “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.”

Galatians 5:22–23 (NLT) “But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace...”



TODAY'S SEED

If you asked a hundred people what peace means, you'd probably hear a hundred different answers. Some would describe a quiet cabin on a lake. Others would picture a vacation with no deadlines. Someone else might think of retirement, financial security, or simply having a day when nothing goes wrong. Most of us define peace as the absence of conflict, stress, noise, or problems. And honestly, who wouldn't want that? The problem is that's not how Jesus defines peace.

Throughout this series we've learned something important: The One who planted the tree gets to define the fruit. Culture doesn't define love, culture doesn't define kindness or joy. And culture doesn't get to define peace.

When Jesus gathered His disciples on the night before the cross, He knew their world was about to fall apart. Within hours He would be arrested. They would scatter in fear. Everything familiar would change and yet in that moment Jesus didn't promise to remove the trouble that was coming. He promised peace.

Then He made an incredible statement: “I do not give to you as the world gives.” In other words, “Don't confuse My peace with the world's version.” The world's peace is fragile. It lasts only as long as circumstances cooperate, but Jesus offers something entirely different. His peace isn't built on everything around you being calm, His peace is built on Someone within you remaining faithful.

One of the truths we talked about on Sunday is this: Peace isn't the absence of problems. It's the addition of His presence. That changes everything. If peace depended on perfect circumstances, very few of us would ever experience it. But if peace comes from remaining connected to Christ, then it becomes possible to have stability in uncertainty, confidence in confusion, and hope in hardship. The Holy Spirit doesn't produce peace by eliminating the problems, He produces peace by continually reminding us who is in control.

Today, before you begin chasing peaceful circumstances, spend time pursuing the Prince of Peace. Because peace isn't something you find, Ultimately, peace is Someone you know.

BENEATH THE SURFACE

The New Testament word for peace is *eirēnē* (εἰρήνη). While it can describe the absence of conflict, it carries a much richer meaning. It speaks of wholeness, completeness, harmony, and well-being that comes from being rightly related to God. For the Jewish believer, this echoed the Hebrew word *shalom*—life made whole under God's blessing and rule. Biblical peace isn't simply quiet circumstances; it's a settled life because God reigns.

DON'T MISS THIS

Peace isn't found in perfect circumstances. Peace is found in the perfect Saviour.

TEND THE GARDEN

Spend a few quiet moments reflecting.

1. How have you normally defined peace?
2. Are you waiting for your circumstances to improve before expecting peace?
3. What would change if you truly believed Jesus' presence was enough today?

WATER THE SEED

The next time anxiety begins to rise today, stop for thirty seconds. Instead of asking, "How do I fix this?" Ask, "Jesus, how are You inviting me to trust You right now?" Then take one slow breath and remember that His presence has not left you.

GROW THIS IN ME

Father,

Thank You for sending Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Too often I chase peaceful circumstances instead of pursuing Your presence. I confess that I have allowed my emotions to rise and fall with whatever is happening around me. Teach me to define peace the way You do. Holy Spirit, continue producing Your fruit in my life. Help me remain connected to Jesus so that Your peace becomes stronger than my fears. When uncertainty comes, remind me that You are still on the throne. When life feels chaotic, anchor my heart in Your promises. Let my life become evidence that true peace is found in You alone.

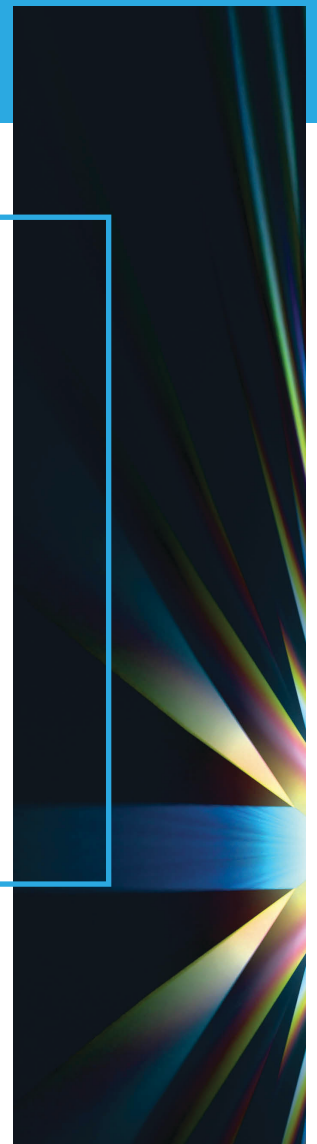
In Jesus' name, Amen.

