

LD YOU THIS, SO THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE PEACE IN YOU
Pray that our LORD will make us strong and give us P



LET PEACE AND JUSTICE RULE
EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL

project constant hope

Prayers for Peace
hope and strength
from the Bible



AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

111762

project constant hope

*You are my place of safety
and my shield.*

Your word is my only hope.

Psalm 119.114 (CEV)

Project Constant Hope is an initiative being undertaken by the American Bible Society to bring the hope of God's Word to a nation traumatized by the tragic events of September 11, 2001 and its aftermath.

The following Constant Hope Scripture-based booklets are available free of charge from the American Bible Society:

- **God Is Our Constant Hope** (leaflet), #111835 English; #111836 Spanish
- **God Is Our Shelter and Strength:** Words of Comfort from the Bible, #111837 English; #111838 Spanish
- **The LORD Is Near to the Brokenhearted:** Comfort and Hope from the Scriptures for You in Your Sorrow, #111676 English; #111677 Spanish
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- **You Don't Have to Be Afraid:** Helping Children Cope with Fear, #111714 English; #111715 Spanish
- **How Can I Pray When I'm Angry?** What the Bible Says about Expressing Anger, #111764 English; #111763 Spanish
- **Prayers for Peace:** Hope and Strength from the Bible, #111762 English; #111761 Spanish

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RESPOND TO GOD

It is the hope and prayer of the American Bible Society that you have found this Scripture booklet to be a source of encouragement and strength. May God's Word be your source of constant hope. Our prayer for you is expressed in the words of the apostle Paul, a first-century Christian:

The Scriptures were written to teach and encourage us by giving us hope. God is the one who makes us patient and cheerful. I pray that he will help you live at peace with each other, as you follow Christ. Then all of you together will praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 15.4-6

We invite you to pray:

Loving God, you are my constant hope. Thank you for speaking to me through the words of Holy Scripture and for hearing my prayers. Guide me each day, and help me to follow you. Amen.

FIND A CHURCH

It is often during difficult times in life that people feel most strongly the need to be among people who share their beliefs and values. While God speaks to each and every one of us individually in real ways, God also desires us to be in regular fellowship with other Christians. If you have never belonged to a church, or if it has been a long time since you last attended church regularly, now is the perfect time to find a church home. The task may seem daunting, but trust God to lead you to a church where...

- the Good News of God's unconditional love through Christ is proclaimed
- the Bible is read during worship and studied regularly by members
- the congregation and leadership are warm and welcoming
- the pastor, priest, or minister gladly answers any questions you may have about the church and its beliefs.



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Prayers for Peace

hope and strength
from the Bible

CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH VERSION



AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY
NEW YORK

Prayers for Peace

Contemporary English Version

This is a Portion of Holy Scripture in *Contemporary English Version*. The American Bible Society is a not-for-profit organization which publishes the Scriptures without doctrinal note or comment. Since 1816, its single mission is to make the Bible available to every person in a language and format each can understand and afford. Working toward this goal, the ABS is a member of the United Bible Societies, a worldwide effort that extends to more than 200 countries and territories. You are urged to read the Bible and to share it with others. For other free Scripture publications, call the American Bible Society at 1-800-32BIBLE, or write to 1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023-7505. If you decide to find a home church, www.forministry.com will help you with easy-to-use tools to search for a local ministry. Visit the ABS website! www.americanbible.org.

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Introduction

Pray that our LORD
will make us strong
and give us peace.

Psalm 29.11

Many of the psalms in the Bible reflect a deep yearning for peace. The psalmists called out to God for peace and justice in the midst of threats of danger and enemy attacks. Praying for peace connects us with God's people of long ago as we, too, call out to God for peace in our time.

When terrorism strikes and fear grips our hearts, we turn to God for help, strength, and comfort. Passages from the Bible offer the assurance that our steadfast hope and trust is found in God. God alone brings peace and judges the nations with fairness.

