



By: Pastor Ronald Marr

I repeat for emphasis, be happy!

May the gentle spirit God has given you become increasingly obvious to all.

Don't let anything make you anxious, worried, or uptight.

Instead of letting even your earnest prayers become a source of anxiety, let them be filled with thanksgiving to God for Himself and His complete enablement.

Remember, He's always with you, enabling you even for the impossible. As you worship Him in prayer, resigning yourself to Him, relinquishing everything to Him, and resting in Him ... as in prayer and always.

He Himself increasingly replaces your troubles as the focus of your attention

... as He becomes your all in all, then, God's amazing peace will increasingly fill your heart and mind and overflow to all around.

- A loose paraphrase of Philippians 4:4--7 by Pastor Marr

For many years, I just didn't get it!

The King James Version of the scripture on the other side of this card confused me. I loved the promise that I could have God's peace. And that this peace could be mine even when circumstances seemed to make peace impossible.

But my getting this peace seemed to be made contingent on my prayers of petition. And that I just didn't get. I really didn't!!



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*"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and he shall direct thy paths."*  
- Proverbs 3:5, 6

*"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."*  
- Isaiah 26:3

*"Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."*  
- John 16:24

*"Ye have not, because ye ask not."*  
- James 4:2

"What fools we mortals be."

We live as those who are poverty stricken while we're wealthy.

The God of all the universe, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, infinite, and eternal invites us to ask what we will. But instead of taking Him up on His offer, we continue to depend on our puny abilities (or should I say, inabilities).

Our excuse is that so few of our requests are answered as we would like.

But James gives the real reason behind the reason: "Ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." (James 4:2, 3). In the next verse he calls us adulterers and adulteresses who love the world more than God.



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As we seek to walk with God, we may find ourselves becoming reluctant to ask Him for things. It makes us feel selfish.

And that's not surprising. Spiritual babies are likely to know nothing more than asking for things, many times just to please themselves.

They may know little of seeking after God, worshiping Him, seeking to please Him, or praising Him for Himself, who and what He is.

And God doesn't want us to be grasping after things simply to fulfill our selfish desires.

But, when something really is good for us, God is not only willing to give it to us. He's eager to do so.

If human parents often get greater pleasure from giving their children something than from getting something themselves, how much more must our heavenly Father, the God of love, the giver of every good and perfect gift, take greater pleasure in giving to us than He does even in receiving from us.

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." - Acts 20:35

Surely no one knows this better than the author of the words.

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things. - Romans 8:12

When you next go to prayer, seeking God's face, longing to find something of Him there, at some point, put your hand out. Yes, ask Him for more of Himself. But ask Him, too, for all that He longs to give you with Himself.

Remember that God is love. Remember that it is the nature of love to give. If so, then, it is God's nature to give.

He is not reluctant, not unwilling to give. He doesn't have to be begged.

But He does want to be asked to give. I find my heart properly prepared to receive only after I ask in a dependent attitude.

God loves us too much to give us what will in any way hurt, harm, or destroy us.

Our wicked hearts have to be relieved of their burden of independent rebelliousness. So, we need to come to Him in total dependence, glad neediness, humility, and meekness of spirit.

Better that He shows us His love by not giving us something we want, or giving us something we don't want, than that He grant us our wishes to our eternal hurt and harm.

But He loves us too much, too truly, to grant selfish petitions that would harm us for time and eternity. He wants to give us only what is eternally good for us.

Now, what is eternally best for us is that we love God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and learn to depend on Him more and more.

For this reason it is well for us to ask Him for everything we want, first having submitted it to the proviso that we only want it if He wants it too, if it is actually eternally good for us and pleasing to Him.

When we are asking Him for anything, it is well for us to remind ourselves to whom we come ... to worship, praise, and thank the Almighty God who is totally able and willing to meet every need we have.

Moment by moment, whether we want relief from physical, mental, or emotional pain or danger, financial or relational difficulties, or aid with a project, protection from every threat, comfort in sorrow, help in spiritual need, salvation of the lost, or just the need of a parking place, we please the Lord when we bring them to Him.

We encourage the process of learning to be more and more lovingly, gratefully, submissively, constantly dependent on Jesus and the Almighty God who is also our loving, caring heavenly Father who loves to meet our needs.

And we grow in love with Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

You see, my experience said the opposite. I had found that very often, when I prayed, asking God to give me the things that were really important to me, I ended up, not at peace or rest in the Lord, but quite the opposite, all worried and exhausted.

... My problem was that I'd read the passage as though it excluded prayers other than petitioning God for things. Instead we need to include worship, and praise, and thanksgiving, waiting quietly for Him, listening and responding to His voice.

Now, what does the passage really tell us to do if we would have God's peace?

First, rejoice in the Lord. But how to do it? By worshiping Him in every way we know how. If you don't know how, learn how. Let Him become your all in all.

Then, replace active worry with thanksgiving to God, first for Himself, then for all He has done and all the wonderful, impossible things He wants to do for you.

For the rest, read the other side several times a day for a week or more. Let God show you Himself and His way of peace.

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