**GOD PRODUCES THE FRUIT. WE CREATE THE CONDITIONS.
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LOOKING AHEAD

Day Two – Peace Is a Person

Tomorrow we'll discover one of Jesus' most surprising promises: He never offered us a trouble-free life—but He did promise that His presence would be enough. Real peace isn't something we achieve. It's Someone we remain connected to.



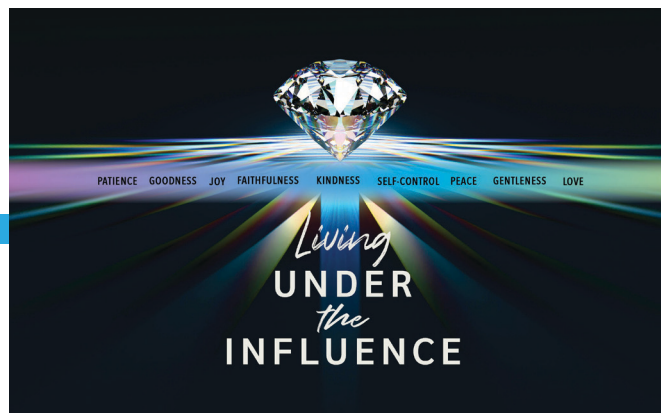
LIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Day 2: Peace Is a Person

TODAYS SCRIPTURE

John 14:27 (NIV) “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.”

Isaiah 9:6 (NIV) “For to us a child is born... And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”



TODAY'S SEED

Yesterday we discovered that God—not culture—gets to define peace. As we take another step today, I want to remind you that peace isn't merely a “something” peace is a person, named Jesus. Isaiah didn't simply say the Messiah would bring peace. He called Him the Prince of Peace. This is more than a title. It reveals His nature.

Everything a prince governs comes under his authority. Jesus doesn't merely distribute peace from a distance; He rules over it because peace belongs to Him. That changes the way we pray.

How often have we prayed, “Lord, I just need some peace”? There's nothing wrong with that prayer. But perhaps a better prayer is: “Lord, I need You.” Because when Jesus comes, peace comes with Him.

When the disciples found themselves in the middle of a violent storm, they weren't separated from Jesus. They were simply overwhelmed by the storm around them. While they panicked, Jesus slept. Why? Not because He didn't care. Because He knew something they had forgotten. His presence was greater than the storm. The danger wasn't

imaginary, the waves were real, and the wind was powerful, but so was His authority.

Many of us live as though peace is something we gain and lose throughout the day. “I had peace until... you can fill in the blank with whatever crises comes to mind. Maybe it was the person, the text, the report, or the phone call.” The truth is, if our peace disappears every time life changes, we weren't resting in Christ—we were resting in circumstances.

I hate to remind you but, Jesus never promised us a storm-free life. The fact is, He promised the opposite. “In this world you will have trouble.” But in the very next breath He says, “Take heart! I have overcome the world.” That's why biblical peace isn't pretending everything is okay. It's knowing the One who ultimately makes everything okay.

When you feel like peace is gone remember that The Prince of Peace hasn't moved, He's still present, faithful and He still reigns. And peace is still inviting us to remain close to Him. Peace isn't a destination you eventually reach. It's the daily result of walking with the One who is Peace Himself.

