

PEACE & PROGRESS

IN A
HOSTILE WORLD

Kingdom Concepts
by John E. Schrock



GET READY TO BE RATTLED!!!

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John Schrock challenges me, inspires me, and rattles my theological presuppositions. It is without question that God has placed His hand on John's life to raise an awareness and understanding of the Kingdom of God. He is not a theologian writing to theologians. He is a down to earth practical leader who lives out the things he teaches. I encourage you to read his Kingdom Concepts with an open heart. If you find yourself debating with John in your mind as you read, that's great! His writing is doing its job - challenging your thinking. I predict that his insights will help bring balance to your thinking, even if you don't agree one hundred percent with all that he says. John's ability to share powerful truth simply and pragmatically has made him a dynamic force for transformation. I am proud to be his friend and pastor.

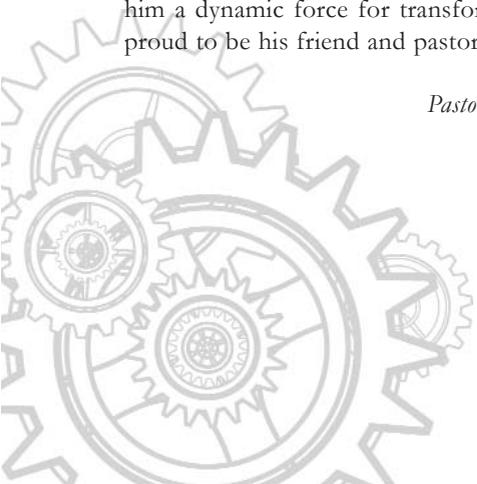
Pastor Timothy Troyer

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Printed in the United States of America.



P E A C E . . .

*Free form war, strife, or
disturbance*

*Following laws of order
and harmony*

*An undisturbed state of
mind.*



PEACE & PROGRESS



Making peace is to end hostility. In order to have personal peace we must have an undisturbed or settled mind and have a measure of satisfaction within ourselves. This is contentment or peace, which is not easily accomplished because we have creative minds and we like to dream of possibilities, progress and our future. We constantly seek for advancement and compare ourselves with others around us. This is healthy and normal; it is how we are created and made to function. We should not condemn ourselves for wishing or dreaming and comparing ourselves with those around us. However, we must be careful not to become jealous or envious and use unethical means to achieve or to compete.

Our problems start when we want what others have without having to earn it. This starts a war within us. When we want something bad enough, we will start negotiating with ourselves and start justifying our methods of getting it, whether it is a thing, position or status. This creates a battle within us, a constant struggle of what's right and what's wrong. As long as we are planning to work toward earning it, our minds will function right, and we can and will find ways to achieve many of our goals. This will make us feel good about ourselves and we will experience joy and have peace in our heart. We will feel like God himself did when he stood back and looked at what he created and said,



"I like that, that's good." The Psalmist said, "Great peace have they that love thy law." The end result of following God's law is that it will make us feel good about ourselves. Why? Because God's laws are the foundations for peace. His law demands love of our own self and love for our neighbors. The laws of God over-all insist on us being fair, righteous, and merciful: they hold us accountable. This creates a peaceful environment and gives us a great feeling of self worth as an achiever. So being creative and an achiever does not have to come from hostility, but should come from harmony.

What destroys our peace is when we start rationalizing our behavior in getting things without earning them. This attitude or reasoning will justify corruption, and we will lose good common sense of what's right or wrong. In such cases our creative minds will look for ways to manipulate, steal, and even plan how to get away with it. We cannot expect peace of heart or peace with each other when creative minds justify corruption.

We must remember that the mind is neutral. It is like a calculator and functions like a computer. We are not the mind; we are the soul and the decision maker. We are the will, and we have the power to say "yes" or "no" to the suggestions or evaluations of the mind. Just because a thought comes to our mind doesn't mean we cannot say no. We become what we are because of our choices. We can choose to be peaceful and negotiate our differences, or we may become hostile in our demands.

