



A Spiritual Encouragement Message **July 24, 2020**

Godly? Prove it!

by Andrew Lemus

We live in a crooked and perverse generation. It is amazing how things have changed so much from our great grandparent's generation to our own. Divorce is common place, sex outside of marriage is normal, homosexual marriage has been endorsed by America's leaders, violence is laughed about on YouTube, lies, rejection of God, you name it, we live in an upside down place. Unfortunately, it is so upside down that many of us that wear the name Christ have been influenced, often unknowingly, and conduct ourselves like the world we live in. To us the inspired pen of Paul writes, "work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12).

Complaining and arguing are commonplace in our generation. Just a few moments on Facebook and we can read the grumbings and murmurings. From politics, viruses, finances, marriages, relationships, to everything else under the sun, there are complaints being made about it. Complaining seems to be normal conduct these days. Likewise, arguing is a complaints evil cousin. How many times do we complain about what we just got done arguing about? Husbands and wives don't talk things out, they argue. Parents arguing with their children, employees arguing with each other, friends, acquaintances, and even members of the Lord's body arguing.

As Christians we are called to conform to godliness and not the world. We are told to do things God's way and not the world's way. But sadly, so many of us have joined the pattern established by the world and have made it a habit to complain and argue. It is about time that we put a stop to it.

Paul wrote very clearly, "Do all things without grumbling or disputing" (Philippians 2:14). We shouldn't be grumbling, murmuring, or complaining nor should we be those that are disputing or arguing. Paul isn't saying we should never disagree with someone but that when we do disagree, we shouldn't argue (1 Timothy 2:23). Unfortunately, it seems that we are often tempted to complain and argue. Ever stood in line at the DMV? Ever have a tire blow out while driving down the road? Ever have a disagreement with

someone and they just would not come to terms with you? If so, you probably have faced the temptation to resort to complaining and arguing.

It is one thing to tell someone to do something and another to get them to do it. Ok, we should obey God and not complain and argue. Sounds good right? But how do we get the right motivation so that we can obey the command in our everyday lives? Paul gives us the “how to” when it comes to “how to” not complain and argue.

Study God’s word (Philippians 2:16). Paul tells us to hold fast to the word of God. Study God’s word and allow it to reside in our hearts and minds. Do this so that, when we are tempted, we are reminded of how we ought to conduct ourselves as children of God (Philippians 2:15).

Live by God’s standard (Philippians 3:16). When we are tempted to complain and argue remember that we do not yield to the standard of the world but the standard given by God. We are not part of this crooked and perverse generation, we simply live in the midst of it. We have chosen to make Jesus Christ Lord and in the midst of temptation, we can show who is Lord by keeping the divine standard.

Think on godly things (Philippians 4:8). “Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.” If we are thinking on these things, there is no room for ungodly thoughts. We can pull our habit of complaining and arguing out by the roots by renewing our minds to think on godly things.

Have the right motivation (Philippians 1:9-10). We are trying to help people get to heaven. We are thinking about souls. How is complaining about my brothers conduct to another going to help him get to heaven? How is arguing with my friend about his actions going to bring him closer to Christ? Paul was imprisoned when he wrote this letter to Philippi and didn’t complain about it. Instead he recognized it as a God given opportunity to fulfill the cause of Christ (Philippians 1:12-14). Complaining and arguing are not going to help us to fulfill the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

Focus on the future (Philippians 3:13). “Forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead.” How many of us complain about something in the past? We shouldn’t be focused on what we don’t have, what we haven’t accomplished, and the errors we have made. Our focus should be on what we do have, what we can accomplish, and the progress you are making.

Remember Christ (Philippians 2:5-8). Regardless of what we are going through, it doesn’t compare to what Christ went through on our behalf. Jesus willfully endured more than we can even imagine and yet did so without arguing or complaining. When you think things are bad, consider how bad others have had it. When someone disagrees with you, consider that they disagreed with God in the flesh. Remembering Christ and how good we have it can help us to stop complaining and arguing.

Learn Contentment (Philippians 4:11). If we learn contentment what will we have to complain and argue about? When we read through the Philippians letter we are given the necessary tools needed to be content. Study this letter, meditate on it, and do what it says. If we do, we can join Paul and proclaim that we also have learned contentment.

It is imperative that we do all things without grumbling and disputing so that we can prove ourselves to be godly. Consider Paul's words of why we shouldn't complain and argue, ***so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, (Philippians 2:15).***

If we follow the pattern of the world and subject ourselves to its moral code, are we not merely proving that we are part of this crooked and perverse generation? It is imperative that we heed Paul's inspired words to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). It is a difficult command to obey but it is what we are called to do. It is when we do not engage in complaining and arguing that we will be viewed as different, lights in this dark world. If you consider yourself to be godly, take some time today to prove it!