

“Joy In The Everyday: The Needed Contrast”

Growth Group Guide

July 19, 2026

WELCOME *(Connecting with each other)*

Give example of contrasting things. What benefits are derived from the contrasts? How can the contrasts of life vs. death, joy vs. grumbling, cooperation vs. disputing, honest vs. crooked, etc., lived out in us as Christians benefit the world (the people) around us?

WORSHIP THROUGH PRAYER *(Connecting with God)*

Open in prayer. Give thanks to God that the Spirit living in and through us makes us uniquely joyful and life-giving to a dying world.

Matthew 5:14-16 NLT. You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

Ephesians 5:8 ESV. ...for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light...

WORD *(Letting God speak to us)*

1. Have you ever struggled with the issue of why Christians don't look any different from non-Christians? Had/Have you hoped there was a way for them to be different?
2. From the sermon, we learned that when Christians don't look different from non-Christians, it's because both are living from the flesh. How can thinking we're just forgiven, and not also made alive in Jesus, cause this problem? **Read Galatians 2:20**. What in this verse shows us we can live differently?
3. How does what we discovered in our last question become real in our daily lives? (See Philippians 2:5-13 or the study guide from last week.)
4. The previous questions help us remember our foundation for living as a Christian: dependence on Jesus so we live primarily from the Spirit on a daily basis. Why is it important to have this foundation in place before we approach verses that tell us how to act as Christians? What problems will we have if we ignore/neglect this foundation?
5. **Read Philippians 2:13-16**. Paul says to do “all things without grumbling or disputing.” Look at v13. What does this verse say are all the things we are to do in this way? As well, who are we not to complain against or question? Discuss.
6. As Christians, do you think grumbling or disputing is natural for us? Consider if the person is living primarily out of the flesh or the Spirit.
7. When we live naturally by the Spirit, Paul says we will be what? What does this add to our discussion about what is natural for a Christian?

8. We can define “blameless” in v15 as a person who can't be criticized for a lifestyle that's fleshly, or lived sinfully. “Innocent” means having inner spiritual purity; seeking to live without a mix of fleshly living and Spirit living, but wholly from the Spirit. How is this different from what you have thought or heard elsewhere?
9. When we live naturally by the Spirit, we shine as lights. **Read Ephesians 5:8**. What is the spiritual identity that enables us to act this way? How did we get this way?
10. **Read John 10:10**. In your own words, what does it say? **Read Romans 5:10**. In your own words, what does it say saves us? Why are these two verses so important since Paul tells us we “hold fast to the word of life (Phil. 2:16)?” Also, how do these verses affect the Gospel Message we share with others?
11. As Christians, when we live spiritually, we live as a contrast, a strikingly different looking way of life. Why is it so essential we live as normal Christians and provide the contrast this world needs?

WALK *(Living out God's purposes)*

- ✓ **One Big Idea: Our distinctive living reflects God's work within us, displaying a joyful attitude and a cooperative nature, bringing light and life to others.** In this One Big Idea, we learn what normal, natural Christian living looks like when it's spiritually lived, lived out of dependence on the Spirit within you. Just think what might happen in your part of the world as you embrace the Philippians 2:5-16a path to normal Christian living. Spiritual revival in you and others! Keep moving forward with God in what you are learning. Talk to Him today.

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

You may have been here in April when Jimmy Prophete from Haitian Christian Mission visited us and gave an interview. Since that time, Jimmy has been to Haiti for a visit years in the making! His visit was full of joy and awe in all God is doing through HCM's ministries and schools despite the violence and insecurity caused by gang violence in the country. Also, earlier this month, Jimmy traveled here to attend the Northwest Christian convention. If you were able to attend as well, you likely saw Jimmy. He felt his time here was less like visiting supporters and more like visiting family. Jimmy and HCM are indeed family to us! July's newsletter also reports that they have successfully met their recent financial goals for several important campus repair projects! Maintaining clean safe, and functional facilities remains an important goal. These goals allow all staff, families, students, and ministry staff to “THRIVE in the places of HOPE that God has entrusted to them.” Prayer points: Pray for peace in Haiti, especially for the safety of La Croix Perrisse, for their summer VBS, and for wisdom for all leaders, students, the healthcare workers in their hospital, and teachers and pastors. (July 2026 Digital Newsletter)

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