

1. We have all have been there—being difficult to deal with; hating; hurting; Usually accomplishes nothing but more trouble and strife—definitely not where God wants us to hang out. Believe it or not there was an entire NT that was hanging out here—unhappy; disgruntled; not getting along with each other—a bunch of grouchy Smurfs! Let’s listen in on what the apostle Paul encouraged them to do about it.
2. 1 Thessalonians 5:13-15 MSG (We can see their discontent right in the text. But why were they so grouchy? Basically it had to do with their misunderstanding about the second coming of Christ—they thought it had been imminent—right away—some had quit jobs and were freeloading on the others; others simply gave up and drifted away; some were worn out from it all and everyone seemed to be grumpy—patience gone; snapping at each other; not able to see anything at all good in their church. It was a mess—a mess I can relate to. How about you? Well if you can relate—then hear Paul’s solution—call it a)
3. Good Combination
  - a. Be Joyful Always (be cheerful no matter what. Joy is such an attractive alternative—especially when it is an unshakable joy down deep that comes from a relationship with Christ. This is permanent joy that is unaffected by outward, temporary factors. It is expressed by a genuine cheerfulness and fortified by God’s love. It is a “fruit of the Spirit”—Galatians 5:22—that reflects God in us. “Rejoice in the Lord always”—Philippians 4:4)
  - b. Pray Continually (no surprise that prayer would be a counter measure to discontent, grumpiness and grouchiness. Scripture places much emphasis on prayer for all circumstances. It is a powerful tool than can accomplish much—James 5:13-18. We can pray the discontent away within our spirits—pray without ceasing!)
  - c. Give Thanks in All Circumstances (This may the toughest part. Giving thanks is easy when things are looking up, but more challenging during difficult days—but that is when we need the spirit of thanksgiving the most. It builds the kind of spiritual character that endures until the end. It puts things in proper perspective. No matter what the challenge—God has our back—find a way to thank God no matter what happens. It changes every part of our outlook, attitude and life)
4. “This is God’s Will for You in Christ Jesus” (so, BTW, Paul states—this is not just a mere suggestion, but actually exactly how God wants you to handle things—individually, together as his church, during the good times, during the bad times. Don’t suppress God’s Spirit—find out a way to be a joyful, praying, thankful people and **“the God who makes everything holy and whole will make you holy and whole, put you together—spirit, soul, and body—and keep you fit for the coming of our Master, Jesus Christ.”**—verse 23 MSG. And if he said he would do it—he will! So live like this—this is God’s blessed will. No more Grouchy Smurf. That is no witness to the world; to the others. How about it church?)