

PASSIONS AND PEACE

Whenever a person desires something too much, he or she quickly becomes restless and anxious. The proud and greedy never rest, while the humble and content live in a world of peace. Anyone who has not died to self is easily tempted and overcome by small, trifling things. His spirit is weak, carnal, and attracted to the sensual things of this world. Still more, she is unhappy when she does restrain herself and becomes angry when someone else stands in her way. Yet, whenever such a person does get what they want, they are immediately overcome with a guilty conscience. None of this leads to a life of inner peace.

True peace of heart is only found in resisting one's passions and not in satisfying them. Do not be a slave to the flesh! There is no peace or freedom for the worldly person. Only the person who walks in the Spirit can find true peace in his or her heart.

(Adapted from *The Imitation of Christ*, Book 1:6)

For further thought...

Are you a restless person? Do you find yourself anxious or guilty feeling much of the time? Do you always want more, or want to move on to the next thing? Are you at peace?

It was Augustine of Hippo who rightly said, “*O God, you made me for yourself, and my heart is anxious until it finds rest in you.*” That is the God-shaped hole we often hear about. People try to fill it with everything except God. Yet, He is the only thing that fits and fulfills the desires of one's heart.

We must remember that each of us is in a great spiritual war. We each live in an internal moral battle between the flesh and the Spirit, between the world and the Kingdom, between truth and lies, between right and wrong, good and evil, etc.

Let us, therefore, be all-the-more diligent to live in the Spirit and not in the flesh. “*To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.*” (Romans 8:6)

Let us seek holiness and not give way to fleshly passions. “*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age.*” (Titus 2:11-12)

Let us stand our ground in the armor of God and not give way to temptaion. “*Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might! Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand....*” (Ephesians 6:10-11)

Let us live in the peace of Christ that surpasses our understanding. “*Do not be anxious about anything... pray... and be thankful. And the peace of God, which is above our understanding, will protect your hearts in Christ Jesus. So, fill your minds with what is noble, right, pure, lovely, and excellent. Put into practice the godliness you have seen in those more mature than yourself. And the God of peace will be with you.*” (Philippians 4:6-9, Scott)

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