

Weekly Lesson

SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT

Imagine a police officer assigned to a fugitive return unit who is sent out to seek and pursue an outlaw. This outlaw, even after being found, is particularly good at sneaking away again. In our recovery journey, peace is like a fugitive outlaw. We seek it, find it, and then before you know it, bam- just like that- we've lost it. God knew it would be that way. That's why Psalm 34 says to seek peace *and* pursue it. Peter wrote about this psalm in a letter to the church. He was saying what a police chief might say to the fugitive return officer, "Stay alert, don't take your eyes off that one."

Peace is not a find-it-once-and-you're-good-to-go feeling. Just as the officer with the find-and-follow mission, we need the commitment to find and follow peace. When we get distracted or wander away to follow something else, we lose our peace. Thankfully, God gave Peace a heartbeat and a name and sent Him to rescue us. Jesus came as the Prince of Peace, and it is indeed Jesus who we find and follow. And, since we didn't do any work to obtain the free gift of salvation, we can't lose our salvation when we've lost our peace. Even when we are faithless, Jesus remains faithful. So, once we are saved, we are invited into an ongoing, interactive, dynamic and rewarding life of seeking and pursuing peace. In the police analogy, the police officer who loses track of the outlaw is *still* a police officer. He may be a frazzled and frustrated officer who needs to regroup and start the search over, but he remains an officer just the same. Frazzled is fine- just keep following after peace.

In recovery we recognize the inner disturbances of impulsiveness, fatigue, self-pity, fear, laziness, and giving up. But, when we are sold out in pursuit of peace, it is easier to ignore the distractions and disturbances that lead us off the hot hunting trail. Let's also face the reality that we have a spiritual enemy working against us who will set tempting traps to deter us from pursuing peace. As the enemy flings deterrent arrows, we use our faith as a defensive weapon. Like good fugitive return officers, we submit to the proper training and the discipline to hone our skills of staying on track and following hard after our Prince of Peace. We remain single-minded to watch for peace around every corner, and to keep our eyes fixed so we don't lose sight of what we are really after. Faith is our fuel to stay focused on pursuing peace. And, peace is vital to our recovery. It is a worthy pursuit.

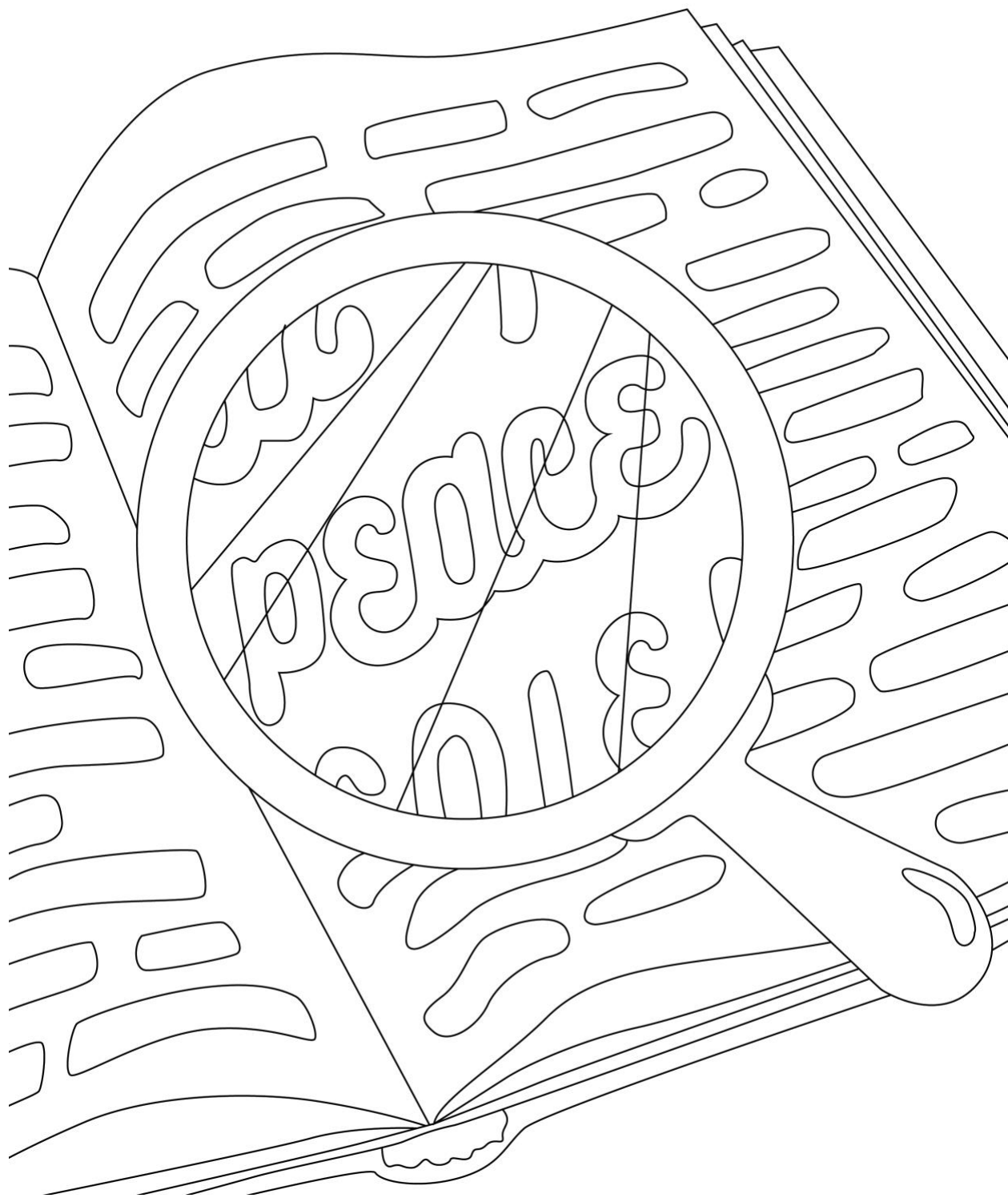
PERSONALIZE THIS LESSON

Think: I am surrendered to following the Prince of Peace. I am focusing on the freedoms of non-agitation. I am alert for distractions and deterrents and ready to dismiss any that come my way.

Feel: I feel at ease in my inner being. I feel committed to peace. I feel gentle. I feel relief.

Do: Keep your spiritual (third) eye on peace. Find peace and stay on the emotional trail behind it. Beware of peace robbers. Let all flaming arrows bounce off your faith shield.

Memorize: You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You (Isaiah 26:3).



WEEKLY LESSON: SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT

What robs you of your peace? (Be specific and list the distractions and disturbances)

Describe your experience of pursuing peace this week?

How can a shield of faith serve as a defensive weapon against threats to steal your peace?

How and why is peace vital to your own recovery? Explain.

Suggested Song: “Soldier” by Unspoken (Follow Through, 2016, Centricity Music)
