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Messages from Murmurers

(