This Scripture booklet draws together passages from the Bible that speak of peace – scripture passages that recall the prayers of the psalm writers, the prophets, and Jesus' first followers. Scripture also points us to the call to God's people to be peacemakers and to follow the road that leads to reconciliation.

You are encouraged to use this booklet when you take time for personal devotion and reflection, or when you gather with others to offer God your prayers for peace. Find strength, hope, and reassurance in God's Word. As the apostle Paul prayed:

I pray that the LORD, who gives peace, will always bless you with peace. May the LORD be with all of you.

2 Thessalonians 3.16

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I-The LORD God Alone Brings Peace

*In the midst of anxiety and fear,
pray for peace.*

Know that God is All-Powerful.

God is our mighty fortress,
always ready to help
in times of trouble.
And so, we won't be afraid!
Let the earth tremble
and the mountains tumble
into the deepest sea.
Let the ocean roar and foam,
and its raging waves
shake the mountains.

A river and its streams
bring joy to the city,
which is the sacred home
of God Most High.
God is in that city,

and it won't be shaken.
He will help it at dawn.

Nations rage! Kingdoms fall!
But at the voice of God
the earth itself melts.
The LORD All-Powerful
is with us.
The God of Jacob
is our fortress.

Come! See the fearsome things
the LORD has done on earth.
God brings wars to an end
all over the world.
He breaks the arrows,
shatters the spears,
and burns the shields.
Our God says, "Calm down,
and learn that I am God!
All nations on earth
will honor me."

The LORD All-Powerful
is with us.
The God of Jacob
is our fortress.

Psalms 46

Know that God is in control.

Only God gives inward peace,
and I depend on him.
God alone is the mighty rock

that keeps me safe,
and he is the fortress
where I feel secure.
God saves me and honors me.
He is that mighty rock
where I find safety.

Trust God, my friends,
and always tell him
each one of your concerns.
God is our place of safety.

We humans are only a breath;
none of us are truly great.
All of us together weigh less
than a puff of air.
Don't trust in violence
or depend on dishonesty
or rely on great wealth.

I heard God say two things:
"I am powerful,
and I am very kind."
The LORD rewards each of us
according to what we do.

Psalms 62.5-12

A time is coming when everyone will live in peace.

In the future, the mountain
with the Lord's temple
will be the highest of all.
It will reach above the hills,

and every nation
will rush to it.
People of many nations
will come and say,
“Let’s go up to the mountain
of the LORD God of Jacob
and worship in his temple.”

The LORD will teach us his Law
from Jerusalem,
and we will obey him.
He will settle arguments
between distant
and powerful nations.
They will pound their swords
and their spears
into rakes and shovels;
they will never again make war
or attack one another.
Everyone will find rest
beneath their own fig trees
or grape vines,
and they will live in peace.
This is a solemn promise
of the LORD All-Powerful.

Micah 4.1-4



II- Put Your Trust in the LORD

*When safety and security are
threatened, pray for peace.*

The LORD watches over us.

The LORD is truthful;
he can be trusted.
He loves justice and fairness,
and he is kind to everyone
everywhere on earth.

The LORD made the heavens
and everything in them
by his word.
He scooped up the ocean
and stored the water.
Everyone in this world
should worship and honor
the LORD!
As soon as he spoke
the world was created;
at his command,
the earth was formed.

The LORD destroys the plans
and spoils the schemes
of the nations.
But what the LORD has planned
will stand forever.
His thoughts never change.
The LORD blesses each nation
that worships only him.
He blesses his chosen ones.

•••

Mighty armies alone
cannot win wars for a king;
great strength by itself
cannot keep a soldier safe.
In war the strength of a horse
cannot be trusted
to take you to safety.
But the LORD watches over
all who honor him
and trust his kindness.
He protects them from death
and starvation.

We depend on you, LORD,
to help and protect us.
You make our hearts glad
because we trust you,
the only God.
Be kind and bless us!
We depend on you.

