

Speaking to the soul



Complaining

Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticise you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people. Philippians 2:14–15

We probably all complain from time to time, but as a way of life it can be very destructive. It has been wisely said that complaining doesn't solve problems, it only attracts them. Complaints were clearly a feature of the church in Philippi and Paul was eager that they should stop. His comments

remind us of the people of Israel during their 40 years in the wilderness. Even though they had observed God miraculously leading them out of slavery in Egypt it wasn't long before the complaints began.

Paul challenged his readers to live in such a way that they couldn't be criticised, because that could only damage their Christian witness. He had no illusions about how hard this would be. His description of the world being full of crooked and perverse people was clearly based on his own personal experiences. He knew how tough life in the world was, and he could see that if the Philippian Christians lived out their faith in the way that he had described they would stand out from the people around them. No doubt they were often tempted to withdraw from the world, but Paul insisted that their calling was to be in it.

If you have been to Christian conferences or holidays you may well have had the feeling, as I have often had, that it would be wonderful to have stayed there enjoying the worship and fellowship. It can be very hard to get back into normal life after those precious times. But the fact is, God has not called us to cut ourselves off from the world. He uses such special times to build us up so that we can live our lives in the midst of people who think and act very differently from us. Tough as it may be, we need to play a full part in the life of our communities praying that, miraculously, we might be able to shine the light of Christ in our dark world.

QUESTION

In what way are you able to shine for Christ in your daily life?

PRAYER

Lord, forgive me for those times when I am prone to complain and argue. Fill me with your Spirit today so that I will be able to shine for you however tough life might be.
Amen