

COMPLAINING

Do everything without complaining or arguing so that you may become blameless and pure children of God, without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe.

Philippians 2:14-15

Think for a second. How long does it take you to remember someone who complains? Now think about someone who has it tougher than you but complains very little. Did it take a little longer? In our generation, as the verse above seems to insinuate, there are a lot of folks who complain. But my purpose in writing this is not to point a finger at others, but to help us improve our speech to the standard Paul sets...do everything without complaining.

Here are some things that can help. We can shine like stars and be examples. When you think of yourself as a star you have to realize that you stand out. I know folks who don't want to stand out, but did you know that the Lord wants you to? He loves to show off good character. So let's please the Father and be shining stars in a dark environment. What do you do when people are watching you? Well, how about doing what Jesus would do. Be nice to people and catch yourself before you complain about something. If you would just practice this one thing for a month you would see that you can change the spiritual atmosphere that you live in. Set the pace; don't let your mouth grumble. Be an example.

Second, be a light. Stars are lights that are pleasant, and Jesus called us to be salt and light. What is a light? Light helps people see. As a Christian we are not there to help a person see everything that is wrong with them. We want to help people see what is *right* with them. We have enough critics in this world. Be one who compliments, not one complains. Catch people doing things right and shine a verbal light on it. Let others know that you appreciate them. Light a fire of enthusiasm with motivational words. Affirm worth and potential wherever you go and you will see a lot of smiles and less scowls.

Thirdly, stars are pure light. To shine pure we need to learn to forgive. Those who keep records of wrongs are always bringing up the past and are stuck in a world colored by anger. Mahatma Gandhi once said, "Anger is like acid that can do more harm in the vessel in which it stands than to anything on which it is poured." Forgiveness involves releasing the past offense and offender and moving on in a spirit of love. The Bible says that love covers a multitude of sins. We need to get over the past and move on without complaining about what people said and what they have done. And don't obsess. Sometimes I find myself doing this. I get to thinking and over inflating something that has been said negatively to me. That negativity eats at me. Know what I mean? Listen, when you build your emotional life on the negative words of others you disempower yourself and fall victim to the metastasizing cancer of negativity. Negative people complain! You can never change other people and you can't change all situations, but you can change yourself with the help of Jesus. We are encouraged by Paul to be blameless stars. Let's deal with our thought life. Develop the skill of looking at life in the light of the soon return of Jesus and you will improve how you serve and how you speak.

Be a star today. Do everything without complaining.