BENEATH THE SURFACE

The Hebrew word **shalom** means far more than the absence of conflict. It describes wholeness, completeness, harmony, and flourishing under God's care. When Isaiah called Jesus the Prince of Peace, he wasn't saying Jesus would simply make people feel calm. He was declaring that Jesus would restore what sin had broken. Through Christ, our relationship with God is made whole, and from that restored relationship flows the peace that steadies every other part of life.

DON'T MISS THIS

You don't ultimately need more peace—you need to stay close to the Prince of Peace.

TEND THE GARDEN

Spend a few quiet moments reflecting.

1. When do you most often find your peace disappearing?
2. Are you depending more on stable circumstances or on the steady presence of Jesus?
3. What would change today if you intentionally walked with the Prince of Peace instead of chasing peaceful circumstances?

WATER THE SEED

Several times today, pause before moving to your next task. Simply whisper, “Jesus, thank You that You’re here.” Don’t ask Him to come closer. Remember that He already has. Then let His presence quiet your heart before you move on.

GROW THIS IN ME

Father,

Thank You for sending Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Thank You that peace is not something I have to manufacture or chase. It is found in a relationship with Your Son. Forgive me for the times I have trusted my circumstances more than Your presence. Too often I have allowed fear to become louder than Your promises. Teach me to keep my eyes on Jesus when life feels uncertain. Holy Spirit, continue producing Your fruit in my life. Draw me closer to Christ each day. Help me remember that when I remain connected to Him, I have everything I need. May His peace steady my heart, guide my decisions, and become visible to everyone around me.

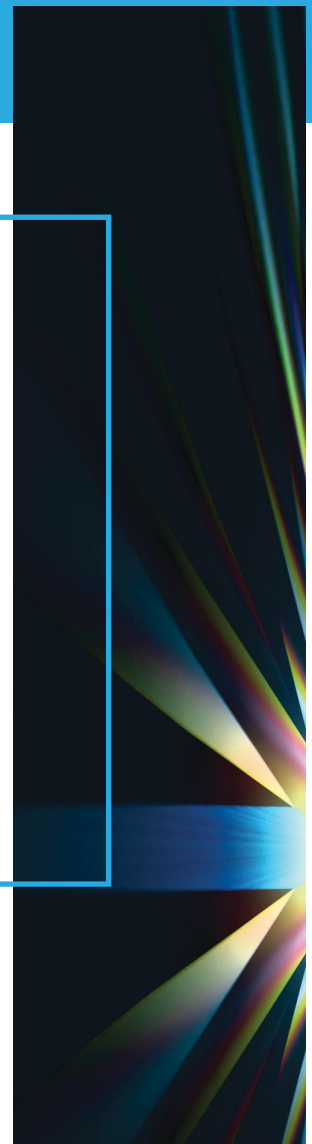
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LOOKING AHEAD

Day Three – Guarded by Peace

The peace of God doesn’t simply comfort us—it protects us. Tomorrow we’ll discover how God’s peace stands guard over our hearts and minds, keeping worry from taking control and allowing Christ’s peace to become the deciding voice in our lives.



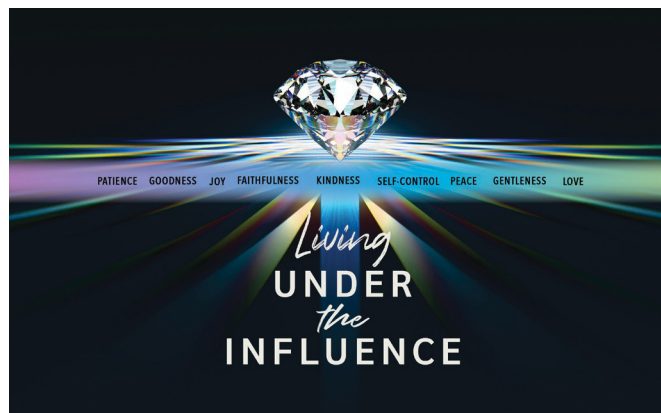
LIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Day 3: Guarded by Peace

TODAYS SCRIPTURE

Philippians 4:6–7 (NIV) “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

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



TODAY'S SEED

One of the greatest lies anxiety tells us is this: “If you think about it long enough, you’ll gain control over it.” So, we replay conversations, we imagine worst-case scenarios, we rehearse arguments that never happen and we try to solve tomorrow’s problems before they ever arrive.