Psalm 33.4-12, 16-22

The LORD will care for and protect us.

You, LORD, are the light
that keeps me safe.
I am not afraid of anyone.
You protect me,
and I have no fears.
Brutal people may attack
and try to kill me,
but they will stumble.
Fierce enemies may attack,
but they will fall.
Armies may surround me,
but I won't be afraid;
war may break out,
but I will trust you.

I ask only one thing, LORD:
let me live in your house
every day of my life
to see how wonderful you are
and to pray in your temple.

In times of trouble,
you will protect me.
You will hide me in your tent
and keep me safe
on top of a mighty rock.
You will let me defeat
all of my enemies.
Then I will celebrate,
as I enter your tent
with animal sacrifices
and songs of praise.

Please listen when I pray!

Have pity. Answer my prayer.

My heart tells me to pray.

I am eager to see your face,
so don't hide from me.

I am your servant,
and you have helped me.

Don't turn from me in anger.

You alone keep me safe.

Don't reject or desert me.

Even if my father and mother
should desert me,
you will take care of me.

Teach me to follow, LORD,
and lead me on the right path
because of my enemies.

Don't let them do to me
what they want.

People tell lies about me
and make terrible threats,
but I know I will live
to see how kind you are.

Trust the LORD!

Be brave and strong
and trust the LORD.

Psalm 27

Know that God hears our prayers.

Always be glad because of the LORD! I will say it again: Be glad. Always be gentle with others. The LORD will soon be here. Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything. With thankful hearts offer up your prayers and requests to God. Then, because you belong to Christ Jesus, God will bless you with peace that no one can completely understand. And this peace will control the way you think and feel.

Finally, my friends, keep your minds on whatever is true, pure, right, holy, friendly, and proper. Don't ever stop thinking about what is truly worthwhile and worthy of praise. You know the teachings I gave you, and you know what you heard me say and saw me do. So follow my example. And God, who gives peace, will be with you.

Philippians 4.4-9

Be assured that God answers prayer.

Our God, you deserve praise
in Zion, where we keep
our promises to you.
Everyone will come to you
because you answer prayer.
Our terrible sins get us down,
but you forgive us.
You bless your chosen ones,
and you invite them
to live near you
in your temple.

We will enjoy your house,
the sacred temple.

Our God, you save us,
and your fearsome deeds answer
our prayers for justice!
You give hope to people
everywhere on earth,
even those across the sea.
You are strong,
and your mighty power
put the mountains in place.
You silence the roaring waves
and the noisy shouts
of the nations.
People far away marvel
at your fearsome deeds,
and all who live under the sun
celebrate and sing
because of you.

Psalm 65.1-8



III- The LORD Offers Comfort and Peace

*When people are hurting,
pray for peace.*

The LORD's love is always with us.

You, LORD, are my shepherd.
I will never be in need.
You let me rest in fields
of green grass.
You lead me to streams
of peaceful water,
and you refresh my life.

You are true to your name,
and you lead me
along the right paths.
I may walk through valleys
as dark as death,
but I won't be afraid.
You are with me,
and your shepherd's rod
makes me feel safe.

You treat me to a feast,
while my enemies watch.
You honor me as your guest,
and you fill my cup
until it overflows.
Your kindness and love
will always be with me
each day of my life,
and I will live forever
in your house, LORD.

Psalm 23

The LORD brings healing.

Our holy God lives forever
in the highest heavens,
and this is what he says:
Though I live high above
in the holy place,
I am here to help those
who are humble
and depend only on me.

•••

But I will heal you, lead you,
and give you comfort,
until those who are mourning
start singing my praises.
No matter where you are,
I, the LORD, will heal you
and give you peace.

The wicked are a restless sea
tossing up mud.

But I, the LORD, have promised
that none who are evil
will live in peace.

Isaiah 57.15, 18b-21

Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to be our helper.

