

# Goodness and Peace in Man

by Thomas a Kempis

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*True peace and happiness are found in humbly enduring suffering and being the conqueror of oneself.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:9, Romans 12:18, Galatians 5:22, Philippians 4:7, James 3:17

**Topics:** "Inner Peace", "Humility"

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## Description

Thomas a Kempis emphasizes the importance of finding peace within oneself before being able to bring peace to others. He contrasts the behaviors of a peaceful man, who does good and turns all things to good, with those of a passionate and disturbed individual, who is quick to believe evil and neglects his own duties. Kempis urges self-reflection and humility, encouraging individuals to bear with others and seek peace even with those who are harsh or irritating.

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## Transcript

FIRST keep peace with yourself; then you will be able to bring peace to others. A peaceful man does more good than a learned man. Whereas a passionate man turns even good to evil and is quick to believe evil, the peaceful man, being good himself, turns all things to good.

The man who is at perfect ease is never suspicious, but the disturbed and discontented spirit is upset by many a suspicion. He neither rests himself nor permits others to do so. He often says what ought not to be said and leaves undone what ought to be done. He is concerned with the duties of others but neglects his own.

Direct your zeal, therefore, first upon yourself; then you may with justice exercise it upon those about you. You are well versed in coloring your own actions with excuses which you will not accept from others, though it would be more just to accuse yourself and excuse your brother. If you wish men to bear with you, you must bear with them. Behold, how far you are from true charity and humility which does not know how to be angry with anyone, or to be indignant save only against self!

It is no great thing to associate with the good and gentle, for such association is naturally pleasing. Everyone enjoys a peaceful life and prefers persons of congenial habits. But to be able to live at peace with harsh and perverse men, or with the undisciplined and those who irritate us, is a great grace, a praiseworthy and manly thing.

Some people live at peace with themselves and with their fellow men, but others are never at peace with themselves nor do they bring it to anyone else. These latter are a burden to everyone, but they are more of a burden to themselves. A few, finally, live at peace with themselves and try to restore it to others.

Now, all our peace in this miserable life is found in humbly enduring suffering rather than in being free from it. He who knows best how to suffer will enjoy the greater peace, because he is the conqueror of himself, the master of the world, a friend of Christ, and an heir of heaven.

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