Paul knew that tendency well. Writing from a Roman prison, not a peaceful place by anyone’s definition, he gave one of the most practical instructions in all of Scripture: “Do not be anxious about anything...” Notice he didn’t say there would be nothing to worry about. He said there was something better to do with our worries. Pray, give thanks, and present your requests to God.

Then notice, Paul doesn’t say God immediately changes every circumstance, he says God gives peace, but not just any peace, it’s a peace that “transcends all understanding.”

In other words, there are moments when God’s peace simply doesn’t make sense. People look at your situation and wonder, “How are you still standing?” “How can you still trust God?” “Why aren’t you falling apart?” The answer isn’t

because you’re naturally calm. It’s because the Holy Spirit is producing something supernatural within you.

Paul then uses a fascinating word. He says God’s peace will guard your heart and mind. Picture a Roman soldier standing watch outside the city gates. His assignment wasn’t to create peace, it was to keep danger from getting inside. That’s exactly what God’s peace does. It stands guard over your heart. It doesn’t anxious thoughts never knock on the door. It means they don’t have to move in.

Later, Paul tells believers to let the peace of Christ rule in their hearts. The word rule was used of an umpire making the final call in an athletic contest. Every day, competing voices are trying to drive our decisions. Fear has an opinion, so does worry and anger.

But Paul says, “When you’re uncertain... When you’re offended... When you’re tempted to panic... Let peace make the call.” The Holy Spirit doesn’t promise you’ll never hear fearful voices, He simply invites you to stop giving them the final say.

BENEATH THE SURFACE

The Greek word translated guard is *phroureō* (φρουρέω), a military term describing soldiers stationed to protect a city from attack. Philippi was a Roman colony, so Paul’s readers would immediately picture armed guards protecting the city’s gates. Likewise, the word translated rule in Colossians 3:15 is *brabeutō*, meaning “to act as an umpire” or “to decide.” Peace isn’t merely a feeling God gives us; it becomes the God-given referee that helps direct our responses, decisions, and relationships.

DON’T MISS THIS

Peace doesn’t remove every anxious thought—but it won’t let anxiety become the authority.

TEND THE GARDEN

Spend a few quiet moments reflecting.

1. What worry has been occupying your mind lately?
2. Have you been trying to control something that only God can control?
3. Which voice has been making the final call in your heart—fear or peace?

WATER THE SEED

The next time worry begins replaying in your mind today, stop and pray this simple prayer: “Father, this belongs to You now.” Then thank Him for one specific thing He’s already done in your life. Instead of rehearsing the problem, begin rehearsing His faithfulness.

GROW THIS IN ME

Father,

Thank You that You never ask me to carry what only You can bear. Too often I allow worry to occupy my thoughts and fear to influence my decisions. Forgive me for trying to control what belongs in Your hands. Thank You for promising a peace that goes beyond my understanding. Thank You that Your peace doesn’t depend on everything around me changing—it depends on You remaining faithful. Holy Spirit, continue producing Your fruit in my life. Stand guard over my heart and mind today. When anxious thoughts come, remind me to bring them to You instead of carrying them alone. Teach me to let the peace of Christ become the deciding voice in every situation. May my life demonstrate that Your peace is stronger than my fears.