Jesus said to his disciples:

If you love me, you will do as I command. Then I will ask the Father to send you the Holy Spirit who will help you and always be with you. The Spirit will show you what is true. The people of this world cannot accept the Spirit, because they don't see or know him. But you know the Spirit, who is with you and will keep on living in you.

I won't leave you like orphans. I will come back to you. In a little while the people of this world won't be able to see me, but you will see me. And because I live, you will live. Then you will know that I am one with the Father. You will know that you are one with me, and I am one with you. If you love me, you will do what I have said, and my Father will love you. I will also love you and show you what I am like.

The other Judas, not Judas Iscariot, then spoke up and asked, "LORD, what do you mean by saying that you will show us what you are like, but you will not show the people of this world?"

Jesus replied:

If anyone loves me, they will obey me. Then my Father will love them, and we will come to them and live in them. But anyone who doesn't love me, won't obey me. What they have heard me

say doesn't really come from me, but from the Father who sent me.

I have told you these things while I am still with you. But the Holy Spirit will come and help you, because the Father will send the Spirit to take my place. The Spirit will teach you everything and will remind you of what I said while I was with you.

I give you peace, the kind of peace that only I can give. It isn't like the peace that this world can give. So don't be worried or afraid.

John 14.15-27

Assurance is ours because of Christ's victory.

What can we say about all this? If God is on our side, can anyone be against us? God did not keep back his own Son, but he gave him for us. If God did this, won't he freely give us everything else? If God says his chosen ones are acceptable to him, can anyone bring charges against them? Or can anyone condemn them? No indeed! Christ died and was raised to life, and now he is at God's right side, speaking to him for us. Can anything separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble, suffering, and hard times, or hunger and nakedness, or danger and death? It is exactly as the Scriptures say,

“For you we face death
all day long.
We are like sheep
on their way
to be butchered.”

In everything we have won more than a victory because of Christ who loves us. I am sure that nothing can separate us from God's love — not life or death, not angels or spirits, not the present or the future, and not powers above or powers below. Nothing in all creation can separate us from God's love for us in Christ Jesus our LORD!

Romans 8.31-39



IV- Follow the Path of Love and Reconciliation

When people become targets of hate because of their race or ethnic background, pray for peace.

Speak kindly of others and avoid hurtful and cruel remarks.

Sharp words cut like a sword,
but words of wisdom heal.
Proverbs 12.18

Kind words are good medicine,
but deceitful words
can really hurt.
Proverbs 15.4

My friends, don't say cruel things about others! If you do, or if you condemn others, you are condemning God's Law. And if you condemn the Law, you put yourself above the Law and refuse to obey either it or God who gave it. God is our judge, and he can save or destroy us. What right do you have to condemn anyone?

James 4.11,12

Jesus teaches us to love others.

Jesus said,

“Love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.” This is the first and most important commandment. The second most important commandment is like this one. And it is, “Love others as much as you love yourself.” All the Law of Moses and the Books of the Prophets are based on these two commandments.

Matthew 22.37-39

Jesus teaches us to love our enemies.

You have heard people say, “Love your neighbors and hate your enemies.” But I tell you to love your enemies and pray for anyone who mistreats you. Then you will be acting like your Father in heaven. He makes the sun rise on both good and bad people. And he sends rain for the ones who do right and for the ones who do wrong. If you love only those people who love you, will God reward you for that? Even tax collectors love their friends. If you greet only your friends, what's so great about that? Don't even unbelievers do that? But you must always act like your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5.43-48

God treats all people alike.

The apostle Peter said:

Now I am certain that God treats all people alike. God is pleased with everyone who worships him and does right, no matter what nation they come from. This is the same message that God gave to the people of Israel, when he sent Jesus Christ, the LORD of all, to offer peace to them.

Acts 10.34-36

Belonging to Christ unites us in true community.

We are careful not to judge people by what they seem to be, though we once judged Christ in that way. Anyone who belongs to Christ is a new person. The past is forgotten, and everything is new. God has done it all! He sent Christ to make peace between himself and us, and he has given us the work of making peace between himself and others.

