



DEAN WELCH – TEACHER

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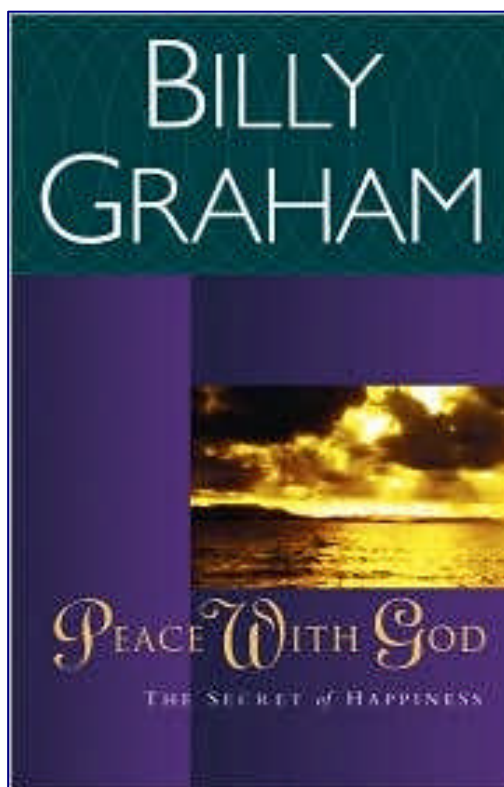
# THE antidote

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## WEEKLY SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

NOVEMBER 29, 2009

LESSON #7 FROM THE **MASTERWORK** SERIES STUDY OF:



# THE antidote

*Let's pretend that we all have just boarded a jet for a non-stop trip overseas. We all get on the airplane, take our seats, and fasten our seat belts, then we reach for a magazine, and when we do, we see something at our feet that bothers us—a set of bicycle pedals. Attached to those bicycle pedals is a big sprocket with a chain going thru the floor to the engines. So, you call for a flight attendant, and you ask, "What's with the bicycle pedals?" She says, "Look around!" You look and everybody's got them. "Why do we all have these pedals?" you ask. "Well, the pilot has agreed to get us in the air, but we have to keep it in the air. He'll get us to 30,000 feet, but then we'll all have to pedal real hard to keep it there."*

I don't care how hard we pedal, how long, how fast—we're going down! And your chances of keeping that jumbo jet in the air by pedaling is equal to the chance of you keeping your soul secure by your efforts. Today we wrap up our 7-week study from Billy Graham's *Peace With God* as we talk about our eternal security and God's antidote to sin. You will recall that our memory verse for this entire study has been **ROMANS 5: 1 (NIV)** which says, *"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

*Did you know that during the construction of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco that during the first half of the construction 23 men fell to their deaths in the waters below. It was so dangerous that they stopped construction. Then they built a huge net under the bridge at a cost of \$100,000, so if anyone did fall they would not be hurt. During the second half of the construction only 8 men fell and, of course, none of them died. But here's the amazing thing... during the last half of construction the work proceeded at 25% greater efficiency. Having the net under them didn't make them more careless it made them more confident and more efficient. **Why?** The workers could concentrate on their jobs*

and not have to worry about dying! To be a productive Christian you need to know that your future is absolutely secure. And the first step is to believe and then, as we talked about last week, to repent and turn away from our sin and turn to Christ only.

We live in a confusing world. At a time when TV screens are filled with competing political ads, national health care concerns, mammogram testing, cervical cancer screening guidelines, disagreements about foreign policy, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and all kinds of news reports based on false information, we wonder: "Just what do we know for sure?" In a world of confusion and uncertainty, can we be sure of anything? Yes, as we've been learning over the past seven weeks, we know we can have peace with God and that our eternal security can be locked down. Turn to **1 JOHN 5: 13-14, 18-20 (NLT)** and follow along, trying to count how many times John says "we **know**":

*<sup>13</sup>"I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may **know** you have eternal life. And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him. <sup>14</sup>And since **we know** he hears us when we make our requests, **we also know** that he will give us what we ask for... <sup>18</sup>**We know** that God's children do not make a practice of sinning, for God's Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch them. <sup>19</sup>**We know** that we are children of God and that the world around us is under the control of the evil one. <sup>20</sup>And **we know** that the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding so that **we can know** the true God. And now we live in fellowship with the true God because we live in fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only true God, and he is eternal life."*

What a passage! In this world of confusion and false information—when scientists and medical experts are constantly changing their theories; when politicians are changing their stances—God's Word assures us that there are some things that we can know for certain. There are some truths that cannot be denied and will never change; some things of which we can be sure. One of the assurances we see in that verse is the promise from God that He

holds us securely and that as a believer we cannot be lost! Have you ever questioned your eternal salvation—or wondered if you could *fall from grace*?

