

# WHINING NOT ALLOWED

## Philippians 2:14-16

### INTRODUCTION

**Illustration** – A cowboy was driving down a dirt road, his dog riding in back of the pickup truck, his faithful horse in the trailer behind. He failed to negotiate a curve and had a terrible accident.

A Texas Ranger came on the scene. He saw the horse first. Realizing the serious nature of its injuries, he drew his service revolver and put the animal out of his misery. He walked around the accident and found the dog, also hurt critically, so he ended the dog's suffering as well.

Finally he located the cowboy --who suffered multiple fractures--off in the weeds. "Hey, are you okay?" the cop asked. The cowboy took one look at the smoking revolver in the trooper's hand and quickly replied, "Never felt better!"

You see, he knew not to complain.

We have been breeding a complaining self-indulgent society for decades. → Like Veruca Salt – "*I want it now!*"

We grumble, complain (and whine) about:

- Government
- Bosses
- Employees
- Media
- Parents
- Husbands
- Wives
- Children
- Government Leaders

- Church Leaders
- Those Outside the Church
- Those Inside the Church

And this is really just the tip of the iceberg, isn't it?

Well, God has something to say to us → **READ Phil 2:14-16**

**Proposition:**

- I. **The Command**
- II. **The Reason**

**So That:** Simply put, so that we would stop grumbling and complaining.

Before God, I would give STBC an A+ in terms of external grumbling and complaining. However, we all fight the internal battle minute by minute, day by day, to not grumble and complain in our heart to ourself.

## **I. The Command Phil 2:14**

Point – The command of God.  
Specifically, How to “work out your salvation”!!

Proof – “<sup>14</sup>**Do all things without grumbling or disputing;**”

One of the most often quoted texts by a sound parent.  
The context is staggering.

What comes before (v. 12), the most amazing blend of a biblical understanding of sanctification and the command from the Lord to, “Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”

Now watch this:

2:12 is the activity.

2:14 is the attitude (internal more than external)

And after (v. 15) – “Prove yourselves to be children of God”

Gossip and murmuring and grumbling and strife among men ... especially in God's church ... is an abomination before God at the highest level → Proverbs 6, Romans 1, James 2.

However, we must understand that all external grumbling and complaining comes from internal grumbling and complaining against God. And the context here is internal against God.

External grumbling and complaining to others is *no bueno*. But the real issue is the grumbling and complaining to God. It is the opposite of being content and satisfied in the Lord and His provision.

“**grumbling**” – secret talk, whispering, *murmuring, muttering*  
Isa. 58:9 – “speaking wickedness;” 1 Pet. 4:9 – “complaint”

“**disputing**” – διαλογισμῶν – Greek word from which we get the English word, “dialogue” → *the thinking of a man deliberating with himself; inward reasoning*: (as opposed to a dialogue between people)

Mark 7:21 – same word is translated as “evil thoughts”  
Rom 14:1 – translated as “opinions”  
1 Tim 2:8 – translated as “dissension”  
James 2:4 – translated as “motives”

It is not just what you do. It is how you do what you do.

Sermon Title: I couldn't decide between: “Stop Complaining,” “Whining Not Allowed,” and “No Whiner Babies Allowed.”

**Dr Lloyd-Jones** says, “*There is nothing that leads to such havoc in the Christian life, there is nothing that so ruins life, as this spirit of murmuring and disputing. It ruined the whole story of the ancient people, it has ruined the Christian life and experience of many a Christian in this world. It makes you ill at ease; you feel your lot is the only difficult one in the world.*”

*It leads not only to that, but to a poor testimony; it brings disgrace and disrepute upon the Christian name.”*

What does the doctor mean by “it ruined the whole story of the ancient people”?

**Turn to: 1 Cor 10** – Read v. 11 first, then the rest (1-13).

Israel’s grumbling/complaining

→ Exod 15:24; 16:2, 7-9, 12; Greedy grumblers – Num 11

When they were in Egypt they grumbled because they were in Egypt, and when they were out of Egypt they grumbled because they were out of Egypt and didn’t have any leeks, garlic, onions, or fish in the desert.

God refused to let them enter the promised land. That generation all died and were buried in the desert. This is the judgment God brought upon murmurers and complainers.

