



First Baptist Church Fair Oaks Ranch

Philippians 2:14-15 “Do everything without grumbling and arguing, so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world....”

This verse contains quite the challenging command. It is a direct and very clear command in regards to everything we do. We are told that no matter what we are doing, whether we like it or not, we should not grumble or argue. Grumble means ‘to murmur with discontent; to utter a low voice by way of complaint.’ The Israelites did this while wandering around in the desert for 40 years and how often do we grumble on a daily basis when the curve-balls come flying at our face or that mundane task rears its head again. It’s easy to point our fingers at the wandering Israelites questioning why they would complain when God had just performed some amazing, rescuing miracles, yet, God is just as active in our lives, giving us just as many provisions and protections, and we have the audacity to also murmur with discontent. Or, if we aren’t grumbling, how often are we arguing with others when in reality, some self-denial and humility would be the better course of action? Furthermore, even if we aren’t arguing with others, how often do we argue back towards God when He gives us a command? Any caretaker of children knows exactly what this feels like. You give them a simple command and instead of them just joyfully accomplishing the task, they waste time and energy and drain the joy out of the room by whining and arguing back, instead of just simply doing the task. I don’t want to show God the same draining attitude children often show us.

As challenging as this verse is in our daily lives, I love that God gives us the ‘why’ to this command. He doesn’t have to do that. We should just obey because He says so. But, He lovingly gives us the ‘why’ behind the command to help paint a fuller picture for us of what He is doing.

Why are we not to grumble and argue, no matter the task? The first ‘why’ is so that we walk purely, rightly, blamelessly. Is this so we can be arrogant and present to others like we self-righteously have it all figured out? Of course not. We are being commanded to live differently.

We walk around in a very messed up world and it makes no sense to look just like everyone else in our actions and attitudes. God calls us to be different.

The second ‘why’ is found in the words ‘among whom you shine like stars in the world’. All non-believers are walking around in darkness with sin and wrong choices abounding, with no hope. We, however, are called to live differently not just in our actions, but in our attitudes as well, to such the degree that we shine like stars in that darkness. Christians are supposed to be a bunch of stars shining light wherever we are so that non-believers can see the truth; can see hope. How can we shine that light of Christ’s attitude if we are murmuring with discontentment in a low voice (as the definition says)?

So, does our grumbling or arguing back matter? It absolutely does. It’s not just ‘letting off steam’ or venting a little’....it is actually sin that is not just affecting us, but failing to be a beacon of light to a lost and dying world.

I don’t know about you, but this verse is very challenging to me. I’m thankful God allows us to see the reason behind this command as it helps inspire me toward improvement in this area. My mumbling under my breath or complaining about a task is a big deal, even though I often like to pretend it’s not. In the scheme of things, it’s easy to think that grumbling is a ‘small’ sin with little consequence, I mean hey, I



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didn't murder someone! But in reality, this sin snuffs out our shining light and leaves those around us wandering in sin and darkness. Thanks be to Jesus, He not only set the example of what our attitudes should be like (see the beginning of chapter 2) but He gives us the power to accomplish it.

In perfect example, my keyboard just died as I'm typing this. I'm now plinking away on the screen keyboard. Would you like to know what I did the moment it died? I wish I could say that I gave thanks in all circumstances and joyfully typed away on this much more difficult virtual keyboard, but instead, as I'm typing about not grumbling, I murmured under my breath 'of course my keyboard died as I'm right close to the end.' The good news is that the gracious Holy Spirit immediately called me on my stuff and the realization of what I had done was instant. Thank you God for not leaving me in my wretchedness and continually working on me.

Prayer: Dear Lord, we fall so short in this area of attitude. It's so easy to utter a quick word under our breaths when things don't go exactly as we envisioned. Please convict us the moment our lips start moving towards a murmur and help us stop in our tracks and instead give you praise and thanks. Shine through us Lord. In Jesus' name, amen.