



Searching for and Maintaining Peace: A Small Treatise on Peace of Heart

Jacques Philippe

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This classic work is a short treatise on peace of heart in a world where restlessness and anxiety too often take the place of the confidence and peace which ought to be ours.

Searching for and Maintaining Peace: A Small Treatise on Peace of Heart Details

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Mary Alice says

For anyone who tends to let worrying get the better of them at times, this book is a helpful tool to combat that little pesty worry demon. :)

Nicole says

I never write in or mark up books. But this one has more dogears than anything I've ever read.

Kate says

Life-changing read. Philippe tackles tough spiritual topics but all in a conversational manner. I often find that spiritual books are either too full of fluff and platitudes or too rich or spiritually esoteric for a mom living with a dearth of sleep, but this book is an exception. It challenged me without frustrating me and gifted me with wisdom that I am to implement every day would lead me to a contented heart and more peaceful life.

Kelly says

A wonderful little book on how to maintain peace in your spiritual life in the midst of trials and stresses. A very quick read too, which is helpful. Very highly recommended for Catholics (probably other Christians too, though some might have theological differences with Fr. Philippe).

Mark says

It is really interesting to see how God works. I have been a Catholic actively trying to live my faith for more than two decades. This book has helped me more profoundly than any book I've read in the last ten years.

What is a mystery to me is why the message of this book has not sunk into me sooner than it did. It is not as though it is presenting something that is new or alien to the Gospel. But it must have taken all this time for me to get to a point where I could hear and receive it.

The title accurately describes the contents. Fr. Philippe has written a treatise on both the importance of peace of heart and how to maintain it.

I have a strong tendency towards navel-gazing and scrupulosity. I have spent a lot of time over the years feeling bad about my sins and failings, or worrying about what future sins and failings I may stumble into. I trust Jesus very much, but I don't trust myself. I know that way too often that I fail to carry through with my

good intentions and firm resolutions. And that awareness has meant that I can never really relax with God. For if I am not vigilant, then I might fall into sin and ultimately fall away from Jesus.

What this book has helped me to see is that the anxiety I would feel about my own weakness is not what God wants. What I had viewed as devotion and careful attention to righteousness has been largely a prideful dependence upon my own goodness.

We need to trust God completely, even when we sin. We need to just ask for forgiveness, and then move on. God knows and loves us. Really. REALLY. We need to abandon ourselves into His loving care.

It is funny in a sense: People who accuse Catholics of practicing "works righteousness" should read this book. Fr. Philippe makes it incredibly clear how we can do NOTHING without God, and only as a result of His grace. We have to be so abandoned to God that we don't even worry about how good or bad we are. We simply keep turning to God, trusting Him, loving him, and looking to Him "both to will and to work" in us. The grace of faith, the ability to ask for God's forgiveness is a pure gift. Nothing we do makes God give it to us---He just does.

I am doing a horrible job is summarizing this book. But I want to stress the change this book has already made in my life. Although far from having perfect peace all of the time, I am much happier, much more peaceful than I used to be. I wish I had come across this work 20 years ago.

booklady says

FINAL REVIEW: Some books really are life-changing. *Searching for and Maintaining Peace* is one of them. There really aren't enough accolades I can give this book. If you happen to already be a calm peaceful person who takes whatever happens to you in stride, you may never need this book. As for me, I am still working toward that with the help of God's Grace and this book. I have found it to be **invaluable** in that endeavor and have recommended it to many and given it away as a gift more than any other book except Holy Scripture and the Catechism.

Rather than repeat what is below in my earlier post, let me just highlight what I think helped me more than any other part of this book. In **Part Two: How to React to That Which Causes Us to Lose Peace**, there are 16 Chapters dealing with various situations which frequently lead to stress, confusion, and often, alienation from God (just when we need Him most). There is a gold-mine of help in this entire section, but for me I needed to learn to deal with my frustration with myself (pride) so I benefited from Fr. Philippe's suggestions here:

1.) God acts in the peace of one's soul. It is not by our own efforts that we succeed in liberating ourselves from sin; it is only the grace of God which attains this end. Rather than troubling ourselves, it is more efficacious to regain our peace (with His help) and let God act.