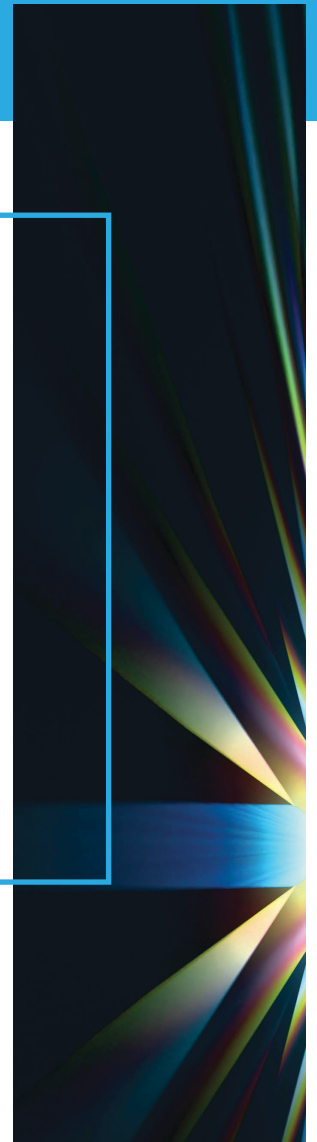
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LOOKING AHEAD

Day Four – Surrender Is the Path to Peace

Peace isn’t something we stumble into; it’s something we practice. Tomorrow we’ll discover that surrender isn’t giving up—it’s placing our lives back into the hands of the One who has always been in control.



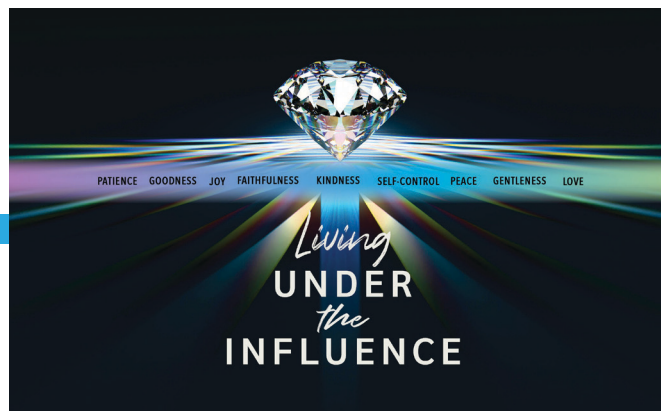
LIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Day 4: Surrender Is the Path to Peace

TODAYS SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 26:3 (NIV) “You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You.”

Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV) “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest... Take my yoke upon you and learn from me... For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”



TODAY'S SEED

One of the greatest obstacles to experiencing peace isn't what is happening around us, it's our desire to have control. If we're honest, most of us like having control. We want a plan, and we especially want to know how things will turn out. We want our questions answered and problems solved before they become bigger problems. And, honestly, God often calls us to plan wisely, work diligently, and take responsibility.

The problem comes when we begin carrying responsibilities God never asked us to carry. Somewhere along the way, planning has a way of becoming worry. Preparation becomes control, and responsibility turns to anxiety. And soon, we're exhausted—not because life is difficult, but because we're trying to be God.

In one of today's scriptures, notice that Isaiah doesn't say, He promises perfect peace to perfect people with perfect circumstances. He promises it to people whose minds are fixed on God. The phrase perfect peace is actually the Hebrew expression shalom, shalom—a repetition used to

emphasize completeness. We might say, “peace upon peace.” This kind of peace comes from trust. Peace grows wherever trust takes root.

Jesus paints another picture in Matthew 11. He invites weary people to take His yoke upon themselves. To us, a yoke might sound restrictive, but to Jesus' listeners, a yoke represented partnership. As the two oxen pulled together under one yoke it was the stronger animal carried most of the weight while the younger learned to walk alongside.

Jesus never said, “Carry your burdens by yourself.” He said, “Walk with Me.” Trusting is a daily choice to stop pulling the load alone. This is why so many are tired today, we're carrying things like the future, other people's opinions, outcomes we can't control and questions we can't answer. Peace begins the moment we place those burdens back into the hands of the One who has never dropped anything. The Holy Spirit produces peace as we learn to loosen our grip and strengthen our trust. Every act of trust becomes an opportunity for peace to grow.

