Another type of pressure is financial pressure—earning enough money to satisfy our material desires and setting aside enough to provide security for our old age. There seems to be a continual pressure to get more money. In fact, it seems that no matter how much money people make, it is never enough.

Battles for Life and Health

There are also some more basic pressures, such as the pressure to survive. Each of us faces a constant fight against disease and illness. Many people have been diagnosed with some condition which may likely prove fatal, essentially creating the pressure of a death sentence hanging over them. This is one of the heaviest forms of pressure a person can face.

In these cases, there is often an inner voice that keeps up a steady stream of threatening, accusing, or tormenting thoughts. It is important to understand that where there is a voice, there is a person behind the voice. The presence of a voice indicates the presence of a person.
If the voice we are hearing accuses or torments us, we can be sure the person behind the voice is Satan. Bear in mind that the devil is called the accuser. When you have an accusing voice in your mind—one which drives and goads you—you can be sure that the devil is the one behind it.

**Common Attacks**

The adversary brings many forms of accusation against people’s minds. One common accusation is: *God doesn't love you.* The ultimate result of believing that accusation is to feel rejected and lonely. You begin to feel like God seems to have a plan for everyone else’s life except yours. Another accusation is: *You'll always be a failure.* Sometimes those words are echoed by people close to us—maybe a parent or a spouse. Their message is clear and constant: “You have failed so many times that there just isn’t any other option for you in life but failure.”

Another tormenting thought is: *You're going out of your mind.* In counseling sessions, I have been astonished at how many people have heard a voice speaking these words to them—reminding them that because it has happened to others in the family, they will be next. This is an agonizing form of torment.

Then there are also attacks associated with physical pain and the symptoms of disease. A person may be tormented by thoughts that a certain pain is caused by cancer, although there is no disease present. Quite possibly there’s very little wrong with you. However, you are just too shaken and frightened by the pain you feel to rise up and challenge these nagging thoughts.

“**What I Feared…**”

Job was a character from the Bible who underwent the kind of mental torment we are dealing with in this letter. He summed up the process very vividly and succinctly.

*What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me. I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil.* (Job 3:25–26, *NIV*)

What Job said is true of countless thousands in our contemporary civilization. “What I feared has come upon me.” Fear can open the door to the very condition you are dreading. One of the possible causes for cancer in some people is simply their own morbid fear of cancer. Likewise, a key factor for insanity in people is their own fear of losing their minds. The devil uses fear as a lever to bring additional difficulties upon us: “What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me. I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil.”

Is that your condition? Does that describe you? If so, I want you to know there is a remedy. It comes as we recognize the door Satan is using to get into our lives.

There are various doors, but I am just going to mention two of the most common ones. The first is resentment and unforgiveness. It is common to feel resentful and unforgiving toward someone, usually a person close to us: a parent, a spouse, a child, a neighbor, or a minister in a church. The second door is an attitude of rebellion toward God. Our rebellion might be toward society or human authority. But in essence, it is rebellion toward God—a refusal to submit to the righteous government of God.

**Closing the Door**

Having understood which door is open, the remedy begins by closing the door. If the door is resentment and unforgiveness, then we have to forgive the person we resent. We have to lay down our bitterness and hatred. In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus says:

*Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.* (Matthew 6:12, *NIV*)

We have no right to ask God to forgive us beyond the degree to which we forgive others. God will forgive us to the extent we forgive others. Jesus said:

*For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.* (Matthew 6:14–15, *NIV*)

If we want forgiveness from God, we have to forgive others. God has laid down that requirement, and He will not alter it. Remember, forgiveness is not an emotion—it is a decision. In a sense, it is tearing up the IOU for what somebody owes you. The way to close the first door is to forgive other people.

If your problem is rebellion, and especially rebellion against God, the way to close that door is to submit to God. Again, it is a decision of your will. We see this from what James says in chapter 4, verse 7:

*Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.* (James 4:7, *NIV*)
You cannot resist the devil as long as you are resisting God—because God is the only one who can give you the faith, strength, and grace you need to resist the devil. So, if the devil is tormenting you, submit to God. It is a decision of your will. Lay down your rebellion toward God by saying, “God, I submit to you. You are my Creator; You are in command of the universe and I submit to Your dealings in my life. I will do whatever You require of me.” At that point, you then have the right to take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and drive the devil out of your life—just as Jesus did when the devil came to Him in the wilderness temptation. Jesus answered him each time, “It is written…it is written…it is written…”

Jesus was submitted to God; therefore, He could resist the devil. If you submit to God the way Jesus did, then you also have the right to resist the devil. You have the right to say to those voices, “I will not listen to you anymore. Satan, get out of my life! I am yielded to God. I belong to God. You have no power over me! All the claims against me were settled by the death of Jesus on the cross. I now resist you and command you to go from me.”

