

In this epistle Grace and peace is offered in the opening words and in the closing words. Grace and peace is offered in every epistle except James and First John. Grace is offered to all. Peace is offered to believers only.

This offer of grace and peace is given to offset the troubles that every human faces and will face in this world of trouble.

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- In places of war, conflict, murder, kidnapping, and other tragedies, God's grace and peace is available to offset those experiences and get you through them.

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- Even in places of relative calm and safety, people will face times of distress when they are moved out of their comfort zone. Others will suffer a life-changing accident or lose a loved one. They also need God's grace and peace.

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- No matter who you are, you can expect that something will happen at some point in your life that is going to try your trust in God.
 - Peace is an abiding trust in God
 - Absence of peace is a result of a circumstance that has temporarily (or permanently) caused you to lose your trust in God.
 - Example: in Mark 4:35-41, the disciples temporarily lost their trust in the Lord Jesus when they faced a terrible storm that moved them outside of their norm.

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- In times of tragedy and loss, your future will be determined by how quickly you can get the things of God back in their proper place and get the trouble back under the governing power of God.
 - In those times, only the peace of God will take care of your need. The peace that the world offers won't do it.
 - If there were no death, disease, crippling accidents, heartaches, etc., we wouldn't need peace in our heart.
 - Peace is not an absence of trouble, but being able to stay on God despite the trouble.

John 14:26-27

Jesus wants us to have HIS peace. He has no worries, He never panics, He's never fearful. He has perfect peace and He wants to give THAT peace to us.

The Lord's peace is not like the world's peace.

John 14:26-27
(Continued)

The world is looking for the absence of conflict. The conflicts are there to remind you that you need God.

God gives peace that supersedes the conflicts and walks THROUGH the conflicts. God's peace is greater anything that may move you from your norm—to an abnormal condition.

God's peace comes in those conditions and helps us to trust Him again.

"Let not your heart be troubled" makes it MY responsibility to receive the peace that God is making available to me.

Philippians 4:6-7

Don't be full of care. Pray. Tell God about your troubles as they arise. Don't let them pile up until they become too heavy to bear. That will help us to remain in "the peace of God that passeth all understanding."

Isaiah 26:3

Perfect peace is trusting God. It is accomplished by keeping your mind stayed on Him.

Matthew 5:3-12

These Beatitudes are the well-known "blessed are's." Matthew 11 gives us one more.

Matthew 11:2-6

John the Baptist stands as an example to us. The greatest man born of a woman experienced a time when something shook him out of his norm. That should be a comfort to us.

Jesus had to remind John that his unfortunate situation didn't affect the continuing work of healing and preaching the gospel. We need to remember that everybody else's world is still normal even though ours is not. That's why they won't understand our situation. Only the Lord experienced all the things we'll face in this life. He understands our every situation.

"Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me" (vs. 6). You will lose your peace when something happens that causes you to not trust God. You'll blame God. You'll condemn God. You need to move past that as quickly as possible and trust Him again.
