Connect Study—the Kingdom is Righteousness, Peace and Joy

Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit…

The Kingdom of God is not about external things but the reign of God which is characterised by righteousness, peace an joy.

1. Righteousness

Rom 5: 17 For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God’s wonderful grace and **his gift of righteousness**, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures make it clear that none is righteous, not even one. All of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. And our sin separates us from God—spiritual death. But because of God’s wonderful grace, he sent his Son, Jesus Christ to die on the cross. Through Jesus’ death on the cross, the penalty of sin was paid. When we receive Jesus into our lives, we receive the gift of righteousness—a right standing before God

Rom 6:22 But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life.

Not only that we have a right standing before God, we also need to live out in practical righteousness. Righteousness, peace and joy are interconnected. You can’t have peace if you don’t live in righteousness. In Ps 32, the psalmist describes how his strength was sapped when he refused to confess his sin.

1. Peace

The scriptures speak about peace with God, peace within us and peace in relationships

When we have the right standing with God, we would have peace with God. But God also want us to experience that peace in our heart.

Jn 14:27 “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (NIV) Peace is a gift.

But the Devil seeks to rob and steal that gift of peace from us. To guard our peace, we must guard our mind. Phil 4:6-7 Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your **hearts and minds** as you live in Christ Jesus.

The Greek word for worry is “Merimnate”, which sounds like marinate, which is an interesting word association. We need to check what we marinate our mind in.

1. Joy

Neh 8:10 says “ the joy of the Lord is our strength”. Joy is like a barometer. The presence of joy tells us our spiritual state.

Ps David talked about having joy even when we go through trials. Thus it is evident that joy is not dependent on circumstances.

Discussion questions:

1. What are some practical steps that we can take to live in righteousness e.g. accountability, avoid temptations, etc?
2. What are some things that are robbing your peace at the moment?
3. Do people describe as a “worrier”? What are some practical steps to “not worry”?
4. The Scriptures also speak about living in peace with people especially in the Body of Christ? How does that look in a connect group?
5. How can one increase his/her joy?