Peace with God

So far, we have dealt with our need to be released from mental torment. But what is the ultimate result of that release? The answer is: true peace of mind.

Following our release from mental torment, we need to learn how to enjoy true peace of mind. These two fit together on opposite sides of a single coin—one side, the mental torment, is negative. The other side, enjoying true peace of mind, is positive.

The first and most important peace of mind we need is knowing that we have peace with God. There can be no real, permanent peace unless there is a right relationship with Almighty God. Scripture says in Isaiah, “There is no peace for the wicked.” There is no peace for those who stand in opposition to God or whose lives are not subject to God’s requirements. Therefore, we must first make sure we have been reconciled with God. Paul said in Romans:

> Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . (Romans 5:1, NAS)

In verse 11, of Romans 5, Paul states that through Jesus we have “received the reconciliation.” The word reconciliation indicates a need for us to make things right with God. By our carnal nature and our sinful lives, we are at war with Almighty God. We need to accept the reconciliation God extends to us through Jesus. Our Savior paid the full and final penalty for our sins by His death so that we could be reconciled to God.

Being reconciled and receiving God’s promise of forgiveness, Paul says we have been justified by faith. As a result, we now have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The word “justified” is an important word. It could be interpreted: to be acquitted, no longer held guilty or to have been made righteous. When we believe in Jesus and His death on our behalf, His righteousness is imputed to us on the basis of our faith. If you find it hard to believe, say the following statements again and again:

> “Through the death of Jesus, I’m justified, just-as-if-I’d never sinned. I have peace with God. God holds nothing more against me. I have been acquitted.”

This truth is the great basis for mental peace. Once we know it, we have God on our side—and that makes all the difference in life.

God Is for Us

Paul expresses this confidence we can have in Romans 8:31-32 (NAS):

> What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

Verse 31 asks a very good question. Who can be against us if God is for us? Somebody expressed it this way: One plus God is a majority in any situation.

Because God was willing to give Jesus—His most precious treasure, His only begotten Son—then we know that such love as that will hold nothing back from us. If God gave up Jesus, there is nothing good that He will ever withhold from us. God is on our side. He is for us. The resources of heaven are at our disposal. That is the true basis for mental peace.

Once we comprehend by faith that we have been reconciled with God—that we are justified (“just-as-if-I’d never sinned”)—then we can move on to receive God’s complete provision for our mental peace.

Paul clearly states this provision in Philippians:

> Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all
true and lasting peace. Ingratitude is opposite to the whole nature of God.

The fourth condition: think about the right things. In verse 8 of Philippians 4, Paul gives a list of those right things. First He says, “whatever is true.” Bear in mind that something may be true, but we shouldn’t think about it. For example, we should not think about people’s faults and failings, even though they may be true. Paul then adds to the list of what we should think about: whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, all that is excellent and worthy of praise. Paul says, “Let your mind dwell on these things.” You have the power to focus your mind on whatever you choose. You can focus it on negative topics or you can focus it on what builds you up. If you look for what is positive and edifying, the Holy Spirit will help you find it.

Praying for Peace of Mind

If you desire to take practical steps to overcome mental torment and enjoy peace of mind, you can let the Lord know it with the following prayer:

Lord, I realize that I can move from the mental torment I have been battling into true peace of mind. I now take the steps to rebuke and resist the accusing voice of the enemy. I declare that You are for me, O God. I am justified by my faith in Jesus Christ, giving me peace with You. I will renounce anxiety; I will pray first when issues arise; I will give thanks for all You have done for me; and I will focus my thoughts on what is good, true and pure.

Thank You, Lord, for providing steps from Your Word for me to escape mental torment and have true peace of mind. I choose that peace today, and I step into it by faith. Amen.