



Links Players

Jehovah Shalom—The Lord Is Peace

...the LORD said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die."²⁴ So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD Is Peace. (Judges 6:23-24, NIV)

Following his record-setting win at the U.S. Senior Open last month, Bernhard Langer unabashedly talked with reporters about the peace he felt during his final round. He recounted how his daily devotional and Bible reading helped him remain calm in the intense competitive situations he encountered in the championship rounds.

In the early 1200s BC, the Israelites felt anything but peaceful and calm. God sent the Midianites to conquer them because they could not break out of their continuous cycle of sin, punishment, repentance, and deliverance. The Midianites plundered the Israelites' crops, destroyed their livestock, and forced them to hide in caves.

When God called a young man, Gideon, to lead the Israelite army against the Midianites, Gideon was fearful and unsure of himself. In response to his request to God for a sign, the angel of the Lord appeared to him. After that encounter, Gideon accepted God's call. God said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die." Gideon then built an altar to God and called it "Jehovah Shalom."

Although Jehovah Shalom is used only once in the Bible, the Hebrew word "shalom" is used over 170 times. The most common meaning is "peace." Beyond that, shalom encompasses concepts like harmony, wholeness, completeness, calmness, and tranquility.

The past 22 years of my life are a compelling example of the peace accompanying a complete surrender to God. Before that, for over 30 years, I suffered from anxiety. I was filled with turmoil, chaos, despair, and fear.

Medication and therapy were of little assistance in reducing the debilitating effects of my anxiety. Like the Prodigal Son in Luke's gospel, I returned to my Father on June 1, 2001, at a Search Ministries "Straight Talk" Breakfast.

That morning, as I prayed the "Sinner's Prayer" with Tom Lehman, I felt a huge tsunami-like wave wash over me as I committed my life to Jesus. I experienced a new sense of calm that had been absent for years. As I gradually grew in my faith and worked at giving up control of my life to him, my anxiety dissipated. I began experiencing "The Lord Shalom" in all his mercy, grace, love, and power.

When I feel slightly unsettled these days, I turn to one of my go-to "refrigerator verses" for comfort. Paul writes: "Do not be anxious about anything but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,

present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7, NIV).

Even though we see a lack of peace in so many facets of our daily life---whether political, cultural, emotional, or spiritual---we can rest assured that Jesus has a remedy for this condition. He tells us: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14:27, NIV).

In her book, “The Names of God,” Marilyn Hickey shares this succinct maxim: “No God, No Peace; Know God, Know Peace.”

Let us be thankful for God’s wonderful gift of peace. We must always be mindful of our need to continually express gratitude and pray to Jehovah Shalom for peace today and tomorrow.

PRAYER

Jehovah-Shalom, we are so grateful, and we thank you for being the God of peace that we can experience when we commit our lives to follow you.

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Mark “Ole” Olson

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