In *The Cure for a Troubled Heart*, author and pastor Ron Mehl, tells the story *about a dear, saintly old woman who was gradually losing her memory. Details began to blur. Throughout her life, however, this woman had cherished and depended on the Word of God, committing to memory many verses from her worn King James Bible. Her favorite verse had always been 2 Timothy 1:12: "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." She was finally confined to bed in a nursing home, and her family knew she would never leave alive. As they visited with her, she would still quote verses of Scripture on occasion—especially 2 Timothy 1:12. But with the passing of time, even parts of this well-loved verse began to slip away.*

*"I know whom I have believed," she would say. "He is able to keep... what I have committed... to him." Her voice grew weaker. And the verse became even shorter. "What I have committed... to him." As she was dying, her voice became so faint family members had to bend over to listen to the few whispered words on her lips. And at the end, there was only one word of her life verse left. "Him." She whispered it again and again as she stood on the threshold of heaven. "Him... Him... Him." It was all that was left. It was all that was needed.*

True peace with God comes only from having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ! He's the HIM we just spoke of. Please don't doubt what God has done for each believer through the blood of Jesus Christ. Listen to these reassuring words from **JOHN 10: 27-30 (ESV)**, if you still have doubts: *"<sup>27</sup>My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup>I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup>My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. <sup>30</sup>I and the Father are one."* So, let me ask you, why can't

Satan rob you of your salvation? [COMES FROM FATHER—WHO IS GREATER THAT ALL] In times of confusion, in times of loss, in times of desperation, one truth of which we can be certain is God's promise of eternal life for the true believer. **Can anyone describe what the security in Christ means to them?**

In *Mattoon's Treasures* from John, it says: *We are secure in Christ. The security is in the **shepherd's** ability, not in the **sheep's**. John 10:28 is very emphatic in the Greek text. It reads, "They will indeed not ever perish." Jesus says, "No man plucks them out of my Father's hand." The word "pluck" is from the word **harpazo** which means "to snatch or grab violently." NO one can snatch a soul from Christ's protective care.*

Knowing we are secure eternally is wonderful, but what about temptation and sin that keep pulling us down? Why would God allow temptation in our lives—that certainly can be a "peace breaker?" Turn to **1 CORINTHIANS 10:13 (NASB)** and let's see what God's Word says? *<sup>13</sup>No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.* What do we learn from this verse?

But, still, back to the question I just asked before I read the verse about temptation. Many are familiar with the promise of **ROMANS 8:28** that *"in all things God works for the good of those who love him."* **But have you ever wondered how anything good can come out of temptation? Why does God allow Satan to attack our faith, to shower us with doubts?** One clue comes from the world of football: *Running back Rashaan Salaam won the Heisman trophy in 1995 for his outstanding rushing career in college. But in his rookie year with the Chicago Bears, the pros uncovered a weakness in Salaam's game: He was prone to fumble. Although he led the Bears in rushing during his rookie season, he coughed up the ball nine times. The coaches devised a practice drill to try to correct the problem. They tied a long strap around a football. As Rashaan ran with that ball clutched against his chest,*

*another Bear ran behind him yanking on the other end of the strap. Rashaan had to squeeze the ball with all his might to keep from losing it.* In many ways, that's what temptation does to us. The more the enemy of our souls tries to yank away our faith, the tighter we squeeze it to our heart. **God allows temptation so that we will CLING more fiercely to HIM.**

Even though there's always a way out provided to us, scripture tells us another way to fight our adversary and to have peace. Turn to **JAMES 4:7 (NIV)** and listen to these words: *"**Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**"* What does it mean to **RESIST** the devil? The word "resist" is from the Greek word ***anthistemi*** (*anth-is'-tay-mee*) which is a compound of the words *anti* and *istimi*. The word *anti* means against, as to oppose something. The word *istimi* means to stand. When placed into one word, it means **to stand against** or to **stand in opposition**. By using this word, James plainly lets us know that we must be aggressively determined to stand against the work of the devil. Just shutting our eyes and hoping the enemy will withdraw won't work. We must dig in our heels, brace ourselves for a fight, and put our full force forward to drive him back and out of our lives.