2.) Abandoning oneself with confidence to His mercy and pardon, is most pleasing to Him. Thank Him for not allowing you to sin even more grievously.

3.) The sadness and discouragement we feel regarding our failures/faults are rarely pure; they are not very often the simple pain of having offended God, but are in good part mixed with the pride of personal failure.

4.) 'The sign of spiritual progress is not so much never falling as it is being able to lift oneself up quickly after one falls.'

There is also an excellent section on decision-making which I tried to cut and paste and then to summarize, but you just have to read it in full. I refer back to it and it has helped me immeasurably. At the end, Fr. Philippe includes selections from six saints, two of which were wholly new to me: Juan de Bonilla, Francis de Sales, Teresa of Avila, Marie of the Incarnation, François-Marie-Jacob Libermann, and Padre Pio, as well as plentiful quotes of favorites throughout the text.

A delight to read and own.

January 20, 2018: It has been *exactly* 10 years since I wrote my first review of this book. Too weird! Although I have read this book many times, I have not updated this with any additional thoughts, although my copy of the book is **heavily** highlighted.

This is a mini-masterpiece and its magnificent author, Fr. Jacques Philippe, looks just like his picture in the author profile. It would be impossible to overestimate how much his numerous books have shaped me over the years, even more so since I met him in 2014 (I think).

I started it two days ago this time and am almost finished. I have read it innumerable times and given away many copies. Wonderful book. In my top 10 of favorite books.

January 20, 2008: *Apart from Me, you can do nothing*, Jesus said (John 15:5).

The best gifts come in small packages; the same thing can often be said about books. *Searching for and Maintaining Peace* is a powerhouse of a tiny book which packs incredible wisdom into its slim size and mere 110 pages. And yet I have a feeling that if I were to read this classic once @ month for the rest of my life and attempt to live its principals, I probably would not succeed; even so, I shall try.

I'm not sure if I've ever heard Peace described so eloquently or understood its importance as a virtue so well. Clearly, '*all reasons that cause us to lose our sense of peace are bad reasons.*' (p13) And yet Peace is not possible without the precursor, Goodwill, as Our Lord said, '*In all things and above all else have goodwill; only this disposition will give your soul the light and special merit of all virtues. Whoever has goodwill, the sincere desire to obtain My glory, to be thankful to Me, to share in My suffering, to love Me and serve Me, as well as all creatures, such a person will undoubtedly receive compensations that are worthy of My generosity and his desire will sometimes be more profitable to him than other people's good works are to them.*' (p19)

SfaMP, a Small Treatise on Peace of the Heart, is a quiet meditation which is divided into three parts. The first third of the book is called: Interior Peace and describes the importance of this virtue as well as why and how we usually lose our inner peace. The middle and largest part of the book covers all those instances and circumstances which cause us to forsake peace, as well as how we can overcome these difficulties. The book concludes with what the saints tell us about peace.

All in all this book is a mini-masterpiece! I'm going to buy a number of copies of it to give as gifts. The best

new book I've read so far this year...after *Jesus of Nazareth*. God bless you Mary Alice for this suggestion!

Patti says

Definitely a great companion to prayer, very simple yet extremely challenging.

Jrottinghaus says

awesome book. short, practical, gets to the heart of the matter quickly. everyone should read this book.

Jess says

For such a small book, it really manages to pack in the material! I may be digesting this one for some time to come!

Tara says

Just what the doctor ordered. Even though the information in the book isn't new, for some reason it finally stuck.

While I don't think I am miraculously free from strife, this book can help reel me in from being scrupulous. For years I have tortured myself that I wasn't "great". What is my role in this world as a catholic wife/mother/etc. Why am I hidden away washing clothes and sweeping, why am I not more like St. Joan of Arc?