2 Corinthians 5.16-18



V- Choose To Live in Peace

When national leaders are considering military action, pray for peace.

The LORD calls us to be peacemakers.

God blesses those people
who depend only on him.
They belong to the kingdom
of heaven!

God blesses those people
who grieve.

They will find comfort!

God blesses those people
who are humble.

The earth will belong
to them!

God blesses those people
who want to obey him
more than to eat or drink.

They will be given
what they want!

God blesses those people
who are merciful.

They will be treated
with mercy!

God blesses those people
whose hearts are pure.
They will see him!
God blesses those people
who make peace.
They will be called
his children!
God blesses those people
who are treated badly
for doing right.
They belong to the kingdom
of heaven.

God will bless you when people insult you,
mistreat you, and tell all kinds of evil lies about you
because of me. Be happy and excited! You will have
a great reward in heaven. People did these same
things to the prophets who lived long ago.

Matthew 5.3-12

The LORD calls us to find the road that leads to peace.

Finally, all of you should agree and have concern
and love for each other. You should also be kind and
humble. Don't be hateful and insult people just because
they are hateful and insult you. Instead, treat everyone
with kindness. You are God's chosen ones, and he will
bless you. The Scriptures say,

“Do you really love life?
Do you want to be happy?
Then stop saying cruel things
and quit telling lies.
Give up your evil ways

and do right,
as you find and follow
the road that leads
to peace.
The LORD watches over
everyone who obeys him,
and he listens
to their prayers.
But he opposes everyone
who does evil.”

1 Peter 3.8-12

Trust God to defeat evil.

The LORD told Moses:

Don't hold grudges. On the other hand, it's wrong
not to correct someone who needs correcting. Stop
being angry and don't try to take revenge. I am the
LORD, and I command you to love others as much as
you love yourself.

Leviticus 19.17,18

The apostle Paul said:

Dear friends, don't try to get even. Let God take
revenge. In the Scriptures the LORD says,

“I am the one to take revenge
and pay them back.”

The Scriptures also say,
“If your enemies are hungry,
give them something to eat.
And if they are thirsty,

give them something
to drink.
This will be the same
as piling burning coals
on their heads.”
Don’t let evil defeat you, but defeat evil
with good.

Romans 12.19-21

*When seeking guidance for justice and truth,
pray for peace.*

God will equip us with wisdom from above.

Are any of you wise or sensible? Then show it by living right and by being humble and wise in everything you do. But if your heart is full of bitter jealousy and selfishness, don’t brag or lie to cover up the truth. That kind of wisdom doesn’t come from above. It is earthly and selfish and comes from the devil himself. Whenever people are jealous or selfish, they cause trouble and do all sorts of cruel things. But the wisdom that comes from above leads us to be pure, friendly, gentle, sensible, kind, helpful, genuine, and sincere. When peacemakers plant seeds of peace, they will harvest justice.

James 3.13-18

The LORD will favor those who do right.

The LORD is sitting
in his sacred temple
on his throne in heaven.
He knows everything we do
because he sees us all.
The LORD tests honest people,
but despises those
who are cruel
and love violence.

•••

The LORD always does right
and wants justice done.
Everyone who does right
will see his face.

Psalms 11.4,5,7



VI- The LORD Brings Peace with Justice

*While waiting for God to bring about justice,
pray for peace.*

Remain faithful to the LORD.

Then the LORD All-Powerful said:

You people are precious to me, and when I
come to bring justice, I will protect you, just as par-
ents protect an obedient child. Then everyone will
once again see the difference between those who
obey me by doing right and those who reject me by
doing wrong.

Malachi 3.17,18

The LORD promises peace to those who are faithful.

I will listen to you, LORD God,
because you promise peace
to those who are faithful
and no longer foolish.
You are ready to rescue
everyone who worships you,

so that you will live with us
in all of your glory.