BENEATH THE SURFACE

The Hebrew phrase translated perfect peace is literally shalom shalom (שָׁלוֹם שָׁלוֹם). In Hebrew, repetition adds emphasis. Isaiah is describing complete, undisturbed peace—a peace that remains whole because it rests in God's faithfulness rather than changing circumstances.

Jesus' invitation to take His yoke would also have carried a familiar image. A rabbi often spoke of his “yoke” as his teaching and way of life. Jesus wasn't simply offering relief from hard work; He was inviting people to exchange the crushing burden of self-reliance for the freedom of walking closely with Him.

DON'T MISS THIS

Peace doesn't come from holding on tighter. It grows every time you surrender something to God.

TEND THE GARDEN

Spend a few quiet moments reflecting.

1. What burden have you been carrying that God never asked you to carry?
2. Where are you trying to control an outcome instead of trusting God with it?
3. What would surrender look like in one area of your life today?

WATER THE SEED

Take five quiet minutes today. Open your hands in front of you as a physical reminder of surrender. Name one burden you've been carrying and then pray, "Jesus, this belongs to You more than it belongs to me." Then leave it there, and every time you're tempted to pick it back up today, remember whose hands are stronger.

GROW THIS IN ME

Father,

Thank You that You never intended for me to carry life alone. Too often I try to control outcomes that belong to You. I confess that I have held tightly to worries, fears, and responsibilities that were never mine to bear. Teach me to trust You more deeply. When I begin reaching for control, remind me that surrender is not weakness—it is worship. Help me keep my mind fixed on You instead of becoming consumed with everything happening around me. Holy Spirit, continue producing Your fruit in my life. Grow a peace within me that comes from trusting rather than striving. Teach me to walk beside Jesus, allowing Him to carry what only He can carry. May my life reflect the quiet confidence of someone who knows that God is always faithful.

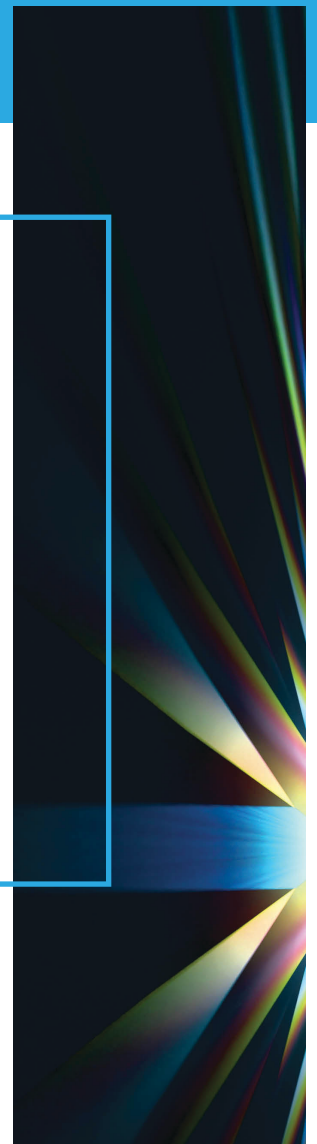
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LOOKING AHEAD

Day Five – Become the Current

Tomorrow we'll bring everything together. Peace isn't meant to stop with us. As the Holy Spirit produces His peace within us, we become people who calm anxious hearts, and point others to the Prince of Peace. God's peace doesn't just settle in us—it begins to flow through us.



