

**Lesson Aim:** To guard our heart and focus on developing a heart that is ruled by the peace of God.



*connecting*

**Prayer:** Start your time together by asking the Holy Spirit to lead your discussion.

**Icebreaker:** What comes to mind when you hear the word “peace”?

1. **Read Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6.** What expectations would this stir up in you if you had first heard Isaiah pronounce them? What type of son or ruler would you expect to arise?
2. **Read Isaiah 7:1-2.** The prophecy of verse 14 is given in the context of a time when Jerusalem was under attack by Aram and the northern kingdom of Israel, and the people were full of fear. What situations are you facing right now that are creating anxiety or uncertainty in your life? What forces are involved? Tell your group about it.



*growing*

3. How trusting of God are you able to be in this situation(s)? What makes it difficult to trust Him? Is there anything that makes it easy to trust Him?
4. **Read Matthew 1:23.** Matthew tells us how Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 as Immanuel “God with us.” When facing challenges that seek to take away your peace, how have you seen Jesus to be “Immanuel, God with us”?
5. On a scale of 1 to 10, what is the stress level in your life?
6. **Read Philippians 4:4-8.** What is Paul’s prescription for stress? How does this contrast with some of our present-day “solutions” for dealing with stress?



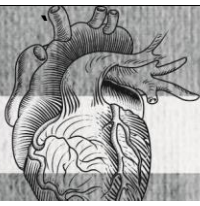
*sewing*

**Close in prayer by using Philippians 4:4-8 as a guide. Take as much time as you are able and is needed.**

- Allow the Holy Spirit to bring to mind things that are creating stress in your life.
- First, consciously choose not to worry.
- Second, thank God for \_\_\_\_\_ (you fill in the blank. It may be related to what’s causing the stress or something/someone entirely different).
- Third, claim the peace of God that you have in Jesus Christ.
- Fourth, claim the peace of God to guard your heart and mind. Envision God’s peace guarding your heart and mind the way a good soldier would guard a prison.
- Finally, focus on what is good (e.g.: Who God is, what He’s done in your life, who He’s blessed you with in your life, etc.)



*reaching*



# Heart

PEACEFUL HEART

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## PEACEFUL HEART

### PEACE & CHRISTMAS (Isaiah 7:14; 9:1-7; Luke 2:8-14; John 14:27)

► What the Prince of Peace came to bring...

- Personal fulfillment
- Well being
- Harmony
- Salvation / reconciliation with God

STEP #1 - TRUST: You cannot have peace without the Prince of Peace.

► Isaiah 24:3-4 - *You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD himself, is the Rock eternal. (cf. Romans 5:1).*

### PEACEFUL HEART

► Christmas Question: How can I get God's favor to rest upon me? (cf. Luke 2:14)

► Opposite of Peace - Struggle, Conflict, Anxiety, & Worry

STEP #2: PRAY: Carry all your "non-peace" issues to God. (Psalm 55:22; 1 Peter 5:7)

### THE PATH OF PEACE (Philippians 4:4-8)

- ➊ Replace worry with rejoicing (vv.4-6a)
- ➋ Take all the anxiety upward (v.6b)
- ➌ Mix in some gratitude (v.6b)
- ➍ Claim His peace & let it guard you (v.7)
- ➎ Focus on the good stuff (v.8)

STEP #3: REST: Keep turning it back over to God until you're OK. (Psalm 131)

► Last bit of advice... seek the highest blessing of God (Number 6:24-26)