**Bockmuehl** – *“These things, then, are not minor blemishes of morality, peripheral human weaknesses in an otherwise flawless Christian spectacle. Instead, they are part of what marks the great watershed of the Christian life ... either one belongs to Christ and henceforth adopts the mind of Christ, or one does not.”*

**Illustration** – It is like the little boy who was told repeatedly to “sit down” and finally “obeyed” said defiantly,  
– “I may be sitting down on the outside, but I am still standing up on the inside.”

This kind of grumbling obedience is not really obedience at all.

And by the way.....

You will find that, as a rule, those who complain about the way the ball bounces are usually the ones who dropped it.
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And by the way, notice what Paul does say here ... and what he does not say. He does not say, do many things, he does not say, do most things, do godly things ... or spiritual things.

He says, “**all things**”

**John MacArthur** puts things into very good perspective:  
*“I hear all about mid-life crisis, do you know that there are nations in the world that don’t ever have mid-life crisis because they don’t live that long? Some people aren’t bothered by such things at all, there are parts of the world where the average lifespan is 37 years and men and women are spared the distressing reality of a 40th birthday. Some people complain about grocery bills. More than 10,000 people die of starvation every day and you’re complaining about grocery bills? Millions more suffer from malnutrition. Some people say they complain about the high cost of rent. Well, maybe you’d rather be a pavement dweller in Calcutta, they don’t pay rent. They are born, live, and die on the pavement. They only thing they have to worry about is to find a rag they can put under their head when they go to sleep.”*

A positive counter example:

**Illustration – Paul Shirley** (was “the running pastor” in one of his social media nomenclatures) – had surgery and now is unable to run. He maybe can run 1-2 miles once a week. He recently told me with a smile, “That’s ok. I was kind of turning running into an idol anyway.” He joyfully relinquished this passion and is perfectly content in God’s provision, his lot in life, the way that particular ball is bouncing.

## **II. The Reason**

## **Phil 2:1**

**Point – Illustration** – Jadon was watching some TV show where they had some kind of sociological experiment for children. The children were each given a ball of cotton candy. Their instructions were this: “Don’t eat the cotton candy. If you don’t eat it in 15 minutes, we will give you another.”

Instructions:

- 1) Don't eat for 15 minutes sufficient in theory (authority)
- 2) If you don't eat for 15 minutes, I will give you another.

The point is this: They gave a command and they also gave a reason to make adherence to the command easier or to increase the motivation to follow the command.

**Application** – In the same way, God gives reason for His command.

Point – Motivation/Reason/Result

Proof – “<sup>15a</sup>**that you may prove yourselves**”

“**that**” – *hina* purpose statement

“**you may prove yourselves ... children of God**”

→ literally – “that you might become ... children of God”

→ **prove!** That you are authentic, true children of God. That those outside the family of God would know you are who you say you are by your non-complaining, non-grumbling spirit.

**Illustration** – Alexander the Great came upon a guard who was asleep, an offense completely punishable by death. He awakened the soldier and asked him his name. “My name is Alexander”, the trembling soldier replied. Alexander the Great responded, “Either change your behavior or change your name!”

Three blessings God brings out for us for the sake of/the wellness of your: **Self, Witness, Pastor**

A. For the Sake of/the Wellness of Your: **Self**

Point – Your Wellbeing. For Your Sake.

Proof – “<sup>15b</sup>**to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach**”

3 Virtues → All 3 words begin with negative particle – a (a)

First Word:

“**blameless**” – ἄμεμπτοι (*amemptoi*) – *blameless, deserving no censure, free from fault or defect*: (in which nothing is lacking);

→ Irreproachable, Immune Accusation  
An authentic life that cannot be criticized.  
An accusation won't stick.

**Illustration** – this word translated as “blameless” is used to describe **Abraham** (Gen 17:1), **Job** (Job 1:1, 8; 2:3), and **Zacharias** and **Elizabeth** (Luke 1:6)

This is moral integrity manifesting itself externally.

Second Word:

“**innocent**” – ἀκέραιοι (*akeraioi*) – *unmixed, pure*, as wine, metals, of the mind, *without mixture of evil, free from guile, innocent, simple*: **Matt 10:16** – “be shrewd as serpents, and innocent as doves.”