Love and loyalty
will come together;
goodness and peace
will unite.

Loyalty will sprout
from the ground;
justice will look down
from the sky above.

Our LORD, you will bless us;
our land will produce
wonderful crops.
Justice will march in front,
making a path
for you to follow.

Psalm 85.8-13

Judgment will be in God's own time.

Everything on earth
has its own time
and its own season.
There is a time
for birth and death,
planting and reaping,
for killing and healing,
destroying and building,
for crying and laughing,
weeping and dancing,
for throwing stones

and gathering stones,
embracing and parting.
There is a time
for finding and losing,
keeping and giving,
for tearing and sewing,
listening and speaking.
There is also a time
for love and hate,
for war and peace.

Ecclesiastes 3.1-8

God watches everything we do.

God watches everything we do.
No evil person can hide
in the deepest darkness.
And so, God doesn't need
to set a time for judgment.
Without asking for advice,
God removes mighty leaders
and puts others in their place.
He knows what they are like,
and he wipes them out
in the middle of the night.
And while others look on,
he punishes them
because they were evil
and refused to obey him.
The persons they mistreated
had prayed for help,
until God answered
their prayers.

When God does nothing,
can any person or nation
find fault with him?
But still, he punishes rulers
who abuse their people.

Job 34.21-30

God judges with fairness.

Our God, we thank you
for being so near to us!
Everyone celebrates
your wonderful deeds.

You have set a time
to judge with fairness.
The earth trembles,
and its people shake;
you alone keep
its foundations firm.
You tell every bragger,
“Stop bragging!”
And to the wicked you say,
“Don't boast of your power!
Stop bragging! Quit telling me
how great you are.”

Our LORD and our God,
victory doesn't come
from the east or the west
or from the desert.
You are the one who judges.
You can take away power
and give it to others.

• • •

Our Lord, you will destroy
the power of evil people,
but you will give strength
to those who are good.

Psalm 75.1-7,10

The LORD rules with justice.

You rule forever, LORD,
and you are on your throne,
ready for judgment.
You judge the world fairly
and treat all nations
with justice.

The poor can run to you
because you are a fortress
in times of trouble.

Everyone who honors your name
can trust you,
because you are faithful
to all who depend on you.

You rule from Zion, LORD,
and we sing about you
to let the nations know
everything you have done.
You did not forget
to punish the guilty
or listen to the cries
of those in need.

Psalm 9.7-12

Our LORD, you will always rule,
but nations will vanish
from the earth.

You listen to the longings
of those who suffer.

You offer them hope,
and you pay attention
to their cries for help.

You defend orphans
and everyone else in need,
so that no one on earth
can terrify others again.

Psalm 10.16-18

The LORD will make all things new.

I am creating new heavens
and a new earth;
everything of the past
will be forgotten.
Celebrate and be glad forever!
I am creating a Jerusalem,
full of happy people.
I will celebrate with Jerusalem
and all of its people;
there will be no more crying
or sorrow in that city.

No child will die in infancy;
everyone will live
to a ripe old age.
Anyone a hundred years old
will be considered young,

and to die younger than that
will be considered a curse.

My people will live
in the houses they build;
they will enjoy grapes
from their own vineyards.
No one will take away
their homes or vineyards.
My chosen people will live
to be as old as trees,
and they will enjoy
what they have earned.
Their work won't be wasted,
and their children won't die
of dreadful diseases.
I will bless their children
and their grandchildren.
I will answer their prayers
before they finish praying.

Wolves and lambs
will graze together;
lions and oxen
will feed on straw.
Snakes will eat only dirt!
They won't bite or harm anyone
on my holy mountain.
I, the LORD, have spoken!
Isaiah 65.17-25



VII- Put Your Hope in God Who Gives True Peace

I pray that God, who gives hope, will bless you
with complete happiness and peace because of your
faith. And may the power of the Holy Spirit fill you
with hope.

Romans 15.13

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