

**Stand Firm, Dear Friends**  
Christ-centered Obedience  
*Philippians 2:12-18*

*“Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example.”* Mark Twain

Although good examples may inspire us, they have no power to **change** us.

Jesus not only sets an inspiring example for us, he **changes** us. He enables us to do what he did!

**Philippians 2:5** *Have this mind in you which is yours in Christ Jesus.*

**Philippians 2:12-13** *Therefore, my dear friends... continue to **work out** your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who **works in** you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.*

Obedience for Christians is a matter of **incarnation**, not, simply, **imitation**.

*“The Christian life is not a series of ups and downs. It is rather a process of ins and outs. What God works in us, we work out in obedience with awe and wonder.”* Warren Wiersbe

**Ephesians 1:16-21; 2:4-7; 3:14-19**

Obedying the commands of **Ephesians 4-6** should not be attempted without, first, experiencing **Ephesians 1-3**. To do so may be hazardous to your spiritual health!

Obedience for the Christian is not **optional** to our faith, it's **integral**.

Our spiritual **birth** was, in every respect, the work of God and God alone, but our spiritual **growth** is something we do with God; it's a partnership.

Nowhere is our faith put to the test more dramatically than in the realm of **relationships**.

There is nothing like **conflict** that reveals whether or not we are people of selfish ambition and vain conceit or people of humility.

**Philippians 2:14-18** *Do all things **without grumbling or disputing**, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.*

#### **Four Insights for Avoiding a Grumbling Spirit**

1. **Recognize** the problem.
2. **Realize** that it's serious.

Exodus 16; Numbers 14, 16, & 17

Deuteronomy 32:5

## Sobering Lessons from Israel's Grumbling

- *When we grumble, we are grumbling against **God**.*

When we grumble against a God-anointed leader, God takes it **personally**.

Any grumbling is ultimately grumbling against the **sovereign authority** of God.

**Confronting** is not grumbling.

When we complain to God we are **turning toward him**. If we grumble bitterly about God we are **turning away from him**.

- *When we grumble, it is a form of **rebellion** against God. **Psalm 78:17-19***

- *Grumblers may lose their **inheritance** in Christ.*

Grumbling can **disqualify** us from receiving our full inheritance in the new earth.

**vv. 14-16** *Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God...so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.*

### 3. **Remember** why we're here.

**vv. 15-16a** *... blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life.*

### 4. **Rejoice** that obedience in times of trouble is a form of worship.

**vv. 15, 17** *... blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish...Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.*

Paul sees the struggle that he and the Philippians are going through as an act of mutual **worship**, calling for mutual **joy**.

**vv. 17b-18** *I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.*

Paul rejoices because he sees their struggles as a God-ordained opportunity to **reveal God** to a dark world.

In the shadow of the Cross, the only attitude worthy of the gospel is **gratitude**.

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** *Be joyful **always**; pray **continually**; give thanks in **all circumstances**, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

**Romans 8:28** *God works all things together for good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose.*