

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Pathway of
PEACE

Living in a Growing Relationship with Christ

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Pathway of Peace—Discussion Questions

(With room for additional notes)

Author's Note

1. In the Author's Note at the opening of the book, Cheryl explains how she chose her lifetime goal: *To be at perfect peace in my heart all the time*, with the theme verse Isaiah 26:3. How do you feel about making God's peace a goal?

Part One—The Highest Perfection

Chapter 1—Our Deepest Need

1. Have you ever had a stress-induced ailment or illness? If so, how did it affect your life? Describe your level of peace during this time.
2. C.S. Lewis wrote that every man and woman has within them a “God-shaped hole.” How do you feel about this? Is there something you have tried (or try) to fill this hole with beside God? Discuss.
3. The chapter explains the biblical narrative that Jesus Christ is God's “purpose of the ages,” the one who brings us into God's presence, whereby we can be at peace with our Creator. Reflect on John 14:27 (page 8). Discuss.
4. Rate your current daily level of God's peace on a scale of 1-10. How difficult or easy would it be right now to move that number up?

Chapter 2—The Many Faces of Peace

1. The chapter begins with many ways peace is commonly defined. Which of these do you most identify with? Why?
2. How do you feel about the definition of Christian peace as a “full awareness of His presence?” Does this strike you as helpful? If so, how? If not, what questions does it raise?
3. Reflect on John 16:33 (page 19). Where do you fit into Jesus’ statement “I have overcome the world?” How can you apply this truth to your life?
4. Are there changes you would need to make in your life right now to be more at peace? If so, what might they be?

Chapter 3—Are You a Hebrew or a Greek?

1. What aspects of the Greek mindset do you gravitate toward? Which are most important to you? What about the Hebrew mindset?
2. Are you more of a Hebrew or a Greek? Explain.
3. Since the Bible has Hebraic roots, what steps can we take to view it more as a Hebrew when we read it? How might that affect how we endeavor to live the truths of Scripture?

Chapter 4—Wisdom From Forrest

1. Read Matthew 7:16. Jesus says people identify us by the way we live. What do you think people predominantly notice about you? Are there things you'd like to change? If so, what? Discuss.
2. How do you feel about the *Holman's Illustrated Bible Dictionary's* definition of biblical obedience, "to hear God's Word and act accordingly." Is this accurate? Support your answer with Scripture.
3. Think about the story on pages 26-27. Which kind of employee would you be? Why?
4. Right now in your life, which do you feel you know better, the Book or the Author? Is one more important than the other?

Part Two—10 Ways Jesus Can Give You Peace

Chapter 5—Yoked With the Master

1. When you've been burdened, weary, or overloaded, what do you usually do? (Really think about it and be honest.) How do you usually find rest or relief?
2. How can the imagery of the yoke (page 34) help you experience peace?
3. Read Matthew 11:28-30 (page 33). Note the action verbs "Come" "Take" "Let" and "Find" in the passage. How might each of these contribute to our experience of God's peace?
4. Clearly Matthew 11:28-30 implies an ongoing partnering with Jesus Christ. What steps might you take this week to grow in your relationship with Him?

Chapter 6—A Prayer-full Life

1. What aspects of prayer (page 43) do you relate to best?
2. George Müller is known as a man of great faith and prayer, who prayed for daily provisions to be met at the orphanage. God was never late. What can we learn from Müller's lifestyle of prayer? (Suggested: review the fog incident at the opening of the chapter.)
3. How relevant is prayer to our experience of God's peace? Discuss.
4. What is your response to Frank C. Laubach's statement "*Prayer at its highest is a two-way conversation and for me the most important part is listening to God's replies.*" How does the listening aspect of prayer impact our peace?

Chapter 7—Heading East, Heading West

1. Psalm 103:12 says “*He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west.*” Why is this a difficult truth for most of us to grasp?

2. When we fail to accept Christ’s forgiveness for our sins, can we really be at peace? Discuss.

3. Forgiving ourselves is an important yet often overlooked aspect of forgiveness. Why is this? How does it affect us when we fail to forgive ourselves? When we do?