It's tough to stand up against our adversary and to resist him in today's society, isn't it? Why is that so hard? Why is it not such a good idea to love the world and its ways? *Stuff breaks. Beverly was across the street last week at Tire Town and spoke with a woman who had bought a brand new car recently—within the last 6 months—but the tires were ruined and had to be replaced. Although less than 6 months old, the tires had been ruined because the car's alignment was incorrect from the factory and had cut the tires to shreds. These things happen. If you love the world, you will constantly be disappointed. Any time something breaks, say out loud, "This is why God told us not to love the world or the things in the world. The things in the world are passing away."*

Also, please remember what scripture tells us in **1 JOHN 2: 15-17 (MSG)** about loving the world. Listen to Eugene Peterson's

paraphrase in The Message: <sup>15-17</sup>*Don't love the world's ways. Don't love the world's goods. Love of the world squeezes out love for the Father. Practically everything that goes on in the world—wanting your own way, wanting everything for yourself, wanting to appear important—has nothing to do with the Father. It just isolates you from him. The world and all its wanting, wanting, wanting is on the way out—but whoever does what God wants is set for eternity.”*

True peace with God comes from HIM—not the world. The world will disappoint and let us down. People and stuff will do the same thing. Our focus and energy should all be directed to the One who provides our eternal security—Jesus Christ. As was evident in the story I told about the saintly old woman who memorized scripture, we also need to spend more time in God’s Word. Can you repeat from memory at least one verse for every year of your life? If you’re five, then you should know five verses and where they’re from. But, if you’re sixty, well...you get the picture. Remember when Jesus faced the devil in the wilderness, how did he counter the temptations of the devil? Yes, with the Word of God—not by sheer human strength or willpower—not even by some supernatural miracle or divine intervention.

How should we **“feel”** about the God’s Word? Listen to these words from **1 PETER 2: 2 (NLT)**, which says: <sup>2</sup>*Like newborn babies, you must  **CRAVE**  pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment,”*

When Sir James Simpson, the man who discovered chloroform, was on his deathbed, a friend asked him, “Sir, what are your speculations?” Simpson replied: *“Speculations!?! I have no speculations! ‘For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.’”* Did you recognize those words from 2 Timothy 1:12? The same words that the saintly old woman in our earlier story relied upon. Peace with God comes from knowing in who you have believed. Is that a good description of you?

## **How does a person develop an appetite for God's Word?**

*Josh Hunt tells the story of Frenchman Michel Lotito and says that he has an iron gut. For some reason, Lotito likes to eat metal. In the past twenty-five years, Lotito has eaten eleven bicycles, seven shopping carts, a metal coffin, a cash register, a washing machine, a television, and 660 feet of fine chain. Lotito says it wasn't easy eating his first bicycle: "I started with the metal and moved on to the tires," he recalls. "It was really difficult to stay that extra day to finish off the rubber. Metal's tasteless, but rubber is horrible." Now Lotito swallows pieces of tire and frame together. But none of that can compare with his biggest meal: a Cessna airplane. That's right, Lotito has eaten an entire light airplane, 2,500 pounds of aluminum, steel, vinyl, Plexiglas, and rubber. With a meal like that he cuts the metal into pieces about the size of his fingernail and consumes about two pounds a day. Most people would agree that Michel Lotito has an unhealthy appetite.*

When we first come to Christ, we have appetites just as unhealthy. New believers need to change their appetites from what is not food at all to what is true food for the soul. **What keeps you from your time with God? What are some examples, or excuses, we use?**

*In closing, Tony Campolo recalled a deeply moving incident that happened during Jr. High week at a Christian camp several years ago. Even though this was a Christian camp, many of the campers were **not** and many who were did not act like it. They treated another one of the campers, a boy with spastic paralysis, with heartless ridicule. Whenever he would ask a question, the boys would deliberately answer in a halting, mimicking way.*

*One night his cabin group chose him to lead the evening devotional before the entire camp. It was one more effort on their part to have some fun at his expense. Unabashedly, the boy stood up, and in his strained, slurred manner—each word coming with enormous effort—he said simply, "I know Jesus loves me, and I love Jesus!"*

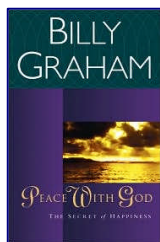
*That was all he said, but no one laughed—there was absolute silence, broken only by the sound of some of the boys beginning to cry. Something wonderful happened in the hearts of the campers that week, and it was all because of his simple testimony, "I know Jesus loves me, and I love Jesus."*

As we conclude this 7-week study about peace with God, know that when you place your faith in Jesus, God becomes your Father, you become His child, other believers become your brothers and sisters, and the church becomes your spiritual family. The only way to get into God's family is by being *born again*. You want PEACE WITH GOD? It's not something that we earn—it's a gift. "*He who has the Son has the life*" (1 John 5:12). We need to **ABIDE IN HIM**. Please listen to the words of a powerful song about this by Katherine Jenkins, following along with the words I've handed out.

**PLAY ABIDE WITH ME BY KATHERINE JENKINS (4:36 MIN)  
HAND OUT LYRICS**

Christians need never worry or be confused on this issue. You want the antidote for sin in order to have peace with God. It's Jesus Christ. If you are in Christ—if you are a child of God—then you can say with confidence that you know you have eternal life as well as peace with Him.

Let's Pray.



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