God's Plan
GOD'S PROMISES
& GOD'S PEOPLE
SMALL GROUP STUDY

Session 4: As Promised: Finding Peace that Lasts

Understanding God's promises is one aspect of our journey, but we must learn to apply them to our lives in order to experience their benefits. We all know it's easy to find things to be worried, anxious, and stressed about every day, but remember that Jesus promised us His peace. Jesus' peace isn't a lack of hardship but rather a calm assurance of God's abiding presence in the midst of conflict. When we learn to appropriate God's promise of peace into our daily lives through rejoicing in trouble, offloading our worries, and replacing anxious thoughts—that's when we find true freedom.

Scriptures

John 16:33 (NIV®)
"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Matthew 6:31–34 (NIV®)
"So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Matthew 10:17–19 (NIV®)
"Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say."

Discussion Questions

1. John 16:33 tells us that we have been promised Jesus' peace. What does Jesus' peace look like? How does it differ from worldly peace?

2. Pastor Allen notes that not all the promises of God begin with "I promise." The Scriptures above include several examples of this. What are some ways you identify the promises of God in the Bible?

3. What does it mean to you to choose a promise from God and make it yours? How do you appropriate that promise?

4. There are many instances in life where peace is needed in the midst of trouble. What are some of those places for you, and what are some biblical steps you can take to be ready to remain peaceful when they arise?

5. Has worry or fear ever caused you to be an "undercover Christian"? What was that experience like? What changes can you make now to stand in your faith and retain your peace in the future?

6. What does it mean to cultivate the fear of the Lord, and how can it affect the way you respond to difficult situations?

7. How can changing the way we speak to ourselves and speaking God's Word over our lives change our thoughts and attitudes?

Going Deeper

1. How do you respond when someone comes to you with a concern? It is often easier to commiserate and share your own worries than to talk about how God can help us. Practice a few one-sentence prayers you can have ready to help someone invite God into their challenges.

2. Pastor Allen gave the advice to replace circular, repetitive, worried thoughts with a Bible verse you could repeat to yourself instead. Choose a verse you would like to commit to memory and share it with the group. Next time you meet, see if you can recite the verse you shared without looking it up.

Prayer

Almighty God, thank You for the promise that we can live in peace. We face some frightening things in this world, but we want to trust in You and Your power. Help us to grow in trust. Holy Spirit, direct us and give us the wisdom and courage we need to walk in the peace Jesus promised, for it is in His name we pray, amen.