

# Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

## *Living in the Spirit*

### Lesson 8: Righteousness, Joy, and Peace

#### Bible Text

Romans 14:17-19; Philippians 4:4-7

#### Memory Verse

“Be full of joy always because you belong to the Lord. Again, I say, be full of joy!” (Philippians 4:4)

#### Word List

**argue:** to disagree or fight by using angry words

**celebrate:** to do something special or enjoyable for a reason

**righteousness:** moral goodness that comes from a relationship with God

Imagine with me what Paul’s life must have been like the day he wrote the words to our memory verse. He was in prison in Rome. He was chained to a guard day and night. Maybe he was cold and hungry when he wrote “Be full of joy....” Then his eyes moved across the dirty, damp prison cell. The chains might have pinched his wrist as he added “always.” Maybe Paul thought about how Jesus changed his life. Without Jesus, his life would be very different. Maybe he would have

plenty to eat and drink, but he would not be right with God. Paul was filled with peace and joy that only God can give because he belonged to Christ. So he added, “Again I say, be full of joy!”

As I write this lesson, our world is fighting the Covid-19 virus. I must stay at home away from my friends. We cannot see the virus. So we wonder where we might get it. The stores do not have all the things I want to buy. I can almost hear Paul say, “Be full of joy *always*, ” even when we are tempted to be afraid, worried, and unhappy. Happiness depends on what is happening. Peace and joy do not. God gives us joy and peace because we belong to Him.

#### Be Right with God and Be Filled with Joy (Romans 14:17; Philippians 4:4)

##### Romans 14:17

**17 For the holy nation of God is not food and drink. It is being right with God. It is peace and joy given by the Holy Spirit.**

##### Philippians 4:4

**4 Be full of joy always because you belong to the Lord. Again, I say, be full of joy!**

What does it mean to be right with God? How do we become a part of His holy nation? Christ puts His **righteousness** in us

when we believe. We could never be good on our own. But in Christ, we can be good because His Holy Spirit lives in us. We become a part of God's holy nation because He has done all the work. Ephesians 2:8 says, "For by His loving-favor you have been saved from the punishment of sin through faith. It is not by anything you have done. It is a gift of God." We receive God's gift of righteousness by believing in Jesus His Son and accepting His forgiveness.

God warned the people what would happen if they did not live right before Him. The land, the people, the rulers, and families would all suffer. God explained that all these bad things happened because they did not serve the Lord their God with joy and a glad heart because of all He had given them (see Deuteronomy 28:47). Being right with God is something to **celebrate**.

All the trouble for God's people came because they were sinning and were not celebrating God and His blessings. They had all the feasts God called for. They came together to eat and drink. But they were not thinking about God. When we celebrate God's goodness to us, we are filled with joy. This joy comes from what God has done. The food, drink, music, and fellowship are just ways to show our joy. God's Word talks about joy almost 1,000 times. Be filled with joy and celebrate that you belong to Him.

## **Live Right and Have Peace with Others** **(Romans 14:18; Philippians 4:5)**

### **Romans 14:18**

**18 If you follow Christ in these things, God will be happy with you. Men will think well of you also.**

### **Philippians 4:5**

**5 Let all people see how gentle you are. The Lord is coming again soon.**

Being right with God makes us want to live right. It is not natural for us to be filled with joy, kindness, and gentleness. But the Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to be like Christ. 2 Peter 1:3a says, "He gives us everything we need for life and for holy living." We can be forgiven only because God does all the work. And we can be gentle, joyful, and peaceful only because God's Holy Spirit works in us.

Sometimes it is hard to get along with other people, even in the church. Some people try to live right without letting God change their hearts. They think they know the right way to live. They make up their own rules. They **argue** against God's ways. They judge others and use angry words and ways. The religious leaders who met Jesus thought this way. They could not see the good that Jesus did because He did not follow their rules.

They argued with Jesus. Their anger with Him led them to think that killing Him was right!

My mother often asked me, “Would you want Jesus to find you doing that when He comes again?” Paul used the same reasoning. We should be found being gentle when Jesus returns. Believers should never argue and be harsh with one another. We all have the same Lord. We are all saved by His work and not ours. We all have His Holy Spirit to help us live right and be at peace with each other.

### **Think Right and Have a Peaceful Heart and Mind**

**(Romans 14:19; Philippians 4:6-7)**

**Romans 14:19**

**19 Work for the things that make peace and help each other become stronger Christians.**

**Philippians 4:6-7**

**6 Do not worry. Learn to pray about everything. Give thanks to God as you ask Him for what**

**you need.**

**7 The peace of God is much greater than the human mind can understand. This peace will keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**

The peace of God comes from a peaceful mind and a heart that works at the things that make peace. It is easy for us to disagree with others. In churches, we disagree over minor things that we allow to get big. We have to gently work to help other Christians become stronger in the Lord.

We can only have this kind of mind when we refuse to worry. When we are worrying, we are not trusting. And when we are trusting God, we are not worried. Instead of worrying, we need to learn to pray about everything. Every little thing in our lives is important to God. He wants us to be thankful even when we face hard times. It is amazing what counting your blessings can do to ease worry and fear. Being thankful gives us a peace the world cannot understand. You might be surprised at the peace you have in the middle of trouble when you count your blessings. God’s peace protects our hearts and minds and keeps us in touch with our Lord, Jesus Christ.

### **Things to Think About**

1. What are you doing to become the joyful, gentle, peaceful person God wants you to be?
2. What are you doing to spread joy to others?
3. How can your gentleness change your relationships with others?
4. How well do you count your blessings and practice thanksgiving no matter what is happening in your life?

**Things to Remember**

There are three big blessings that come to us from the Holy Spirit. We are drawn into a relationship with God that makes us right with Him. Our lives are filled with joy, peace, and gentleness because of His work in us. And our minds and hearts have a peace that we cannot even understand. He makes us right with God so that we can know what is right and wrong. When we live by His power, others will see Jesus in us and be blessed by our joy, peace and gentleness.

**Romans 14:17-19**

**17 For the holy nation of God is not food and drink. It is being right with God. It is peace and joy given by the Holy Spirit.**

**18 If you follow Christ in these things, God will be happy with you. Men will think well of you also.**

**19 Work for the things that make peace and help each other become stronger Christians.**

**Philippians 4:4-7**

**4 Be full of joy always because you belong to the Lord. Again, I say, be full of joy!**

**5 Let all people see how gentle you are. The Lord is coming again soon.**

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