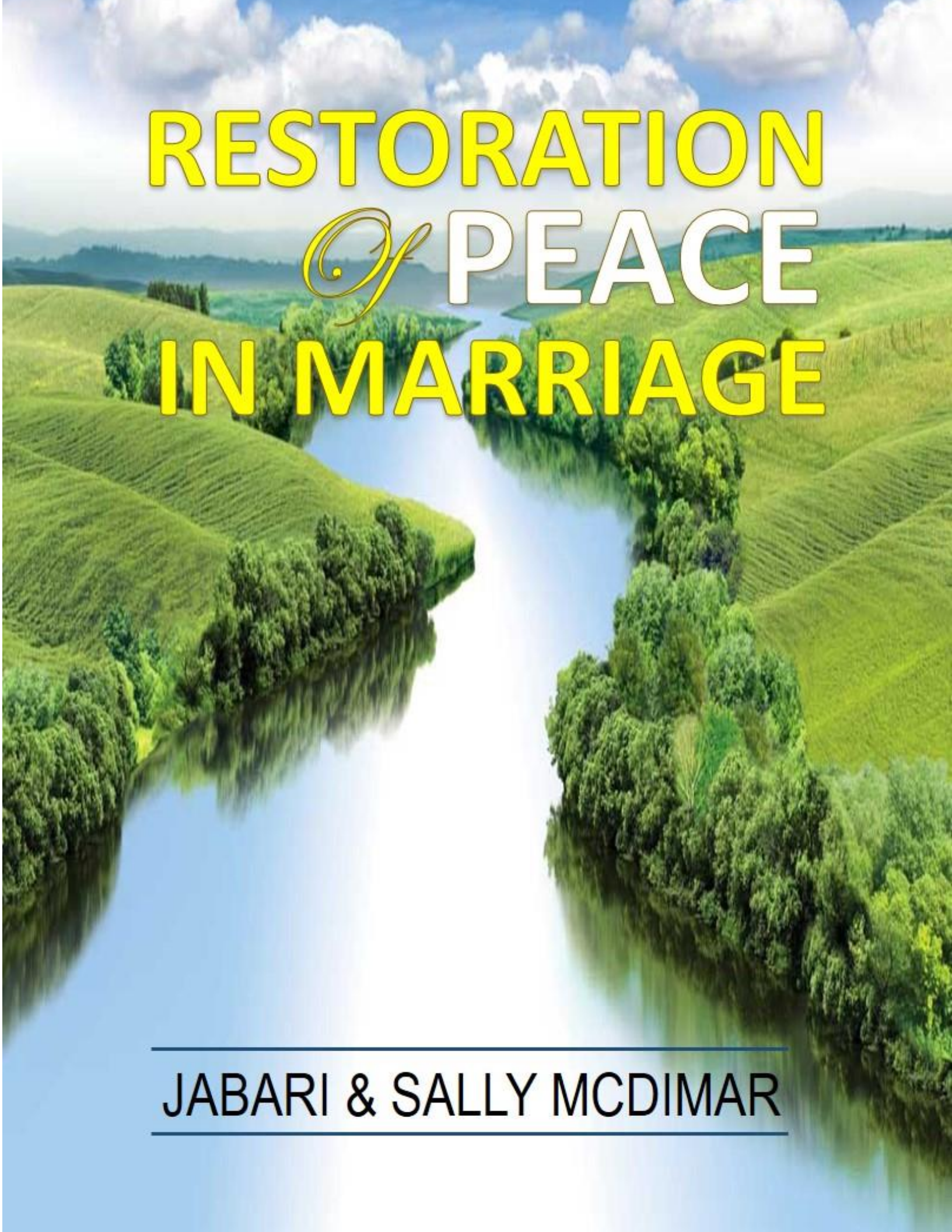


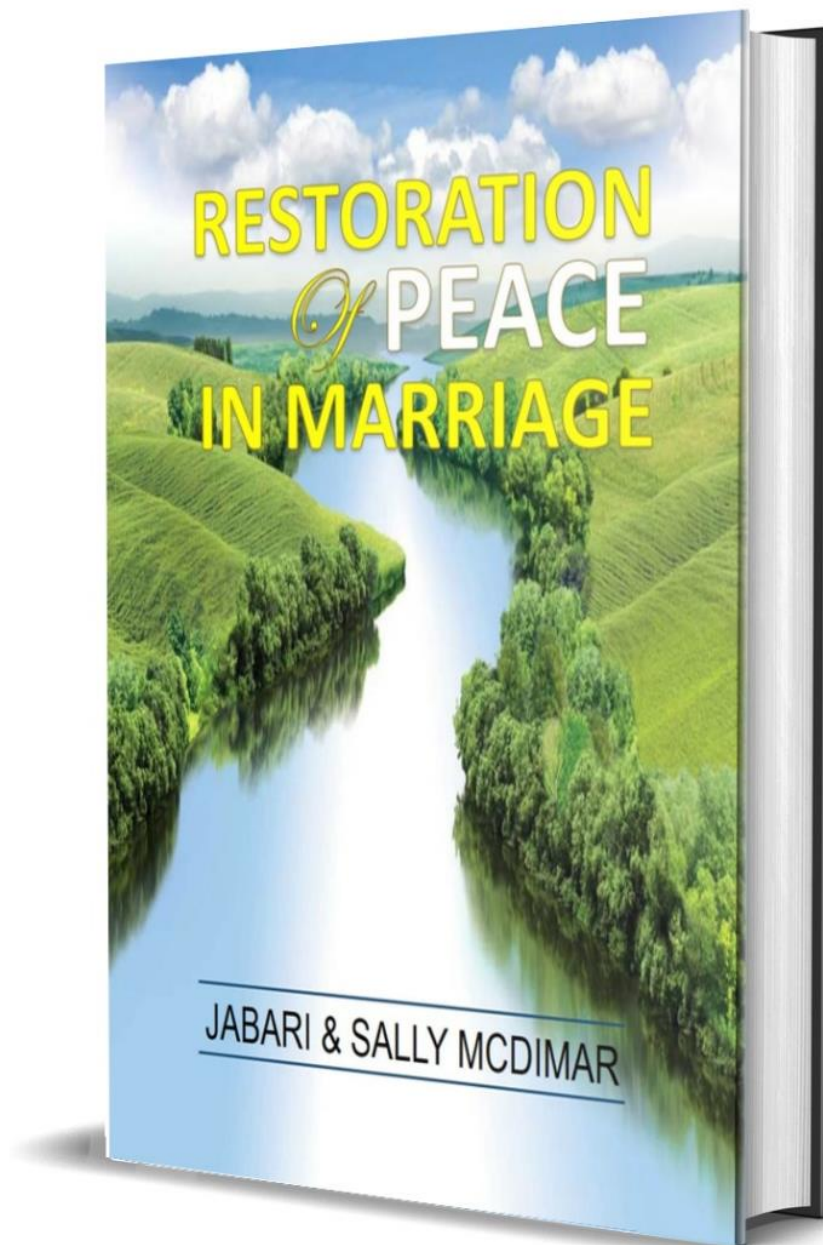


RESTORATION *Of* PEACE IN MARRIAGE

JABARI & SALLY MCDIMAR

Restoration of Peace in Marriage

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INTRODUCTION



SHE CAME TO MY OFFICE crying, “*Pastor, I Have No Peace in My Marriage*”.

Everyone is looking for peace—peace in their soul, their home, and their nation. Peace is perhaps the greatest possession we can have. The wonderful thing is that we can own peace regardless of circumstances. We could own a mansion and all the material blessings we crave and yet not have peace. We can own nothing and yet be blessed with peace.

Give anyone a choice between chaos and peace, and they will undoubtedly choose peace. Peace of mind is what we all strive for. No matter who you are, or what you do, no one wants to feel overwhelmed, stressed out or weighed down from the day-to-day burdens of life. We want freedom, joy, and the peace that comes with it.

Do you want a sweet, peaceful marriage? Is your marriage sweet and peaceful? What comes to your mind when I use the words “*peace*” and “*marriage*” in one sentence? Is your response “*yes, this is natural.*” Or is your response “*not in my lifetime.*” The truth is the best marriages are not always sweet and peaceful. The best marriages might have a few emotional

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skirmishes and small battles, but not all-out war. The goal of this mini booklet is to keep couples from having war or to help stop the war in a couple's marriage.

When we are unable to find inner peace, it carries over into the areas of our lives that matter most. And it is impossible to have a happy, peaceful marriage if we are struggling with unresolved pain that robs us of our peace of mind.

Sure, you can do your best to ignore what's disturbing your peace, telling yourself that's what's best for your marriage. But ultimately, the truth will rise to the surface and what was once just a lack of inner peace begins to disturb your marriage at its core.

We all experience seasons of uncertainty. Going through life and trying to sustain a happy, healthy marriage without some peace of mind is painful and challenging.

And so, the question is, how do we find peace?

Well, there is no easy fix, so nothing I am about to share will give you peace by tomorrow. However, if you are up to the challenge and truly want to see a change in your life, I do believe this mini booklet will help you get closer to peace than you ever imagined.

The truth is many Christians have unrealistic expectations about marriage, which I call "*myths*." One of them is "*Christian couples don't fight*." One husband said, "*I thought 'peace' meant no 'fighting' and so I denied my negative feelings. I'd let*

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things build until I exploded over something trivial'. Here's the truth: it's okay to fight. In the Bible, it says, "*In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold*" (Ephesians 4:26–27).

Unfortunately, the more you believe in this fantasy of the "*perfectly peaceful marriage*" the more pain you will experience because the fantasy runs counter to the cold, hard reality. Upon reflection, we often find a pattern: When their wives brought issues to them, the men blamed and resented them for disturbing their fantasy of a peaceful marriage. The men often say, "*Why can't she just leave it alone? Why is she always complaining and looking for trouble?*" What these men don't realize is if they listened to the criticisms they would have a lot more peace!

Another consequence of the peaceful marriage fantasy is the wish not to rock the boat. Men or women may avoid conflict altogether, explaining differences away or leaving the room when arguments or criticisms break out. Belief in the peaceful marriage fantasy causes good people to believe that keeping the peace is more important than having an open and honest exchange with the people they love. A secret to having peace in your marriage is learning to handle the battles and not to avoid them.

In this mini booklet, I will show you simple Biblical truth on how you can take your life and marriage to a peaceful haven according to Psalms 29:11 "*The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace*".

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Chapter One



THE QUEST FOR PEACE

THE BIBLE IS REplete with lessons that teach us the proper way to treat others and conduct ourselves in personal relationships. Among the most important of these teachings is that our associations and dealings with others should exist within the boundaries of peace. This biblical principle is general in nature and not specifically directed to the relationship between husbands and wives. However, it is certainly reasonable and appropriate to apply these admonitions to marriage, which is, after all, among the most important of all human relationships. Certainly, it is God's will for Christian marriages to exemplify the concept of peace.

The Bible uses the term "*peace*" in a few different ways (*e.g. inner peace, peace with God*). However, often when the Bible mentions peace it is in the context of a relational peace between people. This describes an association or connection characterized by harmony, tranquility, and calm. It reflects not only a relative absence of conflict or strife but also an agreement of mutual concord between individuals.

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God's Word instructs, "*Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord*" (Hebrews 12:14, ESV). Often we rightfully extol the virtues of living holy before God but neglect to give proper attention to striving for peace in our relationships with others – which seems to be of equal importance, scripturally. The Bible also declares, "*If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone*" (Romans 12:8, NIV). Clearly living at peace with others is our duty and expectation. It is something we must continually strive for and do our best to obtain and maintain.

Jesus stated, "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God*" (Matthew 5:9, KJV). We can determine from these sacred words that peace is not something that simply happens naturally or instinctively. We must "*make*" peace. That is, we must will it into existence and commit to the actions that result in obtaining it.

Regarding your marriage, there are many practical applications that we can glean from these and other Bible passages.

Achieving and maintaining peace with your spouse should be near the top of your list of marital priorities. You should consider it a part of your daily endeavor to live righteously and holy before God. It is that important.

Living in peaceful existence with your partner is your duty and expectation as a Christian husband or wife. You cannot separate this pursuit from other Biblical responsibilities to

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your spouse including love, honor, respect/esteem, sacrifice, and so forth. Indeed, you cannot truly attain any of these if you and your partner are not first at peace with one another.

An environment of peace in your marriage will not come about by accident. It is something you must continually strive for, commit to, and work purposefully to maintain even in the midst of difficult circumstances.

Enjoying peace in your marriage means more than merely refraining from fighting and bickering with your partner. It also includes a state of emotional safety and security under which the marriage can grow and develop.

Peace in your marriage is more than just a mental state. It must begin with having the proper attitude and mindset. But, it must necessarily come to fruition in your actions, behavior, and conduct.

Job 22: 21-22 says, “*Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee. 22 Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart*”.

Why should you have peace in your home while the Prince of Peace is not the Lord of your Home? When you keep Jesus outside your matrimonial home, you keep peace out of the home.

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Chapter Two



SECRET TO HAVING PEACE

GOD IS PEACE—the originator of peace. Jesus came to guide our feet into the way of peace (Luke 1:79). He said, “*Come and I will give you rest...*”, “*My peace I give unto you...*” But His peace and rest are not automatic. Although they are His gifts to us, He tells us how to have them. Nothing happens by itself.

In Zechariah 8:12 God says, “*I am planting seeds of peace and prosperity among you...*” God spoke these words to encourage the people when rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem. God is a seed-planter. He is not only a God of peace, but He sows seeds of peace. We, who were created in the image of God, should also be peace seed-planters. How can we sow seeds of peace in our home and family?

Psalms 119:165 says, “*GREAT PEACE have those who LOVE YOUR LAW, and nothing causes them to stumble.*”

And in Isaiah 48:18 we are told, “*Oh, that you had heeded my commandments! Then your PEACE would have been like a river, and your RIGHTEOUSNESS like the waves of the sea.*”

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The secret to HAVING PEACE in the home is LOVING GOD'S WORD. We sow peace into our home when we love God's Word and impart its truth to our children. When last did you have a family devotion together? When last did you pray and worship God together? No wonder you easily get offended at the slightest act of your partner and stumble. But you said, "*Pastor, I go to Church always, read my Bible and pray yet I don't have peace in this marriage*". My dear reader, it's only when you LOVE the Word of God and PRACTICE it, then you shall have GREAT PEACE flowing like a RIVER and nothing shall cause you to STUMBLE.

The secret to SUSTAINING PEACE in your home is LIVING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS. Psalm 85:10 says, "*Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*" You can't have peace without righteousness. They are inseparable. But righteousness is more than turning away from evil. It is doing righteous deeds. Righteousness is not stagnant. It is alive. It is revealed in your facial features as you smile at your family and speak positive things; it comes out your fingertips as you work and toil for the blessing of your family or hug and embrace your children; it shows itself as you walk to do good deeds for your family and others. We see this in Isaiah 32:17, "*The WORK of righteousness shall be PEACE; and the EFFECT of righteousness QUIETNESS and*

ASSURANCE FOREVER." Do you notice that righteousness is work? And do you notice the cause and effect? The effect is quietness and assurance of peace forever!

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The peace that flows like a river and righteousness that floods like the waves of the sea. Halleluiah!

The following verse says, “*And my people shall dwell in a PEACEABLE HABITATIONS, and in SURE DWELLINGS, and in QUIET RESTING PLACES.*” If we want peace in our home, we must sow seeds of righteousness. It means taking a stand against the spirit of the world entering your home. True peace rests on a foundation of righteousness (Hosea 10:12).

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Chapter Three



BE A PEACEMAKER

PRAY FOR PEACE over your family. Confess it over husband/wife and kids. Speak it into their lives. Be a *peace-bearer* rather than a *tension-bearer*.

Peace is a noun, but the Bible verbs it. It tells us to extend peace, pursue peace, love peace, make peace, establish peace, preach peace, proclaim peace, seek peace and speak peace. This is how it happens—by sowing the seeds. Jesus said, “*Blessed are the peacemakers*” (Matthew 5:9) Peace doesn’t just happen; we have to make it happen.

Ask God to help you be a peacemaker today. I know it’s not an easy task. You have to bite your tongue. You have to practice speaking words that are affirming, encouraging, cheerful, comforting, forgiving, healing, helpful, kind, loving, positive, reconciling, respectful, strengthening, supportive, sweet, uplifting, and wholesome. You have to smile instead of a scowl. You have to think of ways to reconcile.

Isaiah 26: 3, “*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.*”

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There is music in these words of the old Hebrew prophet. Why can we not get music into our lives? Why do we not all have this PERFECT PEACE in our hearts? Why do we lose the quiet and the calm of our spirits so easily in the world's distractions and troubles? Let us see if we cannot learn the secret of peace that lies in the prophet's words. The secret is in two parts.

One is that the keeping is of God, not us. We cannot keep ourselves in peace. There is a majestic power in self-control, and we should seek to have that power. Not to be master of our own life is to be pitifully weak. We should learn to control our feelings, our emotions, our appetites, our passions, our desires, our temper, our speech. He that rules his own spirit is the greatest of conquerors, greater than he that captures a city (Proverbs 16:32). No doubt perfect self-mastery has much to do with keeping the heart quiet in danger, calm and undisturbed in the sudden trial. But this is not the real secret of peace. Our self-control reaches but a little way. One may have it and remain unmoved in the face of the most disturbing experiences, and yet not have the peace of God.

God keeps us. *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace."* The Bible everywhere teaches this truth of the divine keeping as the source of all true security and confidence. There is no other keeping that really avails. It is only when God is our refuge and strength that we can say, *"Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."* Psalms 46: 2.

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There is a story of a saintly old man who desired that the only epitaph on his grave should be the word “*Kept.*” This word contained the whole history of his life. In one of the Psalms, the lesson is written out for us in full. “*The Lord is thy keeper. He that keepeth thee will not slumber.... The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.*” Psalms 121: 4-5. It is God who keeps us—it is God alone who can keep us—in perfect peace.

Our peace never can be more secure than that on which it depends. Our trust never can be surer than that on which it leans. Only God is eternal, the same yesterday and today and forever, and only when we rest in God and trust in Him can we have a peace that cannot be disturbed. “*Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.*” Isaiah 26: 4. When we are held in the clasp of His love, we are safe from any disturbance, for He is omnipotent. Our refuge is secure forever, for He is from everlasting to everlasting.

We have the same teaching concerning the divine keeping in a passage in one of the epistles of Paul, in which he also gives us the secret of peace. “*The peace of God... shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.*” Philippians 4: 7 ASV

The figure is military. Men sleep in quiet confidence in their tents, in the darkest nights, in time of war, in the presence of the enemy, because sentinels wake and watch through all the darkness. God’s own peace keeps guard over our hearts and thoughts so that nothing shall ever disturb us or alarm us. Nothing ever can disturb God. He looks without fear upon

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the wildest storms. He is never dismayed by things that seem to us calamitous. His infinite and eternal peace will guard us and keep us in the shelter of its own blessed quiet and calm.

This is part of the great secret of peace which we are trying to learn: “*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace.*” It is God’s omnipotence that keeps us. It is God’s Spirit who broods over the turbulent floods of life and brings order out of chaos. It is God’s Son who stands on the vessel, amid the wild storms, and compels them to become quiet and still at his feet. It is God’s grace that enters into the believer’s heart and abides there as a well of living water within, springing up into everlasting life. We cannot command our own spirit and compel it to be at rest when sorrow or peril is on every side. God alone can keep us in peace.

Nothing that is not infinite and eternal can be a safe and secure hiding place for immortal life.

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Chapter Four



FOCUS ON FORGIVENESS

MOST OF OUR FEELINGS of unrest in life stem from an inability to forgive—others and ourselves. Forgiveness is key if you intend to find peace of mind.

We often think we've forgiven, but the pain attached to a situation still plays a major role in how we move through each day—haunting us at every turn. Forgiveness is a process and going through that process successfully frees us from whatever is holding us down. Learn to forgive and you are well on your way to finding peace.

Life would be so much simpler if your spouse could read your mind, right? Then you wouldn't have to spend so much effort making sure they received your messages in the way you intended. But we all know that none of us is married to mind readers.

That said, frustration and confusion often occur as a result of being unclear when you deliver a message to your spouse. Being clear about what you mean, want, and need can spare you and your spouse a lot of stress and confusion, and that can lead to more peace for everyone.

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Talk to God. The most peaceful and centered people I know have spent a great deal of time strengthening their relationships with the Lord. Sometimes the burden weighing against you is so heavy, going to the Source of all things is the best way to help you find your way through the darkness and back to peace.

Learn to Let Go. You cannot change the past. We all know that, but despite this knowledge, we can hold on to what once happened with every fiber of our being.

For the sake of our own peace of mind, we have to learn how to truly let go. Moving forward with purpose and clarity is the only way to live a joyful life. Yes, we should all learn from our past, but holding on to things you want to change but cannot, won't serve you well.

Be More Patient. Patience is a virtue, indeed. We all have to understand that things will not always unfold in our chosen time frame.

We must accept that everything is as it should be and stressing over things happening at the speed we desire won't change much. Having patience with the people you love, as well as with the way your life is unfolding, is life-changing.

Declutter Your Life. There is definitely some truth to the saying, "*less is more.*" The less you have cluttering your space and your mind, the more you will find in life.

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Take the time to remove what doesn't matter and clear your life and your mind for the kind of peace that will leave you feeling happy and free.

Embrace your personal truth. When YOU stop living to please others, embracing who YOU truly are and what YOU truly want out of life, peace is abundant. If you stop trying to please everyone and just be who YOU want to be, peace will surely follow.

BUILD YOUR MARRIAGE ON YOUR KNEES:

Learning to love your spouse on your knees (*in prayer*) empowers you to love your spouse on your feet, even during the heat of conflict. The divorce rate is just as high among professing Christians as it is among non-Christians. This is no mystery when Christians are attempting to build their marriage the same way non-Christians attempt to build their marriage – without prayer on their knees. Psalms 127:1 says, “*Except the Lord builds the house (marriage)... they labor in vain who build it.*” Can a man actually expect success within marriage without seeking the creator of marriage on their knees?

All too often in marriage, couples only deal with anger or poor communication from the surface, but without getting to the root of the problem, the problem is sure to reappear. Not only will it reappear, but unseen issues continue to grow behind the walls of the marriage.

Often couples with issues in their marriage seek counseling from marriage therapists. They educate the couple on how to

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use the most advanced ways to solve their problems, but unless the couple is counseled to get on their knees to discover the root cause of the problem, their issues are sure to return. It only makes sense to address the root issues of problems rather than simply addressing what the root issues create. Only addressing the issues leads to much greater issues later down the road. It's on your knees in prayer that the root cause of issues can be discovered and overcome.

It is shocking to learn of so many couples who over the years sought to address issues within their marriage off their knees using only human effort and the mere wisdom of men. They sought advice from men who did not counsel them to get on their knees and there, on their knees, build their marriage.

Equally shocking is to learn how many moms and dads seek to raise their children off their knees as if they do not need God's help. Parenting on your knees is greater than any effort off your knees. Attempting to live life off your knees will indeed bring you more trouble and pain than you will ever realize.

We are a generation that has become comfortable living life without serious prayer. I have learned that when I love my wife on my knees, I can love my wife so much better on my feet. Staying off your knees will surely cost you more than you will ever know. It is often said, “*families that pray together stay together*”.

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Philippians 4:6-8, *“Don’t worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart. And God’s peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus”.*



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jabari McDimar is the Director of **Marriage Grace International**, and the President of **International Marriage Institute** with over 1000 students around the world. He is also the CEO of **Lucrative Idea Resources**: An Info Marketer, Content Creator, Blogger and Graphic Design firm based at Shanzu, Mombasa, Kenya.

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The duos are committed to conveying the **New Covenant** message of **Marriage Grace** to a *hurting and dying world*.

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