

February 2023 SHALOM is another section in a compilation of stories/essays which will one day be a book journaling the journey God set Carol Adkins on and now walks her through in greater measures of peace.

SHALOM

Shalom--That word has a peaceful sound. It is used by the Jewish people as a greeting and departure saying. If you've watched the series The Chosen written and directed by Dallas Jenkins which brings to life the ministry of Jesus and the apostles, the word takes on new meaning. There appears to have such a rich emotion behind it when spoken by Jesus and his followers. Shalom means peace but digging deeper into the meaning of the word it means nothing broken, nothing missing, complete.

Shalom aleichem (peace be to you). **Philippians 4:7** states that Shalom is a peace beyond our imagination or understanding. It conveys a vision of far more than the absence of conflict or the achievement of silence or stillness. Shalom expresses the blessing of wholeness or completeness. It reflects an awareness of a reality that once was and could be again—a soundness, a connectedness, a unity, and integrity of life as it was first conceived. All things found possible solely in the person and saving work of Jesus Christ. Shalom synonyms: restoration, harmony, completeness, unity, wholeness, peace, soundness, prosperity, tranquility, welfare.

Isaiah 26:3 You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

So, what helps you feel complete, whole, peaceful, at ease, not worried or stressed? We are made in the image of God. There are three parts to us like the triune Godhead (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). We are spirit, soul (mind, will and emotions), and body. ***Philippians 4:7 Be anxious in NOTHING but in all things make your requests known to God and the peace that passes all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.***

This scripture has been my lifeline. Simply quoting it doesn't usually just snap me out of an anxious thought or situation, but saying, "Be anxious in nothing EXCEPT

1. The fact that the bank account at Fresh Start is dropping faster than the current deposits can keep up.
2. The health issues of ____ is not turning around.
3. The computer's not working, and this grant is due.

It makes me laugh (because no version of that verse from King James to the message has "EXCEPT for.....")

Another saying I'll run through my mind as I take a deep breath is—"This didn't take God by surprise."

True biblical, God's shalom, means an inward sense of completeness or wholeness. Tranquility. The first time shalom is written in the Bible is in **Judges 6:23** where an angel tells Gideon "Shalom to you, do not fear, you shall not die." Gideon builds an altar and calls it YHVH Shalom the Lord is peace.

How and why are we so easily pulled into worry and strife? FEAR? The what ifs on the negative side of the situation so easily take over.

- A pregnancy could result in a handicapped child.
- A routine test could reveal a serious condition.
- A headache could lead to death.

Why are these our first thoughts when most pregnancies bring forth beautiful, wonderful children? Most headaches do not lead to death.

How do we capture those thoughts and bring them into alignment with how Jesus would approach a pregnancy? How does the author of life, the one who says let the little children come unto me look at a situation? How excited He must be when a child is to be born and He knows the plans He has for him/her to prosper and not harm to give a hope and a future. (**Jeremiah 29:11**) So much potential in a small package. The opportunity for this child to be a part of the Kingdom of God and positively affect the world. A routine test demonstrating that walking in health is God's plan so you can go where He wants you to go and do what He wants you to do. A simple headache can be overcome with a cup of tea and inviting the Prince of Peace to touch the tight muscles in the shoulders and taking away tension, balancing the atmospheric pressures, and relieving sinus irritation.

GOD'S WILL and MY CALENDAR. What we want; when we want it; in our timing. I'm one of the biggest list makers I know. I've been known to write something down just so I can cross it off. It gives me a sense of accomplishment. Planning is good and setting goals helps give us direction in life, but lack of flexibility and rigidity is not a godly trait.

PROVERBS 19:20 Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.

We need to have "ears of the learned" (**Isaiah 50:4**) to hear what the Lord directs. We need to be willing to change plans and call or visit someone, take a different route, give something away, have an encouraging word for someone, consider a move or job change. Are we in too big a hurry to get through the grocery store? I remember once calling our neighbor to see if she could let our dog out so I wouldn't have to dash home at lunch time. Her response was that she'd been sick and hadn't even been able to let her own dog out. So, I dashed home and let the puppy out, yet didn't take the time to go check on her situation even the next day.

Another embarrassing, but true story is in April, I had a physical and a positive hemoccult stool sample. I had them re-do it and it was negative but still a colonoscopy was ordered. It had only been 8 years so I assumed it wouldn't be covered by insurance since it wasn't a "routine screening" and therefore procrastinated in scheduling it. By the time I called, the surgeon wasn't scheduling until the end of December. Months of agony over concern of delay, truth about coding for screening, etc. left me anxious. The morning of the procedure, my devotional was about trusting God for finances. I asked the surgeon if confessions were common prior to a procedure. He smiled. He assured me this was a screening (which my insurance would cover) and then he gave a good post procedure report. I was amazed at the relief after confession of not wanting to be deceptive. Why did I keep rehearsing thoughts, playing various scenarios over in my mind? This could have been dealt with and released earlier. Worry doesn't add time to our lives.

Matthew 6:27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

The fruit of the Spirit of God in **Galatians 5:22** are listed below in table form. Rank the amount of each that you feel at any given time. 0-10 The obvious goal is to score 90 but any improvement is a step in the right direction.

time	Now	At work	Choose any moment in
Love	_____	_____	_____
Joy	_____	_____	_____
PEACE	_____	_____	_____
Patience	_____	_____	_____
Kindness	_____	_____	_____
Goodness	_____	_____	_____
Faithfulness	_____	_____	_____
Gentleness	_____	_____	_____
Self-control	_____	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____	_____

Trusting God brings peace. Do you trust the government, teachers, police, your neighbor, co-workers? When the world seems out of control and nothing makes sense, I can go look at the moon and see an object that stays in orbit with regular, predictable phases. It affects the tides in a predictable fashion. God put the moon exactly where it is supposed to be. In Genesis it is called the lesser light and it has a place and a purpose. The Creator can be trusted that He has a plan, a design, a purpose for everything He created. Including each one of us.

A mother snuggles a child in close tucking a head under her chin. Possibly caressing hair, patting a back, getting a blanket and cuddling--all cozy. Can we believe God looks at us that way? Wanting the best for us?

Trusting God brings SHALOM. My favorite name for Jesus is Prince of Peace. I now reflectively and emotionally say, "Prince of Shalom." Therefore, nothing is out of order; nothing is impossible; He can rectify the situation; relax and trust. I'm working to walk in the peace of the Lord throughout the day. I pray you are as well.