

Day 7

Peace

Silence (2 minutes) Take some time to be quiet, to calm down, and to listen. What has God been teaching you? What are the next steps He wants you to take? How is your spirit doing?

Scripture *"I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety."* Psalms 4:8

Discussion This short psalm of David is about calling out to God in distress, confident that He hears the godly. We are charged, *"In your anger do not sin... search your hearts... Offer right sacrifices and trust in the Lord."* (Ps. 4:4-5) Others in the culture are focused on the negative. *"Many are asking, 'Who can show us any good?'"* (Ps. 4:6) U.S. culture has changed dramatically in the last 60 years, even in the last 5-10 years. (Certainly it is always changing. Is it changing more now, or do we just notice more because we live these changes?) It is common to hear Christians express concern about our culture. Sometimes all we see and hear seems negative and we have difficulty shutting off our thinking and letting go of obsessing about what is wrong. Sometimes we get into groups with like-minded individuals and complain; venting and stirring up each other's disappointment, anger, resentment, and bitterness. "Who can show us any good?" And yet within the Church, among people who love and follow Jesus, who believe in the authority of the Bible, there is disagreement about what exactly has gone wrong and what needs to be fixed. Some of our perspectives are starkly different. Like our culture, there is a tendency for the Church to separate into groups which have the same thinking and have little contact with brothers and sisters in Christ of different experiences and thinking. We might be shocked by those who claim to belong to Jesus and think differently than we do. What is wrong with them? How could they be so wrong? "Who can show us any good?" What does David's psalm say? *"Answer me when I call to You, O my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; be merciful to me and hear my prayer... Know that the Lord has set apart the godly for Himself; the Lord will hear when I call to Him. In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Offer right sacrifices and trust in the Lord... Let the light of Your face shine upon us, O Lord. You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound. I will lie down and sleep in peace, for You alone, O Lord make me dwell in safety"* (Psalm 4). David is focused on God's character, avoiding sin, trusting God, gratitude to God, and peace in the safety God provides. May our attitudes, thoughts, and speech be motivated by our righteous and loving God, not by "Who can show us any good."

Application God's peace is for everyone in His Church. Does the peace of God live within us to the degree that we are willing to reconcile with our brothers and sisters who may disagree with us on matters of doctrine, or politics? God's peace isn't just meant for our comfort; it's meant to aid us as we model Christlike love to those around us. Ask God to reveal to you just how His peace can help you show love to those you disagree with.

Prayer Father, You know my heart. You know when I have obsessed, complained and been bitter. You know when I have been petty, judgmental, and critical. Please forgive me. I commit myself to be focused on You and Your goodness. I commit myself to search my own heart and be silent. When I express gratitude for Your blessings and the joy of Your companionship, You give me peace. Thank You, Father. Amen.

Silence (2 minutes) Talk to God about what you are learning. What are your fears? Where are your hangups? Pray for direction.

Scripture memory for the week: *You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal.* Isaiah 26:3-4