

Philippians 2:14-15

“The Lord created the world in six days, rested on the seventh and then on the eighth, starting taking complaints.”

Paul is warning believers that one of the most discouraging threats to working out our salvation is a complaining spirit. If a complaining spirit takes up residency in our heart or in our church it can have a negative, and even devastating impact on the church and the witness of a church or individual.

1. Don't complain about anything in life (vs. 14)

The Scriptures never clarify or describe the objects of grumbling; it is meant to be understood as comprehensive (i.e. all).

The Greek word Paul uses here in verse 14 for “*murmuring*” or “*grumbling*” is from the “*goggusmos*” which means to mutter or express dissatisfaction behind the scene.

This was the same word used of the nation Israel in the wilderness. **Numbers 14:26**, “*How long will this evil congregation grumble against me?*” The Israelites biography in the wilderness is described by the Psalmist description, “... *they grumbled in their tents and did not obey the Lord*” (**Psalm 106:25**).

Grumbling is the result of a lack of obedient humility, it is actually a declaration of pride against God. It comes from the self-centered notion that we are getting something we don't deserve, or we're not getting something we think we deserve. The problem is grumbling can turn into a permanent spirit of disgruntlement.

The word Paul selects for *disputing*, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is a word that refers to arguing or bickering. There is a distinction: *grumbling* seems to be emotional and *disputing* is essentially mental. However, both are emanating from pride and discontent, which makes both of them counterproductive, discouraging, and divisive.

Since grumbling is the lack of obedient humility, in what ways is my pride causing me to grumble and be disobedient?

2. Don't forget to work out your salvation (Vs. 15)

The Greek word for “*blameless*” can be translated to mean integrity in its most literal meaning--blameless, without blame or guilt. Its meaning in this text is blameless indicating a life of integrity.

The Greek word for “*innocent*” refers to purity. Its most literal meaning is unblemished. We are not to contaminate our life, or mix your life with evil, or don't dilute our testimony by mixing our life with sin which compromises our witness as children of God. **Romans 16:19**, “*be wise about what is good and innocent about what is evil.*” Remember **Joel 2:25**, “*I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust have eaten.*”

The Greek word for “*reproach*” refers to being unblemished. All of this relates back to the context of Paul's command to keep our conversations, relationships, and perspectives, not only individually, but congregationally without hypocrisy, without mixture of sin, or tolerance of sin, without conversations blemished by complaining and bickering. Because we are “*children of God.*”

In what ways is my life hypocritical? How have I mixed my life with conduct that does not honor God? Why do I do that?

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3. Don't disregard those who are watching your life (Vs. 15)

The Greek word for crooked is “skolios”; it means to be bent or twisted. In Paul's day it referred to being morally twisted.

Paul adds the words, “*a perverse generation.*” The Greek word for perverse is “diastrepho” it is similar to the word “crooked,” but it adds the idea of abandoning the straight line (purposeful intent), and abandoning God's moral standard and virtues.

Solomon writes of those “*who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness; who delight in doing evil and rejoice in the perversity of evil; whose paths are crooked and who are devious in their ways.*” (**Proverbs 2:13-15**)
“*Be saved from this perverse generation!*” (**Acts 2:40**)

The Western world defies scripture and will effectively decompose:

- Through greed and the idolatry of materialism
- Through utter indifference and double talk which defends the murder of millions of unborn children every year through abortion
- Through the defiant suppression of the truth of our Creator
- Through the redefining of God's intention for marriage
- Through the addiction of millions to alcohol and drugs
- Through the proliferation and legal protection of pornography and graphic lewd entertainment
- Through the ultimately idolatrous worship of government as God, bowing down to whatever the government says is right and forbidding anything it identifies as wrong

4. Don't neglect those who desperately need the word of life (Vs. 15)

It is really unhealthy for a person to live in the state of discontent. Keep in mind that the nonbelievers around us are living in the state of darkness. (**2 Corinthians 4:4**)

The Apostle Peter wrote, “*You've been brought out of the darkness and into a marvelous light.*” (**1 Peter 2:9**) Again in **Ephesians 5:8**, “*For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.*” In **John 8:12** Jesus Christ said that He was “*the light of the world*”, but he also said that Christians “*... were the light of the world.*” **Matthew 5:14**. The very purpose of light is to dispel the darkness and show the way home.

Vs. 16 – “*To hold fast*” is a verb rendered, in this context, “to hold firmly” and “to hold out” or “to extend.” We hold out the remedy, the answer, the hope of the gospel message to the lost world.

What actions describe how I “hold out” Christian hope and the gospel message to the non-believing world?

What actions are missing that would better enable me to “hold out” Christian hope and the gospel?

In summary:

- a. First, when we refuse to complain about our life – we choose to submit to the purposes of God.
- b. When we refuse to compromise our life with sin – we choose to demonstrate the character of God.
- c. When we refuse to cover up the light – we are choosing to invite others to the grace of God.