

## Fact Sheet for **“Is Your Glass Half Full?”** **Philippians 2:14-18**

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Are you a person whose glass is usually half full or half empty? The answer to this question tells us a lot about our basic nature. Today’s passage in Philippians speaks to this and begins with the words...

**ESV Philippians 2:14** ¶ Do all things without grumbling or disputing,

“Do all things” – Doesn’t “all” mean “all”?

“without grumbling” – KJV – murmurings, NKJV – complaining

“or disputing” – NET – arguing

Let’s evaluate this. Did Paul argue (Galatians 2:11-14)? Sure did! Did Jesus argue (Matthew 21:33-45)? Yep! So how can Paul say, “Do all things without grumbling or disputing”?

There’s a difference between a proof text and context. A proof text is removed from its context and given a different meaning, for example... **KJV Proverbs 29:18a** Where *there is* no vision, the people perish. This proof text is always quoted in King James because the wording there is convenient for the meaning that people want. Their idea is that if a spiritual leader is not visionary then the people he leads die on the vine so to speak. But they only quote the first half of the verse because the second half doesn’t fit their purposes. **KJV Proverbs 29:18** Where *there is* no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy *is* he. Here is the same verse in the NKJV, “Where *there is* no revelation, the people cast off restraint; But happy *is* he who keeps the law.” And here it is in the NLT, “When people do not accept divine guidance, they run wild. But whoever obeys the law is joyful.” This verse has absolutely nothing to do with a visionary leader, but has everything to do with knowing scripture. Proof texting is dangerous because it can lead you into all kinds of false theology.

So what do you do with Philippians 2:14?

First of all place it in its immediate context, Philippians 1:27-2:18. The immediate context is that of good inter-personal relationships with other believers in ministry. Our passage today continues that thought.

<sup>14</sup> ¶ Do all things without grumbling or disputing, <sup>15</sup> that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, <sup>16</sup> holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

These verses, in context, also have everything to do with interpersonal relationships between believers who are ministering together.

The NIV does a nice job of translating the sense of verse 15, “so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky.”

The word translated “crooked” is the word we get scoliosis from.

This kind of Christian unity has a strong evangelistic impact. We have the message of life. The world with its values is crooked and twisted. It offers no real answer for the human condition. God has that answer in Jesus Christ, His death on the cross for our sins, and His resurrection to life after paying our eternal penalty. Paying attention to Christian unity not only has an evangelistic impact in our world, it also helps us become blameless and pure before God.

The day before I candidated here I was riding around Dorena reservoir with a member of the church. He said, “There are some who want to see major changes right away, and if they don’t they’re leaving.” I understood him right then to be talking about himself. Within a year he was unhappy with us and gone. We made changes for sure, but not the ones he wanted.

God, in this passage of Philippians, has some great vision... revelation... guidance that speaks to this exact kind of situation.

Notice too that Paul could have grumbled about his circumstances in prison, but look at the next two verses.

<sup>17</sup> Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. <sup>18</sup> Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

His thought in this verse is echoed later in the first verse of chapter 3.

**ESV Philippians 3:1** ¶ Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

Heeding God’s revelation here may be more difficult for some of us than others. But this is God’s Word, and there is blessing when we follow it.

So, when you rub shoulders with others in ministry is your glass half full or half empty?

Remember the verse this passage is known by...

**ESV Philippians 2:14** ¶ Do all things without grumbling or disputing,