

CULTIVATE
LIFE TOGETHER IN THE SPIRIT

APRIL
GROUP GUIDE



Welcome back to Cultivate

We pray that this journey is already bearing fruit in your life and that your group is becoming a place where authenticity and vulnerability can begin to emerge.

This month we turn our attention to the fruit of the Spirit called peace. Not simply the absence of conflict or a momentary calm, but the deep and steady wholeness that comes from being held in the presence of God.

Scripture speaks of peace in ways that reach far beyond our modern understanding. The biblical word *shalom* carries the sense of restoration, harmony, and life made whole again. It is the peace of a world ordered under God's goodness. Can you imagine? A world of wholeness created under the pure direction of God—that is our image of peace for the month.

Jesus once said to his disciples: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives.” (John 14:27a)

The peace Jesus offers does not depend on perfect circumstances. It rises when we remember God is near, intervenes when fear begins to take hold, reigns within our hearts, and stills us when life feels overwhelming.

Peace grows slowly. It is cultivated through trust, attentiveness, and the quiet work of the Spirit.

This month, challenge yourself to not only search and crave peace that Jesus can offer, but partner with him to be a vessel of peace to those around you. Those who embody peace are true standouts in today's world. God offers that to each of his disciples as a gift and a blessing.





Personal Reflection and Practice

Look up the passages below on your own and read them slowly. As you read, notice what it reveals about peace, its source, its posture, or its purpose, and name the main idea in your own words.

Peace That Comes From God

Numbers 6:24–26

Isaiah 26:3

John 14:27

Questions to consider:

Where does peace originate?

How do we hope to receive peace?

Peace That Intervenes

Mark 4:35–41

Philippians 4:6–7

Colossians 3:15

Questions to consider:

How is peace meant to help us prosper as a community?

How is Jesus a vessel of peace?

Peace That Reigns

Romans 5:1-2

James 3:17-18

Questions to consider:

How is peace meant to shape how we live?

Under whose authority do we hope to live in peace?

Peace That Stills

Psalms 46:10

Mark 6:30-32

Questions to consider:

What does it mean for you that Jesus wants you to, at times, pull away and find rest?

How does stillness and rest encourage peace within your life?

GROUP TIME

This outline is a suggested flow for your time together, not a prescription. Use what serves your group and trust the Spirit's guidance.

APRIL

Cultivating Peace

Goal: Reflect on peace as a fruit of the Spirit and notice where God's peace is rising, intervening, reigning, or stilling our hearts.

Themes for the Month:

Week 1:

Peace That Rises

John 20:19–23; Proverbs 12:20

Week 2:

Peace That Intervenes

1 Samuel 25

Week 3:

Peace That Reigns

Colossians 3:12–17

Week 4:

Peace That Stills

Mark 4:35–41



SESSION FLOW

1. Welcome + Opening

Leader Says:

As we gather today, we turn our attention to the fruit of the Spirit called peace. This month is not about controlling our circumstances but noticing how God's peace may already be present and learning to remain open to the Spirit's work.

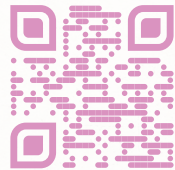
Opening Questions:

- When you hear the word peace, what image or experience comes to mind?
 - Does peace feel present in your life right now, or distant? Why?
 - This month, we celebrate Easter. Does that celebration make peace more tangible in your life? Why or why not?
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2. Watch the Teaching Video with Pastor Rich (10–20 minutes)

Leader Prompt Before Video:

As you watch, listen for how Pastor Rich explains the kind of peace Jesus offers and how it differs from the peace the world often promises.



Video Summary (for leader reference):

- Many people long for peace but do not know where to find it.
- Jesus promises a peace different from the peace the world offers.
- In the story of Jesus calming the storm, the disciples panic while Jesus rests.
- When Jesus speaks 'Peace, be still,' the storm obeys him.
- True peace comes from trusting the One who has authority over creation.
- Anxiety and fear often dominate modern life.
- Peace cannot be manufactured; it must be received as a gift from God.
- God's peace can stand guard over our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

After watching the video together, invite a time of sharing to hear what stood out for all those in the group. Was there a particular story that resonated with the group?