So peace stays with us when we are honest with ourselves and earn our way through life. Earning means the right to have, to be and to speak. Any honest achievement will bring joy and peace. Positions in high places can be

enjoyed when we serve well, and earn them, and have gotten them honestly, but not if we play the game of manipulation or bribe our way to the top. If we sell our souls to the game, it will destroy our personal peace. In most cases, we know when we're right or wrong; it shows up in the form of guilt. The law of life is: the methods we use in getting what we want become the future rules of the game. If we lie, cheat or steal to get it, then we will lie, cheat or steal to keep it. This takes away our personal peace as we fight with our conscience in a constant battle of justifying of our actions.

SELF INFLICTED BATTLES

There are also other battles that take away our personal peace. This occurs when we take on too many challenges. Our minds are made to search for answers to situations. Sometimes we expand or venture into projects with good intents. They become a part on our dream, and our minds go wild with excitement, but all of a sudden things do not seem to work out as we planned. Our finances are falling short and all of a sudden the joy and excitement of following the dream turns into mental depression. The same mind that was leading and spurring us on is now turning us off. Now fear and torment haunt us. So the battle is on and our peace is gone, faith turns to fear, vision turns to chaos and we start praying for peace of mind.

We must remember that both of these scenarios worked through the same mind; the positive and the negative. Fear is really faith in the negative. Once we believed in our dream; now we doubt, and fear takes over which means we doubt that it will come about. It is the same God and the same mind, but the situation has changed. Our view of the future has taken away our peace of mind and we struggle and fight a battle of the mind. To recapture our faith or

regain our peace, sometimes we must get outside counsel to help us reevaluate our dreams and adjust our plans in order to reestablish our confidence level.

Such is the battle for peace of mind. Some call it spiritual warfare, which in some cases may be true, but in many cases it is nothing more than an over-exertion of faith in our vision. It does take away our peace; sometimes to the extent of deep mental depression and to the point of hating ourselves and never dreaming again. There is an old saying: A cat getting burnt sitting on a hot stove will never sit on a hot stove again, but chances are, it will never sit on a cold one either. It is a lesson in the battle on the mind. We must not let it destroy us, for we cannot live without faith and hope.

PERSONAL CONFLICTS

Then there is another kind of peace that is constantly being discussed: peace with each other. This of course starts with having personal peace, for no man or woman is qualified to negotiate peace with others until they understand and have personal peace within themselves. The rule of life is: You catch what people have, not what they say they have. For example, someone may have the measles, but tell you that they have the mumps. However, regardless of what disease they say they have, you will contract the disease that they really have. Likewise, peace is caught more than taught.

In times of war we hear much about peace and the process thereof. Before we are qualified to participate in the process, we must understand that our world is made up of good and evil. There are positive and negative forces such as right and wrong or light and darkness. Sometimes we understand the causes of the conflict and sometimes we are ignorant of them. We must always consider this: we

might be an expert in one situation and blind in another. In either case, however, we still may have to choose sides; it is very hard to remain neutral. So we listen to both sides and we become persuaded and sometimes confused. Without an understanding of what is good and what is evil, we may think we are a solution when in reality we are working against

Conflicts always start by differences of opinions, ideology, or worldviews.

what is right and good. In either case we become a part of an opinion or sometimes a part of a party. In this battle of choosing, sometimes we lose our personal peace as well as our peace with one another. We may become a part of a movement or opinion, even when we are not well informed of the real situation. Sometimes we are well informed, sometimes just plain persuaded, and many times we have no clue but simply become a part of the movement. Peace movements always sound like a good thing to join. It sounds holy, it seems right, and very rarely can we argue against the idea of peace. It just seems like the right thing to join. After all, who can argue about making peace? Isn't that what we all want?

WHY THERE ARE WARS

Yes, we all want peace, however there is much more to peace than just joining a movement. Peace is an attitude and a process. Our Lord said "Blessed are the peace makers," therefore peace is to me made. It is something that can be done. However, our Lord also said that wars must, and will come. There are just causes for war. God himself is a warrior: He expelled Satan and one third of the angelic host from heaven. Conflicts always start by differences of opinions, ideology, or worldviews. Everybody has an opinion about how they think the world should be. We hear

people say, "if I were in charge I would do so and so." But then sometimes they get in charge and they don't make any changes at all. Maybe it is because they didn't understand the situation until they got there or maybe they didn't want to understand. Whatever the reason, probably most of the time they didn't understand all of the facets of the situation and were just a part of an opinion or movement. In any case, we are at such a time again where we are in need of peace in our world. However, we should also be aware of the "movement mode," and that many people promote peace for the sake of the word "peace." Sometimes they are clueless regarding the peace process, how peace is made, and what it is made of. So let us talk about what makes peace, and how it is made.