I'm at where I'm at because that's where I need to be.

Trust in God, that's it. You fall, get back up. Stop beating the ground where you fell, stop yelling at the rock that tripped you. Thank God for the conflicts in your life. They are there to help shape and mold you into the person you are meant to be. Thank Him for thinking so highly of you, that He actually believes you have the strength to carry that conflict.

A diamond doesn't start off as a beautiful precious stone, it has years of pressure to get the final result.

Above all else, Love God.

Aaron says

This short book is packed with insightful practical guidance in living with our hearts full of peace.

Some quotes;

The more our soul is peaceful and tranquil, the more God is reflected in it

The devil does his best to banish peace from one's heart

Learn to be at peace of heart under all circumstances, even in the case of defeat

You made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You (St Augustine)

God does not permit unnecessary suffering

My thoughts are not your thoughts.... So high are My ways above your ways....

Now we know that God works in every way for the good of those who love Him...

I have half this book highlighted. This is one of my favorites. I'm enjoying reading Fr. Jacques Philippe's works!

Jill says

For me, the constant noise of this world, noisy clamoring voices, a thousand opinions on everything and everyone, of course, is "right," busy-ness, programs, and then the disappointments we feel about ourselves and others and the sorrows in our own and others' lives, all of which we know about because we're so plugged in to the whole world - it all makes an interior peace nearly impossible to keep. This little book has such a brilliant perspective and though I've just finished it, I'm going to read it again. It doesn't speak to any particular issue. One could be almost any religion and find it helpful; that is, it's not particularly Catholic. It's just incredibly helpful. The next time through the book, I'm going to think harder about personal situations in my life which fit his "If this is happening to you, think about it this way..." It's going to take practice, and what I could have/should have done right in any situation will probably be more likely at first than what I did do right. That's OK. I'll do better next time. See, I can already take his advice about maintaining peace.

♥ Ibrahim ♥ says

One thing that I like about this book is its constant reference to the Bible. It reminds us again of the spiritual warfare that is ours and which battles to choose and which battles are placed in our way by the devil to drain our resources and sap our energy and divert us from the main battle that the Lord promises us certain victory in. We have to fight on the real battlefield and by God's grace we are certain of victory.

The first goal of spiritual combat is not to always obtain a victory (over our temptations, our weaknesses, etc.) rather, it is to learn to maintain peace of heart under all circumstances, even in the case of defeat. We should not be busy with our imperfections and let them get us down but remember that the Lord himself knows of what we are made; He remembers we are dust (Psalm 103).

No reason is ever a good reason to lose peace. No need to defend ourselves. The reasons why we lose our peace are always bad reasons (p. 13). The peace that the Lord gives to us are His gift, and we should see it as such and not let circumstances affect that peace.

Ethan says

If this book sticks with me for a while, I'll come back and give it five stars. I took my time with it, as it's only 110 pages. This book presumes a solid foundation of Christian Faith, which is probably why it's so short. Books on achieving inner peace can probably fill whole libraries, and as long as they keep ignoring the truths in this skinny little book (and they will), there will always be more. The proposition is simple, Christ came to give us peace. The catch is that Christ can't do much with us unless we remain at peace. The analogy used in the book is that God is like the sun and our lives are like a mountain lake. When we're at peace, the lake surface is smooth and perfectly reflects the image and love of God to others. When we're agitated, stressed, angered, or otherwise disturbed, the lake surface is rippled and the image of God is lost to others. How do we get that peace? Trust. Total abandonment and childlike trust in a Dad who loves us. The book then anticipates problems and objections to this. What happens when we lose peace? How do we get it back? Fr. Philippe anticipates all the objections and what-ifs and treat them all respectfully, really getting it, and then truly answers them. It's a joy to read. I hope it sticks with me.

Joe Kolf says

If the title makes you think, "No way, that's too good to be true," then read this book. It's that good.
