

Philippians 2:14

The Exceptional Life - 1

Phil 2:14-18 *14 Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain. 17 Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. 18 For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.* NKJV

In order to have the right attitude we must get rid of our **wrong** attitude.

Before we can have the mind of Christ we must **rid** ourselves of selfish ambition and conceit.

Before we can be blameless and harmless children of God and allow our lights to shine, we must **stop** complaining and disputing.

Two interpretations of this passage. Both are congruent with the overall picture painted in the New Testament. The first view discusses how this verse fits in to the broader context while the second view understands this passage in the immediate context.

The first interpretation deals with our complaining against and disputing with one another.

Phil 2:1-4 *Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*

Complaining and disputing are **not** congruent with being like-minded, of one accord or having one mind.

Complaining and disputing are neither consistent with considering others better than ourselves nor looking out for the interests of others.

Complaining - ...to murmur, mutter, grumble, say anything in a low tone. (Thayer's PC Study Bible)

Complaining - a murmur, murmuring, muttering; applied to a. secret debate: **John 7:12**. b. secret displeasure, not openly avowed: **Acts 6:1** ... without querulous discontent, without murmurings, i. e. with a cheerful and willing mind, Phil 2:14; 1 Peter 4:9 (Thayer's - PC Study Bible)

John 7:10-13 *But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. 11 Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, "Where is He?" 12 And there was much complaining (**murmuring KJV**) among the people concerning Him. Some said, "He is good"; others said, "No, on the contrary, He deceives the people." 13 However, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.* NKJV

The Jews were having a **secret** debate about Jesus. They were not having an open debate because they were afraid of the Jews.

Acts 6:1-4 *Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint (**murmuring KJV**) against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. 2 Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; 4 but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."* NKJV

The solution to murmuring is an **open** discussion pointed in the direction of a **Godly** resolution. Sometimes there are **real** issues than need a Biblical answer. The apostles did not tell the Hellenists to **quit** complaining and stop causing trouble.

1 Peter 4:7-11 *But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. 8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." 9 Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. 10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. NKJV*

Peter says that love and grumbling cannot **coexist**. We are to love one another, be hospitable to one another and **minister** to one another.

The second interpretation deals with us complaining and murmuring against God.

1 Cor 10:6 *Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 7 And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." 8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; 9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. NKJV*

Some of the Israelites were **destroyed** because of their murmuring.

Num 13:26-14:5 *Now they departed and came back to Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. 27 Then they told him, and said: "We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. 28 Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. 29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan." 30 Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it." 31 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we." 32 And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. 33 There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."*

14:1 So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. 2 And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! 3 Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" 4 So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt." Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. NKJV

The children of Israel complained against God's plan or His **will**.

Num 14:11-12 *Then the Lord said to Moses: "How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them? 12 I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they." NKJV*

God considered their complaining as a **rejection** of Him.

Num 14:26-38 *And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 27 "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. 28 Say to them, 'As I live,' says the Lord, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: 29 The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. 30 Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. 31 But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. 32 But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. 33 And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. 34 According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection. 35 I the Lord have spoken this. I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.'" 36 Now the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report of the land, 37 those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the Lord. 38 But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive, of the men who went to spy out the land. NKJV*

God was upset that the **evil** congregation complained against Him.

God said that those who murmured would be **consumed** and die.

Refer to Philippians 2:14. The murmuring could be referencing the **will** of God from verse 13.

Disputing – “in Greek writings from Plato down, the thinking of a man deliberating with himself; hence,

1. a thought, inward reasoning: Luke 2:35; 5:22; 6:8; 9:46; Rom 14:1 (yet some bring this under 2); the reasoning of those who think themselves to be wise, Rom 1:21; 1 Cor 3:20; an opinion: judges with evil thoughts, i. e. who follow perverse opinions, reprehensible principles, James 2:4 (cf. Winer's Grammar, 187 (176)); purpose, design: Matt 15:19; Mark 7:21.

2. a deliberating, questioning, about what is true: Luke 24:38; when in reference to what ought to be done, **hesitation, doubting**... Phil 2:14 is the moral, the intellectual rebellion against God, 1 Tim 2:8. (Thayer's - PC Study Bible)

Other places in the N.T. where this word is used. These are all from the KJV.

Matthew 15:19 *For out of the heart proceed evil **thoughts**, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.*

Mark 7:21 *For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil **thoughts**, adulteries, fornications, murders...*

Luke 2:35 *(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the **thoughts** of many hearts may be revealed....*

Luke 5:22 *But when Jesus perceived their **thoughts**, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?*

Luke 6:8 *But he knew their **thoughts**, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.*

Luke 9:46-48 *Then there arose **a reasoning** among them, which of them should be greatest. 47 And Jesus, perceiving the **thought** of their heart, took a child, and set him by him, 48 And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.*

Luke 24:38 *And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do **thoughts** arise in your hearts?*

Romans 1:21 *Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their **imagination**s, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

Romans 14:1 *Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to **doubtful** disputations.*

1 Corinthians 3:20 *And again, The Lord knoweth the **thoughts** of the wise, that they are vain.*

Philippians 2:14 *Do all things without murmurings and **disputings**.*

1 Timothy 2:8 *I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and **doubting**.*

James 2:4 *Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil **thoughts**?*

Phil 2:12-15 *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. 14 Do all things without complaining and disputing... NKJV*

We should not murmur against the **will** of God.

We should not **hesitate** in doing God's will once we know what it is.

"It is clear, I think, that the precept to do 'all things without murmurings and disputings' stands in the closest connection with what goes before. It is, in fact, the explanation of how salvation is to be wrought out. It presents the human side which corresponds to the divine activity, which has just been so earnestly insisted on. God works in us 'willing and doing,' let us on our parts do with ready submission all the things which He so inspires to will and to do.

The 'murmurings' are not against men but against God. The 'disputings' are not wrangling with others but the division of mind in one's self-questionings, hesitations, and the like. So the one are more moral, the other more intellectual, and together they represent the ways in which Christian men may resist the action on their spirits of God's Spirit, 'willing,' or the action of God's providence on their circumstances, 'doing.'"

Alexander Maclaren

1 Kings 18:20-24 *So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. 21 And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word. 22 Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. 23 Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it. 24 Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God who answers by fire, He is God." So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken." NKJV*

The Israelites were not doing the will of God. They were **faltering** between two opinions.

Jonah 1:1-3 *Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me." 3 But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. NKJV*

Jonah 4:1-3 *But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. 2 So he prayed to the Lord, and said, "Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. 3 Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!" NKJV*

Jonah murmured against the will of God and he **hesitated** doing it.

Practical Application

1. We should accept the will of God without murmuring against Him.
2. We should do God's will without hesitation.

3. We should not dispute murmur and fight with each other either.