

4 Keys to Guard Your Heart and Mind

There once was a King who offered a prize to the artist who would paint the best picture of peace. Many artists tried. The King looked at all the pictures and it came down to just one. The mountains were rugged and bare. Above was an angry sky from which rain fell and lightning played. Down the side of the mountain tumbled a foaming waterfall. Behind the waterfall a tiny bush grew in the crack of a rock. In the bush a mother bird had built her nest. There, in the midst of the rush of angry water, sat the mother bird on her nest in perfect peace.

Why this one he was asked, "because," explained the King, "peace does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. Peace means to be in the midst of all those things and still be calm in your heart. This is the real meaning of peace."

The picture the King chose often reflects the world we live in, rugged, bare, angry, loud, and a little scary at times. To be at peace in our hearts and minds in the midst of it can be a challenge to say the least. So how do we guard against these daily offenses and live in the peace that God says we can have? Philippians 4:4-7 gives us some keys to help us with that challenge.

*"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!
Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.
Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

Key #1 – "Rejoice in the Lord always." Be full of joy at all times whether we feel like it or not. Delight yourself in Him (Ps 37:4); His joy is our strength (Neh 8:10). And in case we missed it, Paul repeats himself. Why, because our spiritual health depends on it.

Key #2 – "Let your gentleness be known." Gentleness is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) that we are to cultivate and grow. The Greek implication of the word means to have a disposition that is even tempered and balanced in spirit. It can also be translated as "meekness." Jesus was meek – power and strength under control.

Key #3 – "Be anxious for nothing." In other words don't fret, don't worry; cast your cares (all your concerns) on Him for He is the one who cares for you (1Peter 5:7).

Key#4 – Give thanks in all your requests to God. Pray about everything, tell God what your needs are and above all, don't forget to thank Him for the answers even if you haven't seen them yet (Matt. 21:22).

If we learn to apply these keys to our lives, God's peace is ours. It goes way beyond our understanding. His peace will guard our hearts and minds, shielding us from the daily assaults, and placing us in the cleft of the rock in perfect peace.