

Calm and Peace: Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts. Proverbs 4:23

Adrina Green

Adrina Green (May 9, 2013)

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Calm and Peace is a practical handbook on the power of positive thinking, Jesus-style.

Calm and Peace is an eclectic assortment of anecdote, Biblical wisdom, and personal testimony that invites readers to not only adjust their approach to the challenges life throws at them but to ultimately engage in a connection with God through the salvation offered in Jesus Christ.

While Adrina Green's cover suggests a Bible-based approach to stress, the book's interior contains more than that, weaving Bible passages with anecdotes taken from the lives of historical figures as well as Green's own original proverbs (italicized and set apart from the others). The likes of Helen Keller, Holocaust survivor Victor Frankl, and Christopher Reeve are juxtaposed with King David, King Solomon, and Jesus to offer character studies in living peaceably and calmly in the midst of life's brutality. This conglomeration of studies is perhaps what the back matter means when describing the book as "Christian-based" wisdom.

Chapters are peppered with practical and common-sense examples of positive thinking to counteract the negative—"be strong," "this challenge (storm) will pass"—pronouncements that may connect with a wider-than-Christian audience. Initially, Green seems to be writing to her own brothers and sisters of the faith, but the invitation to make "a reconnection with God" near the book's end suggests multiple audiences.

Green's writing contains a few refreshing articulations of the issues at the heart of a lack of "calm and peace," such as when she discusses the pros and cons of blame ("Blame should only ever be a visitor—not a dweller") and her proverb, "When one heart forgives, two hearts rejoice." Yet, for the most part, Green's prescriptions for achieving peace are simple and uncomplicated in presentation and content.

The book's weaker points are in organization: the table of contents comes after some of the items listed therein; a chart lacks lines, making it difficult to follow items that correspond across columns; and sometimes scriptures are inserted without quotation marks and are confused with the author's original writing. In general, the book's content fails to build upon itself in a sensible way from chapter to chapter. In one instance, the key concept of "antidotes" to fear is introduced at length; the next chapter follows with another examination of the same.

Additionally, Green's acknowledgments imply she did most of her research over the Internet and spent "many hours researching and reading valuable literature from a wide range of sources." Unsurprisingly then, the only references she cites are scriptures and web addresses, but at times it's unclear whether the sources she quotes are expert or filtered for their legitimacy in relation to the subject.

Despite its shortcomings, *Calm and Peace* has the potential to achieve what its author set out to do: provide tools for sufferers of anxiety. It's a practical handbook on the power of positive thinking, Jesus-style.

HEATHER WEBER (November 1, 2013)

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