Ask:

When you hear the word peace, what image or experience comes to mind?

3. Hear the Word (5 minutes)

Scripture Focus: Philippians 4:6-7

Invite one person to read the passage slowly. After a pause, invite another person to read it again in a different translation.

NIV (New International Version):

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.

NASB (New American Standard Bible):

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

ESV (English Standard Version):

...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

4. Personal Reflection (5 minutes)

Leader Says: To begin, use the prompts below to consider peace in your own life. Then, consider what you'd like to share with the group.

- Which word or phrase stayed with you in scripture?

- Does this description of peace feel comforting, challenging, or both?

- Where do you sense peace present in your life?

- Where does peace feel difficult to imagine right now?

5. Shared Reflection (8-10 minutes)

Invite group sharing where comfortable:

- In your group conversation, did a different word or phrase stand out?

- What does this passage reveal about the peace God offers?

- What might it look like to allow peace to grow slowly in your life?



6. Real Life Application

Leader Says:

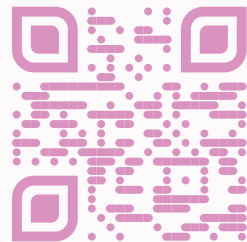
It is remarkable how often the wisdom of Scripture is being affirmed by modern research. The practices the Bible invites us into are not only spiritually formative—they also shape the way our minds and bodies experience life.

Peace and gratitude are no exception.

In Philippians 4:6-7, the Apostle Paul encourages believers to bring their worries to God with thanksgiving. In doing so, he describes gratitude as one of the pathways through which God's peace begins to guard our hearts and minds.

Interestingly, modern neuroscience is discovering something similar. Research shows that practicing gratitude can actually help rewire the brain, strengthening patterns that lead to greater calm, resilience, and emotional well-being.

Scan the QR code to read an article that explores how modern science is beginning to affirm what Paul encouraged centuries ago—that gratitude can open the door to deeper peace.



Article Reflection (for leader reference):

- Did anything surprise you about how gratitude affects the brain?
- The Apostle Paul encourages believers to bring requests to God with thanksgiving. How does the research in the article deepen or reinforce Paul's wisdom for you?
- When you intentionally practice gratitude, how does it affect your sense of peace or calm?
- Have you ever experienced a moment where gratitude shifted your perspective in a difficult situation?
- The article suggests that gratitude can reshape the way our brains respond to stress. Why do you think practices like thanksgiving have such a powerful impact on our inner life?
- If gratitude truly helps “guard our hearts and minds,” what might change in our lives if thanksgiving became a more regular habit?



7. Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Each month, trust the Spirit's slow and faithful work.

Leader Says:

Peace is not something we create for ourselves. It is something we receive from the presence of God. Even when life feels unsettled, we can trust that Christ remains with us. As we stay open to him, his peace has a way of settling into the places where we feel anxious or overwhelmed.

Pray Together:

God of peace,

Thank you for being present with us in every season.

When our minds feel restless and
our hearts overwhelmed,
remind us that your peace is near.

Quiet our anxious thoughts and steady our hearts.

Help us trust your presence and
remain open to the Spirit
who gently forms peace within us.

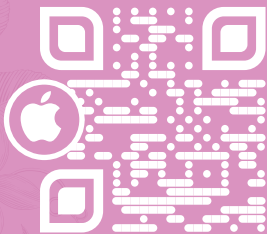
Amen.



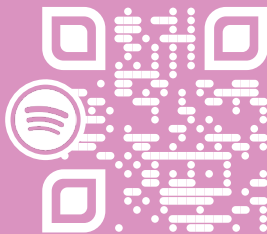
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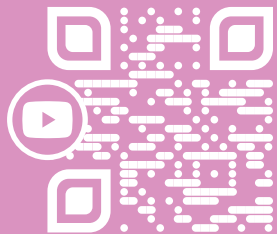
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Throughout 2026, we invite
you to journey with us
through Cultivate.

Each month, a guide is
offered to support reflection,
conversation and growth
as we walk together.



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