

“Be Still: Shift to Joy”

Growth Group Guide

March 22, 2026

WELCOME *(Connecting with each other)*

Who or what embodies great joy to you? Children laughing, sunshine, pleasant waterfalls, fiddle playing, someone you know. What about that person or thing makes you feel joy? When you feel joyful, how do you feel about yourself or life in general? As Christians, God himself is our joy. Based on our lesson title “Be Still: Shift to Joy,” why is that significant?

WORSHIP THROUGH PRAYER *(Connecting with God)*

Open in prayer inviting the Spirit to lead you into deeper joy as you spend time discussing the theme of “Shift to Joy.” It’s God’s joy that brings a revival to our hearts. We are made new and holy in Him!

Psalm 4:7 (ESV) You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.

Psalm 16:11 (ESV) You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Psalm 33:1 (ESV) Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright.

Isaiah 12:3 (ESV) With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

WORD *(Letting God speak to us)*

1. Read Nehemiah 8:1-4 NIV. Nehemiah and Ezra’s first order of business in the life of the city was to read the Word of God to the people. They placed a high value on proper scriptural instruction, and they had the people gather on a holiday (the start of their New Year) to hear it. What did the people have that helped them as they listened to God’s word being read? How might we be helped knowing this?
2. Read Nehemiah 8:5-6 NIV. The people worshipped God not the scriptures. When scripture is approached correctly it will lead us to worshipping God. What do you think might cause us to slip into elevating the scriptures over God? How might we guard against this?
3. Read Nehemiah 8:7-8 NIV. Here we see two ways scripture was processed for understanding, so they could see how it fit in their lives. 1) Large Group Lecture 2) Small Group Discussion. How do you benefit from each of these when it comes to the Bible? Are there other supports that help you too?
4. Read Nehemiah 8:9-12 NIV. It’s evident the people got the message of what was read, because they were weeping in grief as they listened. What do you think triggered it? They would have read Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

5. After some time of tears, Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites encourage the people to “be still” (be calmed) and move on from weeping, to shift to joy and celebration. The people did just that. Why is that important? What enabled them to do it?
6. The Israelites shared their joy and celebration in God and what He had done for them with “those who had nothing prepared (v10).” Why? Why would God love for that to be a part of our story?
7. The sequence the Israelites went through in this story was: 1) conviction 2) cleansing 3) celebration or joy. Without an attitude of judgement or condemnation, but of honest assessment, do you think Christians are generally seen as people overflowing with joy? Why or why not? What might cause us to get stuck on one of the steps?
8. If we as Christians are to live lives of celebration and joy, what needs to change? Read Psalm 103:12 and Ephesians 1:4. How do these verses show truths we need to help us through the 3 steps listed above?
9. Shifting to joy isn’t something we would naturally think of as being still. How does this broaden your view of being still?

WALK *(Living out God’s purposes)*

- ✓ **One Big Idea: To be still is to shift from dwelling on and grieving over our failures and guilt to joy, because God has forgiven us and made us holy.** When we live joyfully celebrating God and what He has done for us, we are living out of the treasures we discover in our relationship with Him, rather than out of duty. It stills and calms us as people. Make a list of your personal God-treasures and joyfully celebrate with Him this week. What happens inside you? How does this impact your perspective of life and what you have to give others?
- ✓ **Do you struggle with finding joy?** You are not alone. Talk to God this week about why that might be true for you. Look over question #7-8 for insight. Then do the exercise above and see what happens in you.

WORLD *(Embracing God’s heart for others)*

Haitian Christian Mission (HCM) - Schools Update: Schools are becoming a major focus, with plans underway to work alongside principals to organize interschool competitions, creating space for mentorship, discipline, and unity. In Nan Plaisir, our adopted HCM school, young people are now taking ownership of key areas of ministry. It’s exciting to see that youth are not just attending church; they are helping lead it. Principals across HCM schools have specifically asked for prayer as well as for practical help. Some schools have immediate needs for benches, additional classroom space, cabinets, and reliable power to maintain electricity in the classrooms. Also, food insecurity continues to be a daily reality for many. Each of these needs represents more than logistics; they reflect real children trying to learn, grow, and thrive under difficult conditions. Pray for God’s grace and mercy among leaders, for peace and safety for children in schools, for the food shortage, and that Haiti would become a place where hope and futures can flourish. (March 5, 2026 Newsletter.)

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