4. Are there any areas in your life right now in which you need to accept Christ’s forgiveness, or forgive yourself? What steps would you need to take to do so? How might it affect the level of peace in your life?

Chapter 8—Letting Go of the Rope

1. Read Hebrews 12:15 (page 55). The verse warns us not to allow any “root of bitterness” to grow within us. How does this relate to forgiving others? How does it rob us of our peace?
2. What is your response to William Barclay’s suggestion that forgiveness is “the most costly thing in the world?” (page 54). Have you experienced this, and if so, how? Did extending forgiveness restore peace to your heart?
3. Do you see forgiving others as an act of faith? Discuss.
4. Is there anyone in your life who has hurt you and to whom you need to offer forgiveness? If so, how will you truly “let go of the rope?”
5. What did you find most challenging or helpful in this chapter?

Chapter 9—A Royal Wardrobe

1. How do you feel about the statement “Most of us approach life as beings of body and soul who also happen to have a Spirit” (page 61). How might life change if we viewed ourselves as spiritual beings who happen to have a body and a soul?
2. Read the scriptures on pages 62-65 and think about the concept “clothe yourself with the presence of Christ.” How can you incorporate this into your life?
3. Which part of the armor is most significant to you? Why?
4. Challenge for the week ahead:
 - Each morning, be conscious of “putting on” the armor of Christ. Pray specifically for at least one piece of the armor per day, using the prayers in the book (p. 66-69), or your own words.
 - Picture yourself so putting on Christ (the armor covering you) that you are hidden from view and people see only Christ.
 - Be more aware of His presence throughout each day.

Chapter 10—Growing Giant Pumpkins

1. Read the scriptures on page 73, which show us that what we feed on or nourish ourselves with determines the kind of fruit we produce in our lives. What changes might you need to make in your mental diet to feed on things that lead to peace? Discuss.
2. John 15 shows us that as we abide in the vine (Jesus Christ), we receive the nourishment we need to grow good spiritual fruit. How can you spend more time with Jesus?
3. Many of us were attracted to Christ because of the fruit we saw in someone's life. Are you satisfied with the fruit people see in you? If not, what changes might you make?
4. In light of this chapter, rate the fruit of peace in your life on a scale of 1-10. What steps might you take to move it up a notch this week?
5. (Additional discussion points): Section of Galatians (page 78); Growing fruit takes time (page 83).

Chapter 11—Saved to Serve

1. Reflect on Mother Teresa's quote on page 88, and the progression from silence to peace. What is your response to her conclusion that the fruit of service is peace? Have you seen this to be true in your life? How?
2. What aspect of the servant's heart comes most easily for you? Why? Which would you most like to develop, and how might you do so?
3. Review Andrew Murray's quote on humility on page 93. What connection is there between humility and peace? Discuss.
4. Do you sometimes do what people are asking of you to serve, or do you only move forward if you're sure God is directing you to do so? How can we know how God wants us to serve?
5. How has your Christian service been lately? What steps might you take to improve it?

Chapter 12—The Miraculous Mind of Christ

1. The chapter shows from the scriptures that the “mind of Christ” gives us the means to see and understand life from the perspective of the Spirit of God in us. Can you think of a specific time you have experienced this, or it has benefitted your life? Explain.
2. Consider the Greek words for “know”—*oída* and *ginóskó*—and how they relate to learning to walk or live by the Spirit. (p. 102-104). Why do we need both kinds of “knowing”?
3. How does living with the mind of Christ give us peace?
4. Do you ask for God’s help in understanding His Word as you read it? How much is listening part of your prayer life? Have you ever written down what He tells you? How could this be helpful?

Chapter 13—Daily Transformation

1. Reflect on the biological miracle of metamorphosis in the caterpillar to a butterfly, and how it relates to the Christian experience of being transformed into the likeness of Christ. Discuss.
2. How does the chapter's explanation of Christian transformation align with, or alter, the way you have always thought about transformation? What part do you play in the process?
3. How do you feel about the description of religion as focusing on outward appearances and actions, while true Christianity is about inner relationship? That true change happens from the inside out? Discuss.
4. Would you agree that the quality of our relationship with the Lord most determines the extent of transformation we experience? Why or why not? How does the process of Christian transformation relate to peace?
5. What is one specific step you can take this week to yield yourself more to the new nature of Christ?

