

# BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

## Work It Out

Philippians 2:12-18

2008

### Introduction

#### I Paul's Appeal

The first paragraph starts off with a conjunction “Therefore”, which points back to Philippians 2:6-11 and Christ's incomparable example of humility and obedience before the Father.

Thus Paul makes a connection between the obedience *Jesus showed* (Philippians 2:8) and the obedience *Paul expected* of Christians as followers of Jesus (Philippians 2:12).

A. He appealed to them as his dear **friends** [Verse 12a]

**Dear friends** = Agapetos = “Beloved; those loved with the agape love of God”

This phrase softens the command that Paul is about to give, not in terms of its importance, but in terms of the context in which it is given; it comes from someone who loves them and has the best at heart for them.

Phil 4:1 “Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!”

Matt 3:17; 17:5 “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

**Application:** The biblical model of godly leadership is agape love!

B. He appealed to them as those who had always obeyed: [Verse 12b]

**Obeded** = Hupakouo = “Literally, “To hear under”: “To hear with the intent to act.”

They had obeyed not only in the initial reception of the gospel (Acts 16:14, 32-33), but ever since that time as well (over ten years).

Jam 1:22 “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”

**There are two kinds of obedience:** “Presence Obedience” and “Absence Obedience”

1. Whether in his **presence**: “Slacker obedience”

a. Done only when others are around: also known as “Eye-service”

b. Done only to impress the boss

Col 3:22a “Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor ...”

2. Or even in his **absence**: “Godly obedience”

- a. Done with sincerity of heart
- b. Done out of reverence for the Lord
- c. Done with an eternal perspective

Col 3:22-24 “Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”

**Application:** What kind of a worker are you?

**Quote:** “Who we are when no one is looking is who we really are.”

## II Paul’s Command

A. He acknowledged man’s **responsibility**: [Verse 12c]

- 1. Continue to work out your salvation

**Note:** Present imperative form meaning, “An on-going, lifelong process”

**Work out** = Katergazomai = “To perform, be engaged in, labor for or accomplish”

What exactly is Paul saying?

- a. What he didn’t mean

He’s not telling us to work FOR our salvation, but to work OUT our salvation. Paul is not suggesting that we earn our own salvation.” That would contradict everything else Paul and the rest of the scriptures teach us!

- b. What did he mean?

Salvation is extended to us as a free gift of God's grace. We did not and cannot do anything to earn it. But once we are saved, the new life that Christ births in us should result in a new way of living.

Stated another way -- God works in us and we work out (or manifest) our new life in Christ. This requires consistent effort and diligence on our part.

**Quote:** Muller

“The believer must finish, must carry to conclusion, must apply to its fullest consequences what is already given by God in principle . . . He must work out what God in His grace has worked in.”

Eph 2:8-10 “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God -- not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Eph 5:8-10 “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light . . . and find out what pleases the Lord.”

**Application:** What is it that we are to do to evidence or manifest our salvation?

1. Live a life of love for God and love for others
2. Submit yourself in total obedience to God's Word
3. Cooperate with the Holy Spirit and learn to recognize His voice
4. Continue to grow in your relationship with God:
  - a. Daily Quiet Times, worship and prayer
  - b. Studying, meditating on and memorizing the Bible
  - c. Be involved in a small group Bible Study
  - d. Read good books that will help you in your knowledge of God
  - e. Take a class at Kauai Bible College
  - f. Have accountability with a friend who can encourage you along
5. Find your place of service and ministry within the body of Christ (church)
6. Seek out opportunities to share the Gospel with those around you

a. With **fear** and trembling

**Fear** = Phobos = "Alarm or terror"

**Trembling** = Tromos = "To quake with fear"

It isn't the trembling of a guilty sinner living in fear of hell or damnation;  
It is the joyful trembling of a believer having an encounter with the God of glory.

1. It is an attitude of the **heart**

Isa 66:2 "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word."

2. It is an attitude of service

Ps 2:11 "Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling."

3. It is an attitude of **vision**

1 Peter 1:17 "Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear."

B. He acknowledged God's **reliability**: [Verse 13]

1. For it is God who works in you:

**Works** = Energeo [Energy] = "To be active and effectual"

The present continuous sense of the expression denotes God's continual, uninterrupted work of moving us along to greater love and service for God.  
John 15:1-2 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful."

a. To **will** according to His good purpose

God's continual "working" in us relates to two very important areas:

1. The "will" or **desire** (thelein) to do what is right

2. The “energy” (energein) to do it.

Ezek 36:26-27 “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.”

b. To **act** according to His good purpose

**Good purpose** = Eudokia = “Desire, good pleasure, goal or objective”

2 Thess 1:11 “With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith.”

**Application:** God can work (and is willing), but only if we let Him!

Heb 13:20-21 “May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

### III Paul’s Exhortation

A. Do everything without **complaining** or arguing: [Verse 14]

**Complaining** = Goggusmos = “Grumbling or murmuring”

**Arguing** = Dialogismo = “Debating or disputing”

**Note:** We are to do *everything* - not just *some* things - without grumbling or complaining!

Some facts about grumbling and complaining:

1. It is the lifestyle of unthankful, unhappy, draining people
2. It is contagious and can lead to division and strife
3. It is “bad advertising” for the Christian faith
4. It is an act of unbelief in God - Rom 8:28
5. It is ultimately done against God not man - Ex 16:6-8
6. It is an act that God punishes - Num 14:26-29

1 Cor 10:10-11 “And do not grumble, as some of them did -- and were killed by the destroying angel. These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.”

