

Serenity

**Serenity: What is it? How do I get it?
Why do I lose it? How can I keep it?**

Serenity hints at tranquility, having an inner calm in the midst of the ups and downs of life. It involves learning to be content with the things that cannot be changed in our life, and taking responsibility for changes where possible.

Give your burdens to the LORD, and he will take care of you. (Psalm 55)

Some of us have never accepted the hurtful circumstances of our life. We may be living in denial to avoid the pain. We continue to struggle against the painful realities, to rebel against who we are or what has happened to us. There are others of us who have accepted the bad, even to the point that it feels normal and comfortable. Therefore, we repeat destructive cycles of behaviour. The process of recovery is a time of learning to find serenity while also accepting life as it is. Life isn't fair. It isn't predictable or controllable. It can be wonderfully rich in some ways and terribly difficult in others. When we become willing to face the hurt in our life and consider how we have reacted to it, then we can move forward in breaking destructive cycles.

Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until that day when our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. God, who calls you, is faithful; he will do this. (1 Thessalonians 5)

Our willingness to let go of the things we cannot change in our past will free us to make positive changes for a healthy future and allow God to rescue us from constantly falling into sin in the present. God offers us forgiveness for the guilt and shame we carry for our wrongs. God also offers us healing and forgiveness to give away to those who have harmed and wronged us. God wants us to be at peace rather than harassed by bitterness and resentment and rage. Healing and forgiveness are God's tools for peace in our lives.

(Jesus) was wounded and crushed for our sins. He was beaten that we might have peace. He was whipped, and we were healed! (Isaiah 53)

God is working with us every day of our lives. Not all circumstances change in a moment. Recovery and healing are a process. God is aware of the fact that life will feel rich sometimes and empty at other times. God knows that we will face challenges that will seem great as we seek to follow a new and healthy path. There's work for us to do, but God promises us peace and contentment while we are working the process. Peace and contentment are the fruit of making good choices today. They are not something we have to wait a long time to find. The Bible offers us this encouragement.

SERENITY PRAYER

***God, grant me the serenity to accept the things
I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time,
enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace;
taking, as Jesus did,
this sinful world as it is,
not as I would have it;
Trusting that You will make all things right
if I surrender to Your will;
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with You forever in the
next. Amen.***

For I have learned how to get along happily whether I have much or little. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need. (Philippians 4)

Peace comes as we take responsibility for the behaviours and attitudes that are ours and make the changes we can. We can change our outlook and attitude towards ourself, life and God. We can ask God for help and guidance and then act in new ways. We can

begin to see all that's good in life rather than all that's difficult. Here's what the Bible says we experience when we place our lives in God's hands, and make the changes we can:

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4)

If we are willing to place our lives in God's hands, there's always hope for positive change and a bright future.

Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. How do we go about finding contentment in an imperfect world?
2. What is God's role in providing me peace?
3. What's my role in finding peace from day to day?
4. What can we change? What can't we change?
5. Where is God in the middle of all this?