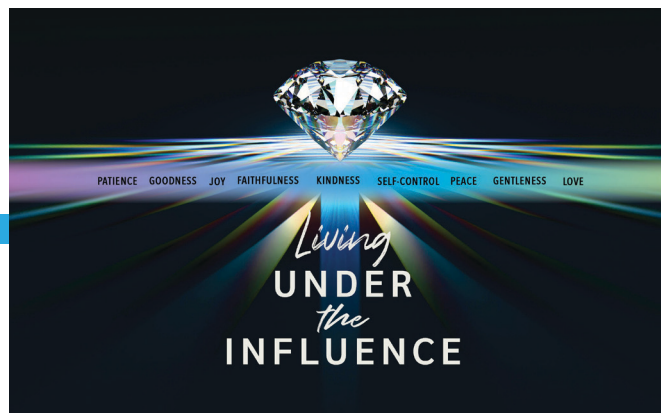
LIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Day 5: **Become the Current**

TODAYS SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5:9 (NIV) “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 (NIV) “God... reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation... We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us.”



TODAY'S SEED

Did you know that Peace was never intended to stop with you? Throughout this entire series we've returned to this central truth, you've been born again of His incorruptible seed and as roots grow deep, fruit grows outward. Eventually that fruit begins creating a current that influences everyone around us.

Have you ever noticed that one angry or anxious person can spread anxiety or anger to many people? Peace works exactly the same way. When Christ settles your heart, something begins changing around you and people will notice, so will your family, friends and coworkers. Not because your life suddenly became easier...But because your responses became different.

One peaceful person can quietly steady everyone else. That's what the fruit of the Spirit is wanting to produce in us, but not just for us, He wants it to become a current that

begins flowing into the lives of others. So this week wasn't just about finding more peace, instead it's about becoming someone through whom God's peace flows.

That's exactly what Jesus did. The cross wasn't simply God's way of calming our fears. It was God's way of reconciling sinners to Himself. Jesus made peace by removing the barrier that separated us from God. Now Paul says we have been entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation.

As followers of Jesus, we carry His peace into anxious homes, into divided families, tense workplaces and into difficult conversations. Not because we're naturally calm, or always know what to say, but because the Prince of Peace lives within us. One peaceful person under the influence of the Holy Spirit can change the atmosphere of an entire room.

BENEATH THE SURFACE

The Greek word translated peacemaker is *eirēnopoios* (εἰρηνοποιός), literally meaning “one who makes peace.” It appears only once in the New Testament, here in Matthew 5:9. Jesus intentionally chose an active word. Peacemakers don't merely enjoy peace—they participate in God's work of restoring broken relationships. Paul expands that idea in 2 Corinthians by describing believers as ambassadors for Christ. In the ancient world, an ambassador represented the authority and message of the king who sent him. Likewise, Christians carry the message of reconciliation into a world desperately searching for peace.

DON'T MISS THIS

The peace God produces in you is meant to become the peace He extends through you.

TEND THE GARDEN

Spend a few quiet moments reflecting.

1. How has your understanding of biblical peace changed this week?
2. Where has God brought greater peace into your own heart?
3. Who in your life needs someone to carry the peace of Christ into their situation?

WATER THE SEED

Today, become intentional about bringing peace wherever you go. Before entering a meeting...Walking into your home...Making a phone call...Or having a difficult conversation... Pause and pray, "Holy Spirit, let Your peace enter this room before my words do."

Then become the steady presence that points people toward Jesus.

GROW THIS IN ME

Father,

Thank You for giving me a peace that this world could never produce and can never take away. Thank You for sending Jesus, the Prince of Peace, to reconcile me to You and to make me whole. Thank You for everything You've taught me this week. Continue reminding me that peace isn't found in perfect circumstances but in Your constant presence. Help me trust You when life is uncertain, surrender what I cannot control, and allow Your peace to guard my heart and mind. Holy Spirit, continue producing Your fruit in my life. Make me a peacemaker. Let my words calm rather than inflame. Let my presence bring hope instead of fear. Let my responses reflect the confidence that comes from knowing You are in control. May others encounter the peace of Jesus because they encounter Him in me.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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LOOKING AHEAD

Next Week's Big Idea

Gentleness is strength under the control of the Holy Spirit. It is not weakness or passivity, but power that has been surrendered to God. As we remain under the influence of the Holy Spirit, He teaches us to respond with humility, patience, and grace, reflecting the heart of Christ even in difficult moments.