**Application:** There is no excuse for a grumbling, complaining Christian! It is SIN!

If anyone had an excuse for complaining, it was the Apostle Paul. But he didn’t!!

Imagine what life would be like without any grumbling and complaining?!?!

1. So that you may become **blameless** and pure [Verse 15a]  
*Blameless* = Amemptos = “Outwardly faultless”  
*Pure* = Akeraios = “Inwardly innocent”

Phil 1:9-11 “And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ — to the glory and praise of God.”

**Illustration:** “Bruno” Brownies

Kids wanted to go to a PG-13 movie with a few swear words and implied sex.  
 Dad whipped up a batch of brownies with just a little dog doo in it.

2. So that you may behave as children of God [Verse 15b-16a]  
 Through the display of a non-complaining spirit along with outward faultlessness and inward purity, we show ourselves to be true followers of God.  
 1 Peter 2:12 “Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”

- a. Without **fault** in a crooked and depraved generation  
*Crooked* = Skolios = “Warped, twisted or perverse”  
*Depraved* = Diastrepho = “To distort, misinterpret, pervert or corrupt”

Deut 32:5 “They have acted corruptly toward him; to their shame they are no longer his children, but a warped and crooked generation.”

Acts 2:40 “With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt (skolia) generation.”

- b. In which you **shine** like stars in the universe  
 Dan 12:3 “Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.”

As believers we are described in the Bible as:

1. The light of the world - Matt 5:14-16
2. Light in the Lord - Eph 5:8
3. Shining ever brighter

Ps 19:1-4 “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”

Prov 4:18 “The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.”

c. As you hold out the **Word** of Life

**Hold out** = Epecho = “To hold upon, retain, pay attention to, give heed to, hold forth”

The phrase can mean either:

1. Holding fast to the Word of Life
2. Holding forth the Word of Life

1 John 1:1-3 “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched — this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.”

**Application:** To shine like stars in the universe ...

1. Is possible only if we "become blameless and pure"
2. Requires doing all things "without grumbling and complaining"
3. Only happens if we allow God to "work in" us as we "work out" our own salvation.

#### IV Paul's Motive

A. He wanted to **boast** on the day of Christ [Verse 16b]

1 Thess 2:19-20 “For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.”

1. That he did not run or labor for nothing

**Run** = Trecho = “To run”

**Labor** = Kopiao = “To feel fatigue, to be weary from work”

Paul described his apostolic labor as a race in 1 Cor 9:24-27 and 2 Tim 4:6-8.

The idea that his work might some how end up to be in vain concerned him.

Isa 49:4 “But I said, "I have labored to no purpose; I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing.”

The Bible describes a number of things that can subvert our effectiveness in ministry:

1. Faithlessness to God's call - 1 Cor 9:24-27
2. Hindrances from other Christians - Gal 2:2
3. False teachings and doctrines - Gal 4:11
4. Temptation from the enemy - 1 Thess 3:5
3. Faithlessness of individual believers or even whole churches

B. He was poured out like a drink offering [Verse 17a]

**Poured out** = Spendo = “To offer as a libation, the drink offering”

The sacrificial process went like this: The offerer came and presented the animal sacrifice as a burnt offering (Numbers 15:4-5 and 28:7). At some point during the burning the drink offering was poured out as the final sacrificial act.

2 Tim 4:6-8 “For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”

1. On the **sacrifice** coming from their faith  
Paul sees his part of God’s work in the Philippians, not as the most important part, but as the final touch of their corporate offering to God.

**Application:**

Rom 12:1 “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship.”

2. On the **service** coming from their faith  
**Service** = *Leutrogia* = “Service to God or His cause”  
1 Peter 2:4-5 “As you come to him, the living Stone -- rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him -- you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

- C. He was glad and rejoiced with all of them **[Verse 17b]**  
Col 1:24 “Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.”

Paul’s supreme desire and joy was to promote and rejoice in the gospel:

1. The Philippians’ obedience promoted the gospel.
2. Paul’s imprisonment promoted the gospel - Phil 1:12-13
3. Paul’s modeling to the believers promoted the gospel - Phil 1:14
4. Even those preaching Christ out of envy promoted the gospel - Phil 1:15-17

Whatever advanced the gospel gave Paul great joy!

- D. He wanted them to be **glad** and rejoice with him **[Verse 18]**  
Paul’s life was going to be a sacrifice for Jesus Christ, either in life or in death. This was a source of gladness and joy for Paul, and he wants the Philippians to adopt the same attitude.

2 Cor 4:16-18 “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

### **Conclusion**

1. Christians should obey the Lord whether other people are watching or not. Paul told the Philippians that he wanted them to obey whether he was present or absent (2:12). We obey an omnipresent and omniscient God - Jer 32:17
2. We must be careful to hold verses 12 and 13 in the proper tension. Do everything in the strength the Lord provides through his Spirit in you, the encouragement of his Word, people, and prayer.
3. If grumbling or complaining is a habitual sin in your life, then take steps now to confess it and repent of it. Learn to replace it with thanksgiving to God and the encouragement of others - Col 3:16.
4. As Christians we are the *light* of the world - (Matt 5:16). Plan to do at least one thing this week with a person who does not know Christ. Ask God for an opportunity to serve them and share Christ with them. “Hold out” the word of life so that God can enlighten them!

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