Third Word:

“**above reproach**” – ἄμωμα (*amoma*) – *without blemish, faultless, unblamable*: OT – the absence of defects in sacrificial animals;

**Heb 9:14** – “How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

**Eph 5:27** – “He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.”

**Point!** – When you mortify internal grumbling and complaining, these **3 virtues** will blossom in your heart & life

**Illustration** – Going back to the TV show of children with their ball of cotton candy. The children who just sat and looked at the ball of cotton candy in front of them didn't have good success. They succumbed to the temptation and ate the forbidden ball before the 15 minutes were up.

The ones who succeeded occupied their minds with other activities (one even put his head on his chair and spun around in a circle 😊).

**Application** – In the same way, if you stew, brew, and percolate on what is bothering you ... if you sit there and chew and chew and chew on it, like a cow chewing its cud, you will succumb to the temptation and grumble and complain in your heart.

But, if you remind yourself what you (and we all) truly deserve. If you stew, brew, and percolate and chew and chew and chew on the riches of the Word of God, you will fill your heart with praise and thanksgiving and the complaint will die.

**Psa 119:11** – “Thy word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against Thee.”

## **B. For the Sake of/the Wellness of Your: Witness**

Point – For the sake of the Lost. Evangelism

Proof – “<sup>15c</sup>**in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation**”

- this is the exact Greek language that is used in the Septuagint in **Deut 32:5**, from Song of Moses

“**crooked**” – σκολιός – scoliosis

“**perverse**” – misshapen, warped

**“among whom you appear as lights in the world”**

**“appear”** – the literal and better translation → *shine, give light*

- for example, the same word was used Of stars in the Septuagint in **Gen 1:15** – “let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth”
- Of Jesus → **John 1:5** – “the light shines in the darkness”
- Of Believers → **Dan 12:3** – “And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”

**Matt 5:14-16** - increasing our spiritual luminosity in the world  
→ In the world, but not of the world.

**Illustration** – We have to remove all the hindrances that prevent us from shining. There comes a time when a light shade gets so dirty that the level of illumination drops dramatically. You need to remove the shade and brushing out all the dead flies and dust, clean away the grease and wash the shade in warm water. Then the light can shine through it again.

So if we are going to shine like stars, all that hinders the light must be removed. Paul begins with the fact that a grumbling critical spirit extinguishes the light!

When the blind lead the blind ... both fall in the ditch.

“<sup>16a</sup>**holding fast the word of life**” – 1 John 1:1

**“the word of life”** is the life-giving Gospel

It gives life to the dead sinner.

It gives life to the weak saint.

**John 5:24** – “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”

We hold it fast, gripping it, and never let it go.

We also hold forth to a dying world.

→ **Both/And!** We must have both!

Bottom line → **Preached and Practiced!** Both are necessary.

Preaching without practicing is hypocrisy.

Practicing without preaching is cowardice.

**Application** – There is no other way. Hold fast! Hold firm!

And hold forth! Bring the Word of Life to the dying!

Beloved, a transformed life is the greatest advertisement for the Gospel! It's not a perfect life, but a transformed life.

### C. For the Sake of/the Wellness of Your: **Pastor**

Point – Pastor/Elders/Leaders.

Proof – “<sup>16b</sup>**so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.**”

“**so that in the day of Christ**” – 1:6, 10

→ same as “the day of the Lord” but with more of a focus on the believer rather than the unbeliever (wrath of God)

→ Final “day” of salvation → Glorification

Paul loved athletic metaphors:

“**run**” – **1 Cor 9:24-26** – “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. <sup>25</sup>And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

<sup>26</sup>Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;”

**Heb 12:1** – “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,”

“**toil**” – root meaning of this word means “to strike or cut down”. It is used 19 times in the New Testament to mean not so much the actual exertion a man makes, but the suffering he experiences as a result.

“**in vain**” – hollow, empty (1 Cor 15:58)

**Application – Hebrews 13:17** - “Obey your leaders and submit *to them*, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”

## CONCLUSION

**FB Meyer** Devotional Commentary on Philippians – *“These thoughts press on one’s heart that one can never speak a word, never transact a piece of business that one’s face is never seen lighted up with the radiance of God or clouded and despondent without it being made harder or easier for other men to live a good life. Every one of us every day resembles Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made other men sin, or we are lifting other men into the light and the peace and the joy of God. No man lives to himself and no man dies to himself, but the life of everyone is telling upon an increasing number of mankind what a solemn responsibility it is to live.”*