

## **Challenge 1: Hold onto Peace**

When I was a senior in high school I had a class in which the teacher gave us a final two-part assignment. The first part was to write a letter to ourselves entitled “Me in Ten Years”. We were to put our letters into a self-addressed envelope and in ten years our teacher promised to mail the letters back to us.

The second part of the assignment was to choose three goals we had written about in our letters, write them down on a small piece of paper, and put the paper inside an inflated balloon. On the last day of class we released the balloons full of our dreams into the air.

As I watched my dream-filled balloon ascend into oblivion that warm spring day, only weeks before graduation, I was not aware of what subtly slipped away with it.

Just as promised, ten years later the letter to myself arrived in the mail. Now twenty-eight years old I sat on the floor of my one bedroom apartment, opened the envelope, and began to read. From the first sentence tears began to flow. The girl behind the words was now a woman left remembering the balloon that not only carried away her dreams, but also her peace.

Throughout those ten years I searched for peace, tried to grab it, even capturing it for a moment, only to let go again and watch it get further and further away. My balloon carried dreams that I had accomplished, the ones I could control, but it was the heart-dreams, the ones that held my passions, my purpose, my identity, that were left untouched. My heart-dreams defined me. They are the ones I would fight and give up everything to keep. But they were also the ones that I had no control over. My heart-dreams were to be a wife and a mother.

I sat there on the floor left with one question: Is Peace Possible?

How does a woman who was designed by God with innate desires to be a wife and mother and who has Godly desires to serve through building a Spirit-filled home find peace with disconnected circumstances?

**There are a few things she must understand:**

**Peace does not come from met desires.**

In all met desires there comes a time when even the best becomes worst. For instance, too much of the best meal becomes the worst stomach ache. The best shopping spree becomes a mound of bills. And the best man that ever lived becomes the person that hurts you to your core. Happiness is what our face shows in the midst of all of those wonderful “bests”, but peace is how our soul sustains us when they take a turn for the worse. Peace is the anchor that holds us firm through the times that we have our desires met and the times that our met desires disappoint us. The only place to receive this peace is through having Jesus fill up your soul.

**Jesus’ peace is supernatural.**

Peace is not the same as happiness. In my early thirties I finally got to a place of peace in my singleness, but I was still not happy about it. I did not want marriage and children any less than I had ten years earlier. I still prayed and begged God to bless me in this way. I still got angry and cried and screamed. However, I began to choose to believe that Jesus loves me more than I could ever imagine, that He knows what's best for me, and that no matter my circumstances He will take care of me. Through believing these truths, and saying them over and over again, the door was opened for me to experience supernatural peace. The kind of peace where the world around you is coming down, crashing and burning, but you stand, still mourning and aware, yet with an untouched spirit.

### **Peace is a result of daily surrendering.**

I am constantly searching for the one-prayer-fixes-everything approach to finding peace. This is something I still seek! But I know that this is not typically how God works. Yes, God is a God of miracles. He does and can answer prayers immediately and miraculously. However, more than answering our prayers, He wants our hearts to be sold-out for Him, and this typically takes place through a daily surrendering of ourselves. I never woke up and said to myself, "I love being single! I want to be single forever." But I did wake up and say, "If I am single forever, I will still choose You, O, God. Your ways are perfect. I love you more than myself, and I want Your peace over all else." The next day when I was in the middle of a good cry, I would say it again. And the next day I would say it again. Every day I laid it down.

### **Today's Daily Challenge:**

My Challenge was to replace my dream-filled balloon with God's dream-filled balloon for me while also holding on to God's peace. Today, single friends, this is my Challenge to you.

### **Today's Daily Prayer:**

Today, Lord, I ask you for courage to surrender my dreams to you. I am not asking for courage in order to let go of my dreams or forget about them or even change them at this point, but I am asking so that I can offer them to you so that you can work through them – so that you can do with them as you will. Please, Lord, allow me to experience your supernatural peace as I surrender to you.

### **Today's Daily Scripture:**

"Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you." 2 Thessalonians 3:16

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 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 your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:4-7

“Then he said to them all: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.’” Luke 9:23

**Today's Thinking Questions:**

1. Do you believe peace is possible?
2. Read Isaiah 9:6: “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”
3. Does this verse change your belief about peace?
4. If Jesus is the Prince of Peace, then where must we go to find peace?