

TRANSFORMED

BEING EVERYTHING GOD WANTS ME TO BE

"Naturally Peaceful"

February 5-11, 2012

PRAYER: Begin with a few moments of sharing thanks and praises in prayer.

Leaders, it's your call; you may choose to incorporate more information/scriptures as time allows for your small group lesson. **Reflection:** Stress is an unfortunate fact of life in our modern world. Everyone is under stress. Everyone is tense. Millions of aspirin are consumed in the US every day. Sales of tranquilizers are at an all-time high. Books on peace of mind become instant best-sellers. We are told that too much stress is unhealthy. What else is new? The Bible has a lot to say about stress, and even more about its antidote – PEACE.

OPENER: How familiar are you with stress? Here is a little quiz. Complete each of these sentences with the appropriate word:

I am ready to throw in the _____ . I am at the end of my _____ .

I am just a bundle of _____ . My life is falling _____ .

I am at my wits' _____ . I feel like resigning from the human _____ .

How did you do? (If you answered towel, rope, nerves, apart, end and race, you are an expert on the subject of stress!)

What do you do to release stress in your life? (workout; get a massage; work on a project/hobby; go to bed early; take a vacation?) **How often do you do this?** (weekly, monthly?)

The Bible talks about three kinds of peace:

1. PEACE WITH GOD:

READ: Romans 5:1

We have to have peace with God before we can experience any other kind of peace. This is the foundation. And there is only one way to obtain it, and that is through Jesus Christ.

READ: John 14:6

Have you experienced this kind of peace? If you have questions or want to talk more about receiving this kind of peace that comes through a personal relationship with Christ, you may want to seek out another time to talk with your small group leader, a pastor, or someone else you feel comfortable with.

2. INWARD PEACE:

First we must have peace *with God*, then we can have the peace *of God*.

How would you describe inward peace? (An internal sense of well-being and order)

READ: Colossians 3:15

How is it possible to have internal peace when everything around you seems chaotic?

3. RELATIONAL PEACE:

We all know from experience that relationships can be a great source of stress. For most of us, our biggest problems are people problems: getting along with the boss, the family, relatives. We deal with conflict, competition, and criticism on a regular basis. These things can rob us of peace.

READ: Romans 12:18

What are some attributes needed to “live in peace” in a dysfunctional society? (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control)

Should there be a difference in your approach to living in peace or dealing with conflict with Believers verses non-Believers?

READ: Proverbs 3:5-6

From these verses, what are things we can do to experience peace our life?

(There are 4 verbs in these verses: trust, lean (not), acknowledge, and direct. Notice the first 3 are commands. The 4th expresses a promise: God will direct your paths.)

Do you ever feel that a lot of things in life are beyond your control? What can you do in such situations?

Peace comes from trusting God with our lives and with the lives of our loved ones.

Why should we refrain from trying to figure life out on our own? (We waste much time and energy always trying to figure things out. God urges us just to trust Him. When we finally stop trying to figure out why God allowed something to happen and just start trusting Him, peace comes.)

God never has to say, “Oops!” because He never makes a mistake. Everything that happens in our life fits into God’s plan for us. He uses every situation – even the problems and heartaches and difficulties that we bring on ourselves – to work out His purpose in our life. We need to acknowledge that God is in control. Our indecision produces stress. When we trust in the Lord, He directs our paths, and He makes them straight, not stressful.

Plan for Action:

Are you lacking peace in your life? Do you fear loneliness? Fear of failure? Death? Illness? Change? Responsibility?

Pray this familiar prayer, called the Serenity Prayer:

“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

The incredible by-product of your prayer will be peace.

How are you doing with your commitment to daily devotions and/or scripture memory? Share your thoughts on how you are doing with the group.

How can this group pray for you this week?

To view the complete teaching from the Sunday services go to www.centralcommunity.org/media

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