Chapter 14—Internalizing Truth

1. How do you feel about the notion that memorization has become “an outdated, dusty tool” (p. 125)? What is the value of memorizing Scripture?
2. Which tip for memorizing Scripture do you find, or would you find, most useful? Do you have your own technique? Discuss methods.
3. Consider the differences between Eastern meditation and Christian meditation (discussed on p. 133-134). How does Christian meditation relate to God’s peace?
4. Do you feel meditating and memorizing Scripture going hand in hand? Why or why not? How do they contribute to our experience of peace?
5. Choose one Bible verse (as a group) on peace to memorize this week. Decide how each person will do this, and if desired choose a partner to work with. [Scripture suggestions: Colossians 3:15, Romans 5:1, Isaiah 26:3.]

Part Three—Living in the Lord’s Presence

Chapter 15—Peace Under Pressure

1. Think about times of good stress and bad stress you’ve experienced. What was your level of peace during those times? What has been your greatest challenge in managing stress?
2. How do you feel about the suggestion that the only true starting point for managing stress is Jesus Christ?
3. What is your response to the statement “To live by worry is to live against reality”? (read quote on p. 151-152)
4. Meditate on each phrase of Philippians 4:6,7 and its meaning (page 148-151). Discuss as group.
4. Read John 12:49 and 5:19 (p.154). Jesus Christ handled everything (including stress) by saying and doing only what the Father told him. How would your life change if you said and did only what the Lord told you?
5. What did you find most challenging or helpful in this chapter? Discuss.

Chapter 16—The Quiet Classroom

1. What is your greatest mental struggle? (e.g., anxiety, racing thoughts, etc.) Why? How comfortable are you with silence? Is silence something you practice regularly?
2. What is your response to “*If God is not first in our thoughts and efforts in the morning, He will be in the last place the remainder of the day.*” (Page 162, E.M. Bounds) Discuss.
3. How has the environment you grew up in shaped your view of God and the time you spend with Him? What habits might need changing? How will you do this?
4. How does cultivating quietness in our lives relate to: A wandering mind? A distracted mind? Experiencing more of God’s peace?
5. What steps will you need to take to grow in quietness of heart this week?

Chapter 17—My Sheep Hear My Voice

1. The chapter cites several examples, including John 20:11-18, showing that familiarity and experience hone the ability to recognize a voice. Review and discuss these examples, as well as any of your own. How might this concept relate to learning to recognize the Lord's voice?
2. Consider Matthew 4:4, and the definition of the Greek word *rhema*: a speaking or utterance by voice. How might this relate to our experience of peace? Discuss.
3. First Kings 19:12 tells us God speaks in a still, small voice. Think of times you may have experienced this. What things deter us from hearing His voice? Discuss.
4. Review John 10, and discuss the shepherd/sheep relationship and how it relates to hearing the Lord's voice. Note verses 3, 4, 5, 16 and 27. What steps might you take this week to draw closer to Jesus Christ as your Shepherd?

Chapter 18—Your Best State of Mind

1. How would your life change if you could eliminate all unthankful thoughts and replace them only with thankful ones? How might this relate to peace?
2. How do you feel about the suggestions that we can't change our circumstances but we can change how we perceive them? That we can choose thankfulness? Discuss.
3. What is your response to the statement "Thankfulness is a lost art in today's culture." (p. 192). Discuss.
4. What can we learn from the story of the Israelites' wilderness wandering that relates to gratitude? (p. 195-196)
5. What did you find most challenging or helpful in this chapter? How does your answer impact the peace in your life?

Chapter 19—Peacemakers in a Troubled World

1. How would you describe the differences between peacekeepers and peacemakers? What examples of each have you known?
2. How do you feel about the suggestion that to be a true godly peacemaker we cannot participate in the violence of our culture? What might you do to respond?
3. Read Colossians 3:13-15. Why is forgiveness important to peacemaking?
4. The chapter suggests that our greatest opportunities for peacemaking occur in the daily routines of life. What steps can you take this week to be more of a peacemaker in your home? In your church? In the world?