

## ACHEIVING PEACE OF MIND

We pray for all sorts of things in the hope of gaining the happiness we seek. We ask God to give us this and grant us that. Since He is the Almighty, we expect Him to take good care of us.

Problem is that we have our own ideas about what we consider good care. Like little kids, we often ask for things that give us pleasure but are not very good for us. What's more, we think we are right when we make our requests.

I doubt that very many persons ask God to grant them peace. Long ago, I decided that there is no greater gift from God (after life itself) than peace of mind.

We all long for happiness, but have very different ideas about what we mean by happiness. For many of us, happiness means acquiring things, being loved and living a conflict free life. This is why happiness is so elusive. We look for it in the wrong places.

Happiness is a state of mind. It exists in the head, in the mind. It isn't a bank account, or even a loved one. Happiness is dependent on peace of mind. You can have little or a lot of material things, but if you lack peace of mind, you cannot be happy. On the other hand, you can live modestly and even poorly, and if you have peace of mind you are happy and contented.

This is why I pray to God to give me peace. My happiness did not increase with a growing bank account and greater success. I found happiness in a peaceful mind. Let the problems come. If I'm peaceful in my mind I will not be bothered very much and will maintain a calm serenity that will carry me through difficulties in a way that keeps me balanced and contented.

When we lack peace of mind, we are jolted and jostled by life's shocks. We get rattled by the stress and tension that we encounter in everyday living. When this happens, we tend to focus on the problems and forget the bigger picture. We panic and overlook the many favors and blessings that the Lord grants us, even as we struggle.

Peace of mind does not mean that you avoid problems, conflicts and tension. It simply means that you can better deal with them. It means that you can keep a balanced perspective on what's happening.

The ability to do this allows you to keep a steady focus on the good things that are happening to you even as hardships kick around you. You stay balanced in your outlook and continue to see and experience God's love for you. Even in suffering and disappointment, you can feel God's protective hand on your shoulder. You can still count your blessings in the midst of your pain and this lightens your burden and eases the hurt. It's like getting a painful injection that you know will heal you. You can handle it better than the crying child who cannot understand that the pain will be followed by wellness.

The next time you pray, may I suggest that you ask the Good Lord for inner peace? It is His greatest gift to you.