

EMBRACE THE CALL

YOU & TITUS 2 NEWSLETTER

Jan. 2021 Vol. 1

Pig Pen Complaining

Dr. Donna Navey

VERSE REFERENCE

Philippians 2: 13-16

13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. 14 Do everything without complaining or arguing, 15 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 16 as you hold out the word of life—in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing.

I recently discovered that I have taken a verse out of context and misapplied it on more than one occasion (even though I was trying to be helpful).

"Do everything without complaining or arguing" Philippians 2:14.

This passage seemed like the "spiritual" thing to say when confronted with obvious complaining. However, one day it occurred to me how inappropriate the words would be to the prodigal son who found himself eating with the pigs in Luke 15. Would I have looked at the young man and said, "do everything without complaining!" The wise advice would have been "Come to your senses!" which as the story goes, he did.

There is discontentment the Holy Spirit allows when Christians are out of the Father's will. A discontented heart is often the result of disobedience that needs to be addressed. It is a good and loving blessing from God to bring us to our senses. It actually affirms our relationship to the Father.

How sad it would be to encourage someone to "keep on keeping on and quit complaining" if what they needed to do was examine whether "keeping on" was out of God's will for her life. I want to be careful in my own life and in my influence of others not to quickly dismiss a complaint before diagnosing the source. An example would be a young woman who has taken on far too much responsibility to effectively do what God has given her to do.

It would be a great disservice to her to suggest that she just keep on doing everything without complaining. What she might need is a good look at Philippians 2:14 in context. You have to get verse 13 before you can correctly understand verse 14.

"For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" Philippians 2:13.

Notice in verse 13 it says God is at work in us to will and act according to His good purpose. If we are not living according to His good purpose, we are fighting against the very will His Spirit is working in us. God's children need to be in sync with His plan. He allows us to be miserable (thank goodness!) when we are out of His will. Let me also give you a word of warning as we look at "complaining" in context. The Philippians passage goes on to explain (verses 15-16) that we are not to complain when we are in His will. Complaining is a distraction to our testimony for an unbelieving world. It hinders us from effectively "holding out the Word of life." Returning to the prodigal son story, we discover it is not the prodigal who needs to be corrected about complaining but rather the older son. He was dissatisfied with his father's plan. We honor our Heavenly Father when we are satisfied with His provision and purpose. It provides credibility to speak Truth with love into the lives of others.



Let's be more careful about how quickly we encourage someone not to complain before we inspect the source of their dissatisfaction. You may be talking to a person in their "pig pen" moment.