Remember, it all starts with having personal peace. There is an old saying: If you are not happy with others, chances are that you are not happy with yourself. This is not entirely true, but it should be, at least, considered. The problem we have today is that we have different cultures, and these cultures have different world views. That is OK, until these different cultures use violence or terrorism, rather than dialogue, in their attempts to persuade. That could be why Jesus said wars will come. Sometimes it is the only way disagreements can be settled. That, however, does not necessarily mean that wars are always right or necessary; it just means we do not understand or want to (or cannot afford to) tolerate the other person's view. Evil will destroy; it is like a cancer and sometimes we must take violent action to cut away cancer in order to save the whole body.

PEACE AND PROSPERITY

There are many good examples of why and how peace is destroyed, and why sometimes war is the only solution. For example, corruption has deep roots and is very

entrenched in many of our societies. The first step in working towards peace of mind is to deal with the destructive forces of corruption. A corrupt mind is a troubled mind. When government agencies or business leaders practice bribes and corruption, the general population will feel justified to do the same. This creates a constant tension and mistrust within society as a whole. Most of us want to enjoy the benefits of peace and prosperity, but sometimes we do not understand or do not want to deal with the destructive force of corruption.

***Corruption is a destructive
obstacle in the way of peace***

We are often engaged in trying to create jobs, do international trade and a lot of other creative programs to promote prosperity. Many of these are good and needed, but we forget this law of life: prosperity is a by-product of a peaceful, righteous culture. Prosperity comes naturally and automatically if the culture's values are right. We must remember the value of peace, or we will become corrupt. The progress of societies is primarily based upon how we deal with corruption. Corruption is a destructive obstacle in the way of peace, because when we lie, cheat, steal or manipulate it creates an environment of mistrust, uncertainty, and brings out the anger and meanness in people. You cannot negotiate peace with evil. Evil and corruption have to be disciplined.

Let us learn from nature. We don't ask a tree to grow, or pray for a seed to produce. We just put it in the right environment and it will grow, be productive and will multiply itself to unlimited success; the seed follows and functions under certain stable and fixed laws. It has the potential within itself, but the progress or the fruitfulness of the seed depends on its environment. It needs sun, moisture and certain temperatures. It cannot produce properly in a hostile environment. Its measure of success is dependant

upon the culture or environment in which it is placed.

Likewise, the human mind functions similarly. Every person has the potential in himself to be creative, productive, and to reproduce. More importantly is that the mind is not limited like a seed, which can only produce after its kind. The human mind can take anything and redesign, recreate or make something new out of what already exists. We have the power to create or to destroy. Our future is in our hands, depending upon the culture and environment we create for ourselves. In a corrupt environment, the mind becomes programmed to expect corruption to be the standard way of life. That is why corruption and violence are destructive and must be dealt with. We cannot have peace with each other, or as a nation, if we tolerate corruption or extortion. A corrupt person trying to make peace is like trying to blend oil with water.

THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

We must remember that prosperity is a by-product of a certain culture or peaceful environment. The human mind was designed to be creative. However, under certain structures, legal systems, or religious beliefs, it cannot explore or create, therefore it retreats out of fear of the structure. Some of these systems, structures, or religious beliefs create an environment that limits the creativity of the mind, which limits progress. Our problem is that we want prosperity first, before we behave. But that is not how it works. We must behave before prosperity comes.

On the other hand we may have a system or structure that has almost no discipline. We may want peace at all costs, which creates an environment without direction or control. So the individual's mind has no rules or structure to follow, and each individual does what seems right in his own mind. In this way we lose our sense of right and

wrong. This creates an environment that invites corruption. Some claim that this is freedom, but freedom cannot be experienced without laws or parameters. Without law and order the environment will bring chaos and confusion, destroying respect for each other and for team work. This does not create a peaceful environment. There is another law of life: where there is no law or order, the mind breeds corruption.

It is interesting to note that in all of creation, only man was given commandments. There is a reason: Because the human mind is creative and can also be destructive. Without a code of ethics it will bring self-destruction. All of creation functions from fixed laws, but since man was given reason and choice, he has to have discipline or a code of ethics for the mind. Everything in life must be governed to keep it from self-destruction. The motors in our cars have governors or they would self-destruct. All societies must have governing laws for the purpose of saving the nations. These laws must be fair and reasonable for everyone, creating a healthy environment for the mind. They will bring peace to individuals as well as to each other.

***Freedom cannot be experienced
without laws or parameters.***

Prosperity is the offspring of a proper code of ethics, which is bred in a culture having the appropriate governing legal system. If the society is too disciplined or too harsh, the legal system will stifle the mind and people will lose their creativity and willingness to produce. On the other hand, if our legal code is too loose and too unstructured, we lose our direction and become irresponsible.

SOMETIMES MISUNDERSTOOD

What does this have to do with peace? Everything. Peace and prosperity go hand in hand. There is an old saying: Prosperity is guarded by problems. He who solves the problems will have prosperity. Likewise, peace is guarded by corruption. If we want peace, we have to deal with corruption. If we have peace within us we will function as peacemakers. We will become problem solvers and healers of broken relationships. This will create a peaceful environment where we can be productive under a set of laws that promote fairness and freedom.

There is great danger in being prosperous without character, because too much prosperity can make us arrogant and haughty. Others who are not prosperous or do not

Peace is guarded by corruption.

understand how we achieved our success may get jealous and want to pull us down or destroy us, sometimes using violence or terror. The nature of a person without self-governing principles will be to demand their share of wealth, claiming that it is their right. They may blame us for being unfair.

Some nations or groups are trapped in their worldview of prosperity and become violently opposed to the very system or code of ethics they need. They are afraid their people will see the light and will want to abandon their old ways or their religious beliefs. But that is the way life works. Whoever finds the light of peace will prosper. Corruption, inner fighting, and bad attitudes are destructive obstacles to peace and prosperity. Others want to keep things as they are, and they are committed to holding onto the past. Many of these nations or groups become protective and isolate themselves into separation. Sometimes they become anti-everything except themselves, even to the point of using violence as their way of expressing or being heard. Many

of them probably mean well, but are ignorant of the ways of life and peace.

There are different ways to establish peace or a peaceful environment. Here are a few:

1. Educate the people on the value of being honest. It should start at home and in Kindergarten all the way through the educational system.
2. Teach everyone, not just kids, the value of getting along. Teach them personal peaceful behavior, how to be gentle, respectful and well mannered, and discipline bad behavior.
3. Teach and practice tolerance. We should not expect everyone to feel the same, or to be equal, because there are different levels of growth and understanding. It is OK to be different. However, don't force your opinions on others. We should always give our opinions, but also listen to the opinions of others. This will create an environment where truth will emerge. In the meantime, there is always some common ground to work from.

Keep the people well informed, not just of what you are doing, but also why and what your intent is. Develop a transparent environment, whether it is a family, business, corporation, or the society as a whole. A nation that promotes honesty and transparency will have a good future, because corruption and evil like to hide in darkness and obscurity.

CONCLUSION

Peace is rest for the soul and mind, and those that have personal peace will create an environment of peace and prosperity. So be careful when you join a movement, or you

may be for "peace" but promote violence. Remember that peace and freedom are much alike in that there is a cost involved. Everybody wants peace but most of us want it our way. Many think that we should have peace at all costs, but you cannot tolerate evil. It takes self-discipline to have peace. Sometimes peace is offensive and sometimes it is defensive. Sometimes it is negotiated, and sometimes we must fight for it. Remember this: Everyone needs discipline. If we do not discipline ourselves, we must and will be disciplined by others, and sometimes this turns into war. The bottom line: Fighting evil is a constant battle that must be won. Progress and peace are a part of the development of the world, and they come from overcoming evil or wrong. So stand for something that is good and right, and you will enjoy peace in a troubled world.

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This ministry is funded through the membership and donations of people who believe that our future is in the Kingdom of God.