



REAL

*What We Long for and Where to Find It*

PEACE

ANDY FARMER

“Peace, if it comes at all, tends to come in little pieces—the job is stable for now, the kids are healthy today, friends still hang out with you—and sometimes I can settle for those scraps. Thanks, Andy, for showing me how I can honor God by aiming for peace that is much deeper. You let those words of Jesus linger in my soul: ‘Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.’”

**Edward T. Welch**, Faculty and Counselor, CCEF

“There are many books I can recommend on finding peace *with* God. There are far fewer I can recommend on experiencing the peace *of* God. *Real Peace* is a book I highly recommend for real people facing real trouble in a really messed up world. It paints gospel-centered portraits, explaining how to apply John 16:33 *in the midst* of our struggles with stress, anxiety, grief, depression, and conflict. Reading *Real Peace* pointed me not to a system, but to a person—the Prince of Peace.”

**Robert W. Kelleman**, PhD, Executive Director, The Biblical Counseling Coalition; author, *Anxiety: Anatomy and Cure*

“This is a book about being whole in a broken world, about finding rest amidst chaos within and without. I actually *felt* peace as I read it, making it a perfect book to read on vacation or on a coffee break in the middle of a stressful day. Filled with charm, personality, and wisdom, *Real Peace* offers solace to restless Christians and invites non-Christians to know the God of peace.”

**Mike Wilkerson**, Pastor and Director of Biblical Counseling, Mars Hill Church, Seattle, Washington; author, *Redemption: Freed by Jesus from the Idols We Worship and the Wounds We Carry*

“We all long for peace in our hostile, chaotic, and seemingly meaningless world. Why? Our souls were created for peace—not mere emotion or experience, but through an abiding relationship with the Prince of Peace. My friend Andy Farmer serves the church and the world well through his deeply thoughtful, winsome, and gospel-orienting work. Through its sociological and soul-revealing insights drawn from the wells of Scripture, *Real Peace* offers us hope that ‘draws the poison of self and despair’ out of our peace-robbing struggles. Such hope is found only through our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. *Real Peace* is a must read for everyone as we are called into the radical mission of the gospel.”

**Robert K. Cheong**, Pastor of Care and Counseling, Sojourn Community Church, Louisville, Kentucky; author, *God Redeeming His Bride: A Handbook for Church Discipline*; contributor, *Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*



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A N D Y F A R M E R

 **CROSSWAY**

WHEATON, ILLINOIS

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# Introduction



THE INITIAL IDEA FOR this book came to me as I stared at a picture. It wasn't a beautiful Caribbean beach scene, or a pristine Alpine meadow. It was a picture of a horse. Running. Down the homestretch of a big race. With thousands of people screaming as he churned up the track. Not exactly the idyllic scene you think would inspire a book on peace. Let me try to explain.

The horse is Secretariat, the legendary thoroughbred who won horse racing's Triple Crown in 1973. Secretariat happens to be my favorite athlete of all time, species notwithstanding. As a fourteen-year-old I somehow got caught up in the national hoopla over the Triple Crown run. I watched each race with rapt attention, spell-bound by the effortless grace and power that seemed to flow out of him as he set records in the Kentucky Derby, Preakness, and Belmont Stakes.

The picture I'm referring to is a famous photo of "Big Red" closing out his Triple Crown with his historic Belmont run. My wife got it for me and had it signed by the jockey, Ron Turcotte, and the photographer who took the shot. Secretariat is running along the rail in full stride toward the finish line. But there's an odd thing about the picture. The horse and his rider are virtually alone in the shot. Secretariat won the Belmont by a mind-boggling thirty-one lengths (over eighty yards)—setting a world record for the distance that still stands. Turcotte said afterward, "I was just along for the ride." Think about it like this: with no competition and no urging from his jockey, my favorite athlete ran faster than

any horse has ever run a mile and a half in history. In fact, his quarter times show that he was actually speeding up as he crossed the finish line!

I was looking at the picture one day, and I noticed something I'd never seen before. At full speed in front of thousands of people, the horse seems absolutely calm. I looked for any sign of stress and couldn't see anything. It dawned on me—he's running just for the fun of it. I was watching an animal do what he was created to do, do it with amazing beauty, and do it with what seemed like pure joy. I thought to myself, "That's peace. I need me some of that."

So I began to study the idea of peace in the Bible. In that process I discovered a second reason to write this book. I had a hard time finding anything written on peace in all its biblical aspects. I could find excellent books on our reconciliation with God through the cross, but they said very little about peace in the day-to-day experiences of life. I found some books on the experience of peace, but there wasn't much connection to the gospel in them. As I looked for helpful resources on how to do peace in the world, I found myself in the world of liberal theology, again with little if any gospel connections. I thought if I could write something that was biblical and gospel-centered, it might start conversations that don't seem to be happening much right now.

The thing that pushed me to actually do this, however, was my experience in pastoral counseling and care. As I studied peace, I became much more attuned to how people I was meeting with related to it. I began to realize that nearly everyone I talked to, regardless of their situation, was thirsting for something like peace in their lives. Whether they use the actual word or not, embedded in the language people use to describe their life struggles is a desperate cry for peace. This is abundantly obvious with the people I talk to who don't claim a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. Even among Christians who are not in difficult struggles, the lack of peace is real. I had a friend ask me today what I was writing on, and when I told her it was peace, she simply sighed, "Ahh . . . I'd love that."

That's my hope in writing this book. That you'll learn to love peace like I'm learning to love peace. Peace in all its dimensions. Let me offer some tips on how to read this book. My best suggestion is to start at the beginning; that's how I wrote it. But you could also look through the table of contents for a chapter that might speak to your immediate sense of need. You'll find application for peace in the normal stress of life (chap. 4) and also for some difficult struggles like anxiety, grief, depression, and conflict (chaps. 5–8). My hope is that if you get something out of one of those chapters, you might then want to read from the beginning.

Nearly every New Testament letter begins with a greeting that includes a blessing of peace.<sup>1</sup> As you begin this book, let me extend that blessing as well. May you read and be enriched with peace. Like my favorite athlete, may we learn how to run our races at peace, finding unexpected joy in doing what we were created and redeemed to do. Or as the New Testament authors tend to say it, “May grace and peace be multiplied to you” (2 Pet. 1:2), through what you read in the pages to come.



# Peace, and the Problem with It



DO YOU EVER HAVE moments in life when everything seems right? I experienced one of those moments, sitting alone on a virtually deserted beach in the Outer Banks of North Carolina. It was the end of the afternoon on a cloudless day—my favorite time to be on the beach. I gazed out toward sets of curling waves coming in from an endless horizon. Rays from the late summer sun bouncing off the ocean cast the water in a metallic blue sheen. There was just enough breeze to fill my senses with the aroma of the ocean, which is to me always the aroma of vacation. I had nowhere to go, no one to talk to, nothing to do but sit and enjoy the solitude. And let my mind drift on the gentle tide of peace.

Somewhere in my tranquil mental meanderings the thought came: “This is almost perfect. But what if I were in Maui?” Now, I’ve never been to Maui, but I have to think it’s just a little better than the barrier islands of North Carolina. I’ve been told that there are no bugs on the beach in Maui—which reminded me that in a little while hordes of mosquitoes would be descending on me. Tiki huts with refreshing fruit drinks (which I suppose dot the Maui beach) were nowhere to be seen. I imagined that the sand in Maui didn’t stick to your feet like it does on the Atlantic Coast. Somewhere in the mist of the surf I began to detect the distinct aroma of dead fish. Bummer.

As a rising tide of grumbling began to engulf me, I was hit by a

wave of guilt. What kind of pampered American am I that I can sit here and complain about this almost perfect moment, when most of the world can't even afford to be here? Someday this is going to be nothing more than a toxic wasteland because people like me go on vacation and don't separate their trash. I'm a lousy person. Of course, being a Christian, I had to factor in the God element. Here I sit by myself with the God of the universe, the Creator of all that I'm enjoying, and he is willing to open his heart to me. Yet the only thing on my mind is the lack of a convenient Tiki bar. I'm not just a lousy human, I'm a lousy Christian too.

There was nothing left to do at that point but pick up my chair and trudge back to the house murmuring, "Man, peace is hard find."

Is peace hard to find in your world? Can you mark even a single moment in your life and say, "That was peaceful"? My guess is that a lot of people can identify with my brief encounter with peace. We have those fleeting experiences when the circumstances around us and our inner state come into an almost mystical alignment and we experience that sense of "Ah, so this is what it's meant to be." It could be fifteen minutes when the kids are actually playing nicely and we can sit and catch our breath because nothing needs to be done *right now*. Or maybe it's those glorious times at the end of school finals when the pressure is off and the next semester is still a week away. What brings peace to you? There are thousands of little moments in our lives where we taste peace. But they don't last, do they? How many times have we been in that peaceful place but couldn't enjoy it because we were preoccupied with to-dos, or frustrated by something that happened earlier that day? It seems really hard to get our moods in line with our moments. Try as we might to get things just right, we don't control the things that make for peace. We don't control the weather, the traffic, flu season, sibling rivalry, lost wallets, cancelled flights, bosses that need "one more thing before you take off." Life seems to work against any sustained sense of order and tranquility. Peace is hard to find.

That's why I'm writing this book. I believe we have a peace problem. But the problem is felt much deeper than simply the

limits of vacations to deliver as hoped. As a pastor I am dealing daily with people in profound life struggles. Marriages can become pitched battles of bitterness. Families are in chaos as teens and parents push each other to the brink of open hostility, and beyond. Men and women fall into gaping wells of depression. Some live in the hopeless grip of grief. Fears torment people in the sleepless shadows of night. As I have counseled and talked to people over the years, every struggle I've seen seems to contain one common problem: the absence, or loss, of peace.

That peace is hard to find shouldn't be a surprise. Peace is *the* elusive human goal. Isn't that what religion is for? To believe and practice religion faithfully is to pursue and hope to achieve whatever form of peace a particular religious tradition holds out—whether it be an inner tranquility, a oneness with the universe, a higher state, or a divine reward. But religion doesn't hold the patent on peace. Every secular utopia has had as its end goal a society of peace. People say that what the world needs is love. But why do we need love? Because if we love each other, we can all have peace. As important as love is, the end goal is peace.

Maybe the great futility of the human condition is that the thing that has been most sought after has been least experienced. In fact, the common denominator of all cultures throughout time is not the experience of peace but the reality of war. It would be safe to say there has never been a day in human history where world peace has truly been found. Somewhere in the world, there is conflict going on; it's always been that way. It has been well observed: Peace is that brief glorious moment when everybody stands around reloading.

What can be said of societies and cultures can be said of individuals as well. No person has made it through life fully at peace with himself or others. I'll talk about why later. Even those we generally cede to have found peace, the Francis of Assisis and Gandhis and Mother Therasas of the world, have been acutely aware of the inner turmoil of their souls. They viewed themselves as pursuers of peace, not possessors of it. There is a universal human quest

for peace and a universal human failure to find it. And this begs the question, what really is peace? And why is it so hard to find?

### Peace, and the Problem with It

If you check out the dictionary, you'll see that peace is generally defined as an absence of conflict, more specifically an absence of war. In other words, it is known by what it isn't. So, dictionarily speaking, if you are not currently in an Apache helicopter dodging RPGs, you're supposedly at peace. Enjoy!

But the absence of active war in our immediate surroundings doesn't mean we have found peace. Life is full of relational conflicts, racial and ethnic tensions, hurtful misunderstandings, and injustices against us. Then there are just the day-to-day irritations of living around other people who don't understand that their greatest joy in life should be valuing our personal space. Even if we get some momentary cooperation with our fellow man, there is enough chaos within us to make life feel like war.

Try this experiment. Google "psychological peace." Then Google "mental peace." Now, "psychological" and "mental" are generally synonymous in our language. Psychological health and mental health are two ways of talking about the same thing. But if you Google psychological peace and then mental peace, you'll find few, if any, common hits. "Psychological peace" will put you into the world of peace psychology, an academic discipline that has to do with how people cope with violence and war. Your search on mental peace will drop you into New Age and all manner of Eastern and quasimystical life paths. The definition of peace even defies the Internet.

What is peace, practically speaking? Let me give you some contrasts that seem to make up the common range of what we mean when we say the word *peace*.

*Harmony rather than hostility.* One of the most common words used to describe the positive aspect of peace is *harmony*. It's a great word, because harmony implies that there are different things that

could function separately, but all are made better because they are together. Musical harmony is multiple notes played together in a chord. Harmony values the individual contribution to a greater whole. There is something about things working together for the benefit of all that seems like peace.

But harmony isn't the norm in life. We live in a hostile world. Things tend to grind against each other. Schedules work against spontaneity. Plaids work against stripes. Progress works against nature. Diversity works against unity. Power works against justice.

The American Deep South of the early nineteenth century was a remarkably stable culture. There was a simple reason for it. There were slaves and nonslaves. But that is not social harmony. There is no peace in stability imposed by racial or ethnic tyranny. I grew up in the Deep South during the civil rights era as a dominant culture white kid. On the surface we were not racists. But we lived in the dying throes of legal racial segregation. In many ways I was oblivious to the deep hostility that racial subjugation had produced. White people had peace with black people because we had our place and our stuff and they had their place and their stuff. But I gradually learned that segregation was not peace producing—especially if our place and stuff were nicer, and better maintained and more accessible than black people's stuff. What I learned to appreciate about Dr. Martin Luther King was his extraordinary vision of peace. He knew that simply changing the status quo wouldn't produce peace. He saw the moral need for justice for the oppressed. He called the country to account for its own laws and documents that guaranteed equality and opportunity for all people. But his vision of peace moved beyond the righting of wrongs to a society where hostility itself would crumble under the hammering of justice. King fought for justice and equality, but his dream was for a unity amid diversity that justice and equality could achieve.

Something in us loves harmony and wants to strive for it. Harmony defies the great barriers to peace: hostility, isolation, and subjugation. Harmony values the individual contribution and the unity of the whole at the same time. Harmony happens when members

of a team make their highest goal the success of the team, whether that's on the field or in the factory. We taste harmony when our families all pitch in to clean out the garage and no one complains. Harmony is the resonant chord of peace in our souls.

*Order rather than chaos.* Keeping with the musical metaphor, my wife and I went to the orchestra a while back. The concert hall in Philadelphia, the city where we live, has an affordable section of seats behind the orchestra. So that's where we sat. I ended up really enjoying the seats because we got to see things that the normal concert goers don't see. For example, we got to see the conductor's face as he led the orchestra. I couldn't hear any mistakes in the playing, but I could tell when they happened because of the evil-eye stare the conductor would shoot at an unfortunate musician from time to time. Using opera glasses enabled me to look at the actual scores on the music stands. Sometimes I could even follow the notes as a musician was playing them.

The orchestra debuted a new concerto by a contemporary composer that could generously be called "dissonant." I don't mind some tension in music, but this piece sounded like a twenty-minute slow-motion car wreck. I got bored, so I began to survey the stage with my binoculars. I noticed one music stand with what seemed to be a blank page of music. (I've learned that this means that it's break time for the musician until the next movement.) At the top of the page was printed, "page intentionally left blank." Scribbled onto the page by the musician was the comment "like the composer's brain." I now like classical music much better.

It turns out that this piece was not really bad. It was intentionally chaotic. It was the composer's intent to create something that disrupted the sensibilities of the audience and the orchestra—to disturb the peace. Appreciating any unfamiliar art will require the disturbance of our comfortable perspective. Some art is intentionally chaotic. In this sense it portrays unsettling realities and provokes uncomfortable emotions. That doesn't mean it has to be pornographic or vulgar in its content. In fact, the art that best unsettles our sense of order usually does it in ways we can't

describe. It gets under our skin, or in our ears and eyes, and pries open the Tupperware lids of our airtight worldview. It confronts us with chaos.

But we can't live like that. We're not wired for chaos. Those who seek to live for chaos flame out in it. They lose their moral and relational bearings. We survive in life by ordering it. Even artists who depict chaos consider order. They take images, materials, and ideas and arrange them in an order with the intent of upsetting our order. But art couldn't do that to us if we didn't value order in the first place. Order in the best sense of the word means security and continuity. It allows us to place trust in something today that we can be confident will be trustworthy tomorrow. Not all of us pursue order the same way. Some folks have a place for everything and everything in its place. Others get along fine with, "If I need it, I know how to find it." But look closely at anyone's life, and you'll find habits, routines, and systems that bring order out of chaos and provide a sense of peace.

*Fullness rather than emptiness.* What interrupted my sense of peace in the Outer Banks was an awareness that I lacked something. I lacked Maui. To have peace means that we can't have a sense of lack. To put it positively, it means we have to be full. Not full as in "stuffed," but full as in, "I'm not aware of anything that I don't have that would improve what I do have."

Think about this for a second. What would a truly full life, in the best sense of the word, mean for you? Let me take a stab at it for myself. A full life would mean that I have things in balance. It would mean that I have a house that is big enough and nice enough to really enjoy, but that I don't have to spend all my time and money trying to keep it nice. In my relationships fullness would mean that I have enough close friends that I never feel lonely or misunderstood, but not so many relationships that I feel guilty because I can't keep up with everybody. A full day would include waking up after a great night's sleep and looking ahead to being busy, but never being stressed out. I would be productive with my time, but also enjoy what I was doing. At the end of the

day I would feel a sense of satisfaction that what I did that day counted for something beyond just toil. I could rest that night happy with myself. And I would look into the future with confidence that the days to come wouldn't just be same old, same old. There would be new adventures to experience, new sensations to be felt, new knowledge to obtain. I would be growing like a tree grows, never weak, always getting stronger.

But fullness is elusive. In one sense I wake up every morning wanting to be full, but having a chronic awareness of emptiness. I have a good house, but it needs work, and I am not particularly good at the work it needs. I have lots of friends, but they don't always understand me the way I want to be understood; and I have a sneaking suspicion that they don't appreciate me the way I want to be appreciated. I wake up in the morning earlier than I'd like because I tend to stay up longer than I should. I have the greatest job in the world, but stress is a daily part of it. Life is busy and complicated, and I'm running way behind. The future? The only thing I know is that I'm growing older, slower, less attractive, and less able to do things that I used to do without thinking, stretching, or medicating beforehand.

Now, I would put myself in the "more full than empty" category. But I know that isn't the experience of most people. The world is filled with emptiness. Most people around the globe have no hope of ever attaining the basic food, freedom, health, and opportunity that I take for granted. I know this. Even in my affluent culture there is alarming physical poverty. Among the haves like me, there is still pervasive poverty of hope, of meaning, and of soul.

True peace can't be compatible with a sense of emptiness. You won't be able to say, "I have peace, but what I really need is . . ." With peace comes fullness.

### Settling for Peace Substitutes

In words like *harmony*, *order*, and *fullness* I've tried to capture what most people want when they say they want peace. If somebody

offered you a free week of harmony, order, and fullness, would you take it? Would there be anything else you would need during that week? Chances are you can't picture what a week like that would feel like. Peace is something we've learned not to expect in life. So we learn to settle for substitutes, knock-off versions that give us the illusion that we have the real thing.

*If we can't have harmony, we'll settle for tolerance.* One of the words you'll hear whenever the issue of social relationships comes up these days is *tolerance*. There are tolerance policies in the workplace. Children are taught the necessity of tolerance toward their classmates. Tolerance is the way people who don't naturally get along find a way to coexist. When tolerance is used in a technical sense, it addresses how much variation between opposing things is permissible before problems happen. Tolerance means by definition that true harmony is not possible. Culturally speaking, tolerance is what happens when everything and everyone has to be equal all the time. We have to tolerate our differences, not reconcile them or harmonize them. In a tolerant society we give each other space—to a limit. But the best tolerance can do is keep tension at manageable levels. It will never deliver harmony.

For a period of my life following college, I worked in a department with two other people, a radical feminist and a gay man. They knew I was a Christian, and I don't think they knew what to do with me. As the new guy I tried to fit in as best I could, but it was obvious I didn't fit their familiar categories. In order to preserve a productive work environment, I think they chose a tolerance policy toward me as a person. Tolerance avoided the uncomfortable differences between us. But their tolerance ultimately felt patronizing and demeaning to me. I would have preferred they say they didn't really agree with what "people like me" stood for. At least I would have had the opportunity to try to express myself in ways they could understand, and they could have done the same with me. To be honest, I think I was OK settling for tolerance myself. Tolerance preserved a comfortable status quo. We were able to work with relative cooperation on a superficial level, as long as

we didn't talk about our differences. I don't think any of us were enriched as people by the self-protective social walls we built in the name of tolerance.

*If we can't have order, we'll wrestle for control.* Here is something funny about people. We live in a world we can't control and then spend all our lives trying to tame it or keep it from taming us. There's a word for that—futility. Futility is believing we can control uncontrollable things. My favorite expression for futility is “herding cats.” If you've never noticed, cats don't do herds. Just for fun I tried herding barn cats once at my parents' farm. It doesn't work—I know they're smart, but they just don't seem to get the whole leadership/teamwork thing. I thought I had gotten a handle on it at one point when they were in one spot in my parents' shed and there was only one way in or out. I wanted to see if I could move them all together from that spot to another spot. So I (humanely) dropped a pan on the floor behind them to see if I could scare them out in the same direction. One found the escape route and took off. But this apparently eliminated that option for two others. One shot up the side of the wall heading no place in particular. The other just ran around in circles. Conclusion? Herding cats—impossible. There are some things we just can't control.

One common tendency I come across in people I counsel is a craving for control. Angry people are angry because they can't control people and circumstances around them. Fearful people are fearful because things around them are constantly exerting controlling pressure on them. Lazy people and escapist people are doing all they can to avoid things that try to control them. Obsessive people are consumed with trying to manage or clean things that won't stay managed or clean. We spend life herding any cats within reach and then wonder why we're stressing and freaking out with the effort. We've bought into the illusion of control. And there's no peace in that.

*If we can't have fullness, we'll pursue indulgence.* My wife Jill and I have realized over the years that “dinner dates” aren't our thing. It's not because we don't love good food. In fact, dinner dates are

a problem because we love good food too much. When we go to a nice restaurant, we have no self control. Everything on the menu looks good, so we order way too much. We inhale bread and salad like black holes inhale galaxies. Stimulating conversation over carefully timed courses of a meal? No time—waiter, can't you see my plate's empty? By the time we get to dessert, we don't even want it, but let's get two. We're home from our dinner date in about an hour, stuffed beyond any capacity to function as a romantic couple, good only for the couch and a movie.

I don't think that's the intent of a good restaurant experience. To do it right is to experience fullness, not (in Jill's lingo) "bloatation."

If I'm brutally honest, I can take my tendencies with restaurants and see them play out all over my life. Enough is never really enough when more is possible. The way I express myself is through how I indulge and what I consume. I don't think I'm alone in this. During the economic downturn that began in 2008, Congress passed a stimulus package directed at jumpstarting the economy. Republican Leader John Boehner lauded the passage of the bill with these patriotic words: "The sooner we get this relief in the hands of the American people, the sooner they can begin to do their job of being good consumers."<sup>1</sup>

Apparently, to be an American is to be a good consumer. But what makes a good consumer? Indulgence. Indulgence is the refusal to live with just enough. I can't just have all my favorite classic rock artists on my MP3 player. I need their entire catalogs, including all the tracks that weren't worth releasing back when the original album came out. But I don't just need more, I need new . . . and special . . . and . . . deluxe . . . and customized. Why? Recent psychological studies show that people who struggle with a lack of self-esteem or a sense of powerlessness tend to bolster themselves by purchasing things that give them a feeling that they are better than they feel.<sup>2</sup> The popular term for this is *retail therapy*, and it highlights the snare of indulgence. Indulgence isn't about enjoying what we have; it is about the obsession with what we don't have. When indulgence drives us, we will never

experience fullness. No matter what we get, there is an insatiable craving for more.

Tolerance rather than harmony. Control rather than order. Indulgence rather than fullness. The goal of this book is to help us move away from whatever we depend on in life to make up for the peace we lack. But we need some basic comprehension of peace that can satisfy us enough to seek it. And as we've seen in this chapter, that isn't a simple task.

### Is Peace Possible? The Experts Weigh In

In the interest of thorough research, I took some time to look up what really wise and smart people have said about peace. Using actual quotes found on relatively reliable websites, I pulled together a virtual think tank to get some answers. Let me set the imaginary scene.

We're on the beach in the Outer Banks. Buddha and the Dalai Lama are sitting under a big umbrella with their feet buried in the sand. Abe Lincoln stares intently at the line of his fishing pole for any sign of a bite. Mother Theresa is collecting seashells. Eleanor Roosevelt and Ralph Waldo Emerson are building sand castles, but Ben Franklin keeps knocking them over as he tries to get his kite in the air. John Lennon tries to teach Gandhi a basic blues pattern on his guitar. Thomas à Kempis just stares out toward the ocean at nothing in particular. From my comfortable beach chair in the midst, I start the debate.

Me: Okay, all you smart and wise guys, here's the question. How do I find peace?

Ralph Waldo Emerson: Nothing can bring you peace but yourself.

Me: Great. Everyone agree?

Buddha (objecting): There is no blissful peace until one passes beyond the agony of life and death.

Me: That's depressing.

Mother Theresa (soothingly): Peace begins with a smile.

The Dalai Lama: If you wish to experience peace, provide peace for another.

Me: Excellent, so how do I do that?

Thomas à Kempis: First, keep the peace within yourself, then you can also bring peace to others.

Me: OK, I'm confused. What comes first—peace within or peace with others?

Buddha (again): Peace comes from within, do not seek it without.

Me: Hey, Mr. Buddha, I thought you just said you can't have peace in this life? Now you say you can. Can you make up your mind?

Eleanor Roosevelt (impatiently): It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it.

Me: I get it. Like you're doing with that sand castle. So how do I work at it?

John Lennon: If everyone demanded peace instead of another television set, then there'd be peace.

Benjamin Franklin (glaring at Lennon): Even peace may be purchased at too high a cost.

Me (fist-bumping BF): I totally agree. Is there any way to find peace that doesn't cost me my TV?

Abraham Lincoln: Avoid popularity if you would have peace.

Me: I'm good at that!

Mahatma Gandhi (interrupting, and just a little irritated): For peace to be real, it must be unaffected by outside circumstances.

Me (exasperated): So can somebody summarize what you're trying to tell me?!

Lennon: All we are saying is give peace a chance.

With that the whole group breaks out in song,

"Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me . . ."

As they break into harmonies, I pick up my chair and leave the beach. Man, peace is hard to find.



# Is True Peace Possible?



I SAT IN MY office with Susan, a woman in her midthirties whom I had just met. Her face showed lines of worry; her eyes spoke of a life of sleepless nights. She described a marriage to a husband suffering with a history of mental illness. His increasing instability and erratic behavior had ruined their finances and raised concerns about his safety and hers. He would disappear for days on end with no answer for his whereabouts when he returned. He refused to take medications provided for him or see his doctor.

A friend who had brought her to church recommended she talk with me. It didn't take much conversation to realize that one thing she wasn't lacking was advice. Susan was getting strong but contradictory counsel from people around her. Trust God . . . tough love . . . protect yourself . . . submit . . . get out while you can. However, it seemed that nobody had bothered to ask her the obvious question: What did *she* want? So I thought I would.

"All I want is peace!"

One of the reasons I'm writing this book is, in that moment with Susan, I didn't know what to say next.

In the first chapter we talked about our common desire for some experience of peace. But the peace we want must be understood in real-life terms. In this chapter we're going to try to define peace. And then we'll talk about how to get it.

## The Peace Conundrum

The Chinese symbol for peace represents a woman sitting under a roof, or in a home. It is a beautiful image of unthreatened vulner-

ability—an inner calm and outer tranquility that express peace. This was not the image of Susan’s life. Susan was a vulnerable woman with no sense of security or tranquility. She was right to want peace.

But the advice she was getting was confusing. Some thought she simply needed to rid herself of the external threat to her security—her troubled husband—and she would find peace. But Susan couldn’t bring herself to abandon her husband in his time of desperate need. Others encouraged her to find inner peace so she could cope with her difficult life. Susan found herself confronted with a fundamental peace problem. The question is, what comes first? Do people need to cultivate an inner tranquility that will give them peace in the turbulence of life? Or do we need to do whatever it takes to find a space for ourselves so we can have some peace? This is the conundrum that has fascinated spiritual thinkers and philosophers throughout history and across cultures. But to Susan it was the defining issue of her life.

### *What Is Real Peace?*

There is an ancient word from the Middle East that captures the essence of this idea of peace we’ve been wrestling with. In Arabic it is *salaam*. In Hebrew it is *shalom*. Salaam/shalom includes both inner calm and outer tranquility. But it is far more than that. The range of meaning includes order, security, relational harmony, well-being, wholeness, and a sense of flourishing life. As one author has simply put it, “Shalom, in other words, is the way things ought to be.”<sup>1</sup>

“The way things ought to be.” That sounds good. But according to whom? According to me? According to you? What if your “way things ought to be” is different from mine? And what if my “way things ought to be” can’t happen if yours does? Who gets shalom and who doesn’t? Isn’t that how wars and racial and ethnic conflicts happen in the first place? My country or people say the way things ought to be requires us to have what you’ve got. Whoever wins the war gets the shalom. Is that real peace?

If real peace is possible, it can't be something we create. So who determines shalom? Simply put, God does. The idea of shalom is uniquely God-centered. In other words, shalom is not something that can exist on its own in this world. It is a gift from God into human experience. Even more, it is the effect on human experience when life is lived the way God designed it to be lived. Behind "the way things ought to be" is a God who is personal and committed in his personal being to a world where peace flourishes—where things are the way they ought to be in his eyes.

Now, if you've been reading along with me up to this point and find that my dropping into God-language is not really where you want this to go, I understand. As you'll see in the next chapter, it isn't where I always have gone, either. But I do think that a God-centered peace story is worth considering. It's a fascinating story as well.

### The Beginning of Peace

The opening pages of the Bible reveal that God has woven peace into the very fabric of existence. The creation story in Genesis is a beautiful poetic depiction of the origin and meaning of everything comprehensible to our human existence. It is a story that is meant to draw us to wonder and worship that a God beyond time and space could create and rule over something so magnificent as the cosmos. The poem moves from the utter simplicity of verse 1—"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth"—through an escalation of images and symbolic language to the pinnacle act of creation—the placing of man (and woman) in their fully realized earthly habitation.

God's initial act of creation produces a cosmos "without form and void" (Gen. 1:2). What verse 2 describes is desolation and chaos and uninhabitability. It is the raw material for something else God intends. And so begins the forming process. Light and dark, earth and sky, land and waters—contrasting elements showing the Creator's artistic structuring of the basic elements in his grand design.

And then to this he begins to add life—populating the desolate expanse with flora and fauna of unique and diverse beauty. Formless and void have become harmony, order, and fullness. But the creation project is not just natural beauty. The Creator’s ultimate goal for his cosmos is revealed in the creation of mankind—creatures uniquely designed to populate this natural world with enjoyers and caretakers of all that God has made.

The creation poem reveals the grand design and activity of God. Though completely at peace within himself, God acts by creative word to give life to beings uniquely designed to comprehend and display his glory. And he places these beings in a perfect environment for that purpose. In that environment, that garden of delights, that Eden (Gen. 2:8), they are to live in joyous dependence on him, in humble wonder at all he has given them in creation, and in loving cooperation with each other in the stewardship of it all. Shalom is the lifestyle, the culture, the politics of Eden. As author Tim Keller describes it,

God created all things to be in a beautiful, harmonious, interdependent, knitted, webbed relationship to one another. Just as rightly related physical elements form a cosmos or a tapestry, so rightly related human beings form a community. This interwovenness is what the Bible calls shalom, or harmonious peace.<sup>2</sup>

What we see in Eden, in other words, is life “the way it ought to be.”

### What Happened to Shalom?

However, as we’ve already seen in chapter 1, peace is not our normal experience. What we experience of shalom is vaporous, fleeting. Harmony gives way to hostility, order to chaos, and fullness to emptiness. For many of us, like Susan above, peace is a pipe dream, swallowed up by a life of strife without and within. What happened to shalom? Where did it go? Can we get it back?

In Genesis 3 the poetry of creation abruptly ends with the tragedy of the fall. The particulars of the story are commonly

known. Adam and Eve are in the garden at peace. The Serpent (the Deceiver) enters their existence with his own power agenda and the political propaganda to sell it: his take is that this rule of God's shalom is really a rule of oppression. God the Creator is not the provider of all good things; he is the withholder of the one essential thing, the right to live on our own terms. The Deceiver invites Eve, and through her, Adam, into rebellion against their Creator and Sustainer. Enticed and inflamed by desire for the one thing God will not allow them to have, Adam and Eve knowingly and willfully reject the way things ought to be for the way they want things to be. Shalom between the Creator and his favored creature is broken.

Adam and Eve have forsaken their peace with God and have aligned themselves with God's enemy. The consequences are profound. There will be no peace in their lives. Harmony? They will be at war with the Deceiver (Gen. 3:15) and in perpetual strife with each other (3:16). Order? They will now live in frustration with their environment (3:17). Fullness? They are driven out of the garden of delight (3:24). Most profoundly, however, the relationship of creature and Creator is forever changed. In this separation there can be no shalom. Because now God has himself become their enemy. And because he is their enemy, he is ours as well.

Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck wrote,

For if the history of the world clearly teaches us anything, it is this: that God has a quarrel with His creature. There is disagreement, separation, conflict between God and His world. God does not agree with man, and man does not agree with God. Each goes his own way, and each has his own idea and will about things.<sup>3</sup>

At war with God. It is an essential but very uncomfortable biblical truth to wrap our brains around. When we talk about Genesis 3, we talk about "the fall" of humanity in sin. But the way we talk about our sinful condition before God tends to sound passive. Something bad happened, and we have to live with the lousy reality of it. We talk about "not knowing God" and of "being lost." We

may even talk about being “dead to God” or “dead in sin.” We need God to “save” us because we need saving. We want God to heal us because we’re broken. God is in the business of finding people who are lost, and giving new life. All of these are true and essential biblical metaphors, but there is a reality to our state that cannot be stomached easily. To be an enemy of God is not a passive state.

The state of war between the Creator and his creatures is called, in theological terms, *enmity*. The book of Genesis plays this enmity out in the petulant rage of Cain (chap. 4), the sorry rebellion of humankind leading to the flood (chap. 6), and the absurd power play of the Tower of Babel (chap. 11). Were you to treat the Old Testament as simply an account of the religious beliefs and practices of ancient people, you would have a very depressing story. The moral of the book would be, “If God is your enemy, you haven’t got a prayer.”

Is the idea of God as our enemy uncomfortable for you to consider? It should be. But it is a pervasively human truth, hard as we try to move beyond it. The history of religion is a history of people trying to appease whatever deity has arisen in their culture. We are a species that lives with the sense that we are being watched by someone or something larger than we are, and that someone or something isn’t happy with us. So we sacrifice and we atone and, in frustration, we shake our fists at gods who are never satisfied with what we try to do to get on their good side. The enmity problem isn’t just something that people who believe in a personal God struggle with. A large psychological study on religious anger published in January 2011 found that people who don’t have a belief in a personal God (atheists, agnostics, Eastern religions) actually tend to have a higher struggle with anger against God than God-believing people.<sup>4</sup> Apparently you don’t have to believe in God to be ticked off with him.

Maybe you have never thought about God this way. For many God is “the Man upstairs” who’s OK with us if we’re OK with him. I had a philosophy professor in college who told me that arguing with God is what God expects of thinking people. But God doesn’t

seem to see it that way. Twentieth-century preacher D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones sums up the problem of enmity with God well:

Man has turned his back upon God and has enmity in his heart towards God and is trying to live his life in this world without God and apart from God, and he regards God as one who interferes and upsets everything. . . . And of course you find this great story unfolded in the pages of the Bible and it is the whole key to the understanding of secular history, man fighting God, man refusing to humble himself before God, and arrogantly and proudly doing the exact opposite, so that what you have in the Bible is an account of the conflict between this glorious God and man in sin.<sup>5</sup>

Maybe the most bold-faced description of enmity comes in a phrase repeated multiple times by the prophet Isaiah: “‘There is no peace,’ says the LORD, ‘for the wicked’” (48:22; see 57:21).

If we are a race at enmity with God, then one thing is certain. We are fighting a war that we cannot win. We are in a place we were never intended to be—God is on our bad side and we are on his. And life at enmity with God, frankly, stinks. Keller says,

When we lost our relationship with God, the whole world stopped “working right.” The world is filled with hunger, sickness, aging, and physical death. Because our relationship with God has broken down, shalom is gone—spiritually, psychologically, socially, and physically.<sup>6</sup>

The experience of enmity, in human terms, is known as *alienation*. We are alienated from God and he from us. Alienation is the virtual opposite of shalom. Alienation is a throbbing awareness that things are not as they should be. We’ll talk more about alienation in the next chapter.

Any recovery of peace must fill the dark hole of our alienation with God. Yet we are unable to do anything about it. In our natures the sinful propensities of our forbearers Adam and Eve run deep—a corruption of desire that sets every natural thought and inclination against God (Rom. 1:21). Our basic religious impulses say more

about how we want to control God or barter things from him than how we want to live in the joyful satisfaction with his rule over our lives that he originally intended. This, friends, is the sorry human predicament—enmity with God and alienation in life.

### God's Surprising Solution

But don't give up on the story just yet. God didn't create us for this! The Old Testament is not the brief grisly account of God squashing the pathetic and misguided rebellion of man. It is the unfolding epic of God's mercy plan for the human race. The first eleven chapters of Genesis are not the story; they are the prologue to the story. God faces down his enemies, thwarts their uprising, and then, amazingly, offers a way back to shalom. This peace plan isn't a negotiation, as if two exhausted foes agree that further hostilities are useless. We bring nothing to the table with which to bargain. God doesn't offer amnesty, simply ignoring the evil done against him. He can't overlook cosmic treason.

What God does offer is beyond comprehension. It is redemptive counterinsurgency. He launches a strategically targeted strike, not to punish, but to capture a beachhead where he can begin a work of new creation. His target is one man—Abram of the Chaldeans. The assault launches in Genesis 12.

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (vv. 1–3)

It is God's intent to work shalom from within the enemy camp. He will create a people from one old man, and that people will be at the center of his peace plan for the earth. God will reach his enemies through identification with them. Generation after generation God will patiently work this shalom out with man through the promises and commandments of the old covenant. It

is an inexplicable commitment to tie his glory to a people whose infidelity and hard-heartedness render them virtually no different than the enemies of God around them. The promise of peace runs through the story of Abraham's descendents—the people of Israel. It connects the existence of this little Semitic tribe to the great redemptive counterinsurgency of God.

In the pages of the Old Testament we see the beginnings of the restoration of peace. God provides the law with its extensive sacrificial system to allow a channel of mercy to his people. This sacrificial system is not intended to change the hearts of people, but it does allow a way for sinful people to rightly relate to a holy God. Through the mediating sacrificial blood of innocent animals, a representative atonement for guilt and sin occurs. The power is not in these rituals, as if they can change God's posture toward sin. The power is in the condescension of God who accepts the "peace offerings" that are brought to him. The sufficiency of the sacrifices is the power of grace.

This wandering insurgency needs a base of operations. So God moves his people to a little strip of land in Palestine that even in ancient days was an unfortunate buffer zone between great warring empires. He centers his own headquarters in a little town in that strip of land known as the "place of peace"—Jeru-salem. Over centuries this people is meant to find security and to flourish as a nation in this small part of the world. And from there God's peace is to be declared.

But that never really happens. The people prove themselves to be stubbornly hard-hearted and wickedly unfaithful. They carry within them the sinful propensities of their forefathers, going back to Adam. And so they disobey God, neglect and abuse his provisions of grace, and run after the violent and perverse ways of the people around them. The peace insurgency is swallowed up in idolatry. As one theologian has put it, "Idolatry—wrongly perceiving who is in charge—is the opposite of shalom."<sup>7</sup> Among God's chosen people, harmony gives way to anarchy, order to chaos, and fullness to famine.

The human narrative of the Old Testament is not easy reading. It is a tragedy that plays out in excruciating detail—the epic demise of God’s very people into moral depravity, subjugation, and ruination. Yes, there is a remnant preserved, and a return from exile. But there is no return to former glory, no rejuvenation of purpose—just a small, poor little people destined to be conquered and reconquered by emerging empires looking for advantageous real estate. It is left to the weeping prophet Jeremiah to lament the pitiful state of the peace project of God.

I have become the laughingstock of all peoples,  
the object of their taunts all day long.  
He has filled me with bitterness;  
he has sated me with wormwood.

He has made my teeth grind on gravel,  
and made me cower in ashes;  
my soul is bereft of peace;  
I have forgotten what happiness is;  
so I say, “My endurance has perished;  
so has my hope from the LORD.” (Lam. 3:14–18)

### The Prince and the Price

Fortunately, the Old Testament is not limited to human tragedy. In fact, the great sweeping desolation of Israel is only part of a larger glorious story that God is telling. The peace insurgency isn’t defeated after all. In the very midst of calamity, God calls other prophets to declare the transcendent plan of peace. Nearly all the prophets allude to this plan, but it is given to Isaiah to most expressively play it out.

The peace plan as declared by Isaiah introduces two remarkable figures into the fray. They are described but not named. God’s shalom insurgency hinges on who they are and what they do. We discover the first figure in Isaiah 9:

But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and

the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,  
on them has light shone.  
You have multiplied the nation;  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.  
For the yoke of his burden,  
and the staff for his shoulder,  
the rod of his oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.  
For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult  
and every garment rolled in blood  
will be burned as fuel for the fire.  
For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Of the increase of his government and of peace  
there will be no end,  
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,  
to establish it and to uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time forth and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. (vv. 1–7)

What an amazing promise! Isaiah envisions the darkness to come and pronounces light! Order, harmony, and fullness will be restored in a new and abundantly rich nation of God. But there is far more here than anyone can imagine. God's peace insurgency will not only survive, it will reign in the earth. It will reign because God himself will make it so. Peace will be the government of God.

A child is born, a Son is given, and he will be the Prince of Peace. What do we know about this Prince of Peace? It appears that he will arise from the unlikely regions of Galilee. He will rule in the royal line of David—the king of Israel’s kings. But he will represent God like no other human can represent God. He will break the yoke of human oppression and bring light to a world of darkness. He will rule with justice and righteousness. And of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end—in expanse or duration. His kingdom will have cosmic scope and eternal security.

But how will this be accomplished? Who is that man who can take this peace insurgency and build it into an empire? What leadership and force must be exerted to build an everlasting nation? How can this great peace be won? The answer comes in the introduction of the other figure later in Isaiah’s prophecy:

Behold my servant, whom I uphold,  
 my chosen, in whom my soul delights;  
 I have put my Spirit upon him;  
 he will bring forth justice to the nations.  
 He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice,  
 or make it heard in the street;  
 a bruised reed he will not break,  
 and a faintly burning wick he will not quench;  
 he will faithfully bring forth justice.  
 He will not grow faint or be discouraged  
 till he has established justice in the earth;  
 and the coastlands wait for his law. (42:1–4)

There is no grand title for this figure. He is simply “my servant.” He is identified with the people of God, but his calling extends beyond them. The Servant will bring forth the just reign of God throughout the nations in the power of the Spirit of God. He will not come to exact vengeance—his means of conquest will leave no destruction in its wake. Somehow the counterinsurgency of God will become the reign of God. But how can this happen? Isaiah now pulls back the veil and reveals the unimaginable plan of peace. Read this slowly in light of the story we’ve been following:

Who has believed what he has heard from us?  
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?  
For he grew up before him like a young plant,  
and like a root out of dry ground;  
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,  
and no beauty that we should desire him.  
He was despised and rejected by men;  
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;  
and as one from whom men hide their faces  
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he has borne our griefs  
and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed him stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.  
But he was pierced for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his wounds we are healed.  
All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have turned—every one—to his own way;  
and the LORD has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,  
yet he opened not his mouth;  
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,  
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,  
so he opened not his mouth.  
By oppression and judgment he was taken away;  
and as for his generation, who considered  
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,  
stricken for the transgression of my people?  
And they made his grave with the wicked  
and with a rich man in his death,  
although he had done no violence,  
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him;  
he has put him to grief;  
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,

he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;  
 the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.  
 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;  
 by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,  
     make many to be accounted righteous,  
     and he shall bear their iniquities.  
 Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,  
     and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,  
 because he poured out his soul to death  
     and was numbered with the transgressors;  
 yet he bore the sin of many,  
     and makes intercession for the transgressors. (53:1–12)

It is here where we must stop and open our minds to what has really happened. The counterinsurgency of God is the death of God! Isaiah 53 is a chapter that has never fit any materialistic interpretation of the Bible. Commentator John Bright wrote, “No concept in the entire Old Testament is stranger, more elusive or more movingly profound than this.”<sup>8</sup> It gives no hope to religious people. It gives no hope to secular people. But if there is truly a state called peace to be experienced in this life, Isaiah 53 holds the key. Remember what we said earlier. Sin has created enmity between man and God. The only way to resolve that enmity is through judgment for sin. In Isaiah 53, judgment thunders down. The Servant is chosen by God. Yet he is despised and rejected. He is slaughtered for something that he did not do—an innocent condemned as guilty. But he is no hero or martyr. His death accomplishes something no other death could accomplish. He bears our sins and carries our sorrows; he takes our transgressions upon himself—he himself becomes the peace offering for our sin that pleases the divine Judge. And he does this willingly, actively, and joyfully. What does his death do? Look carefully at verse 5:

But he was pierced for our transgressions;  
     he was crushed for our iniquities;  
 upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
     and with his wounds we are healed.

Isaiah offers us the answer to the problem of peace in two remarkable figures. The Prince of Peace, whose reign of peace will never end, is one. He is not simply a representative of God—he is “Mighty God . . . Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6). He alone has the authority to offer peace to God’s enemies. And the Suffering Servant, who could only bear our sorrows and griefs and be crushed for our iniquities if he had none of his own, is the other. The only one who has no grief and has no transgression is God himself. The astounding answer to the problem of peace is that the Prince of Peace who offers peace and the Suffering Servant who paid the price of peace are the same. The substitutionary death of the divine Prince of Peace brought us peace. God has reconciled us to himself through his own divine self-sacrifice.

### The Person of Peace

We’ve covered a lot of ground in this chapter. It’s some heady stuff. But I can summarize it pretty succinctly. We want peace. Really, we need peace, because we are alienated from the one source of true peace in the cosmos—our Creator God. And peace has come through the intervention of God in his own self-sacrifice—a divine atonement—that resolves the enmity between us and God. But what does that mean for the dear woman who desperately wants peace in her troubled life? What does it mean for me, and for you? To explore that, we need to talk about the Servant Prince of Peace. We need to talk about Jesus Christ.

# PEACE *is* POSSIBLE.

We all experience stress, anxiety, grief, conflict, depression, and despair—pain that causes us to cry out for peace. Taking on these common yet critical hardships, seasoned pastor and biblical counselor Andy Farmer shows us where to find and how to experience true, lasting peace—peace with God, peace with each other, and peace with ourselves.



“Peace, if it comes at all, tends to come in little pieces—the job is stable for now, the kids are healthy today, friends still hang out with you—and sometimes I can settle for those scraps. Andy shows us how we can honor God by aiming for peace that is much deeper.”

EDWARD T. WELCH, *Counselor and Faculty Member, Christian Counseling & Education Foundation*

“There are many books I can recommend on finding peace with God. There are far fewer I can recommend on *experiencing* the peace of God. *Real Peace* is a book I highly recommend for real people facing real trouble in a really messed up world.”

ROBERT W. KELLEMAN, *Executive Director, The Biblical Counseling Coalition*

“This is a book about being whole in a broken world, about finding rest amidst chaos within and without. I actually felt peace as I read it. Filled with charm, personality, and wisdom, *Real Peace* offers solace to restless Christians and invites non-Christians to know the God of peace.”

MIKE WILKERSON, *Pastor and Director of Biblical Counseling, Mars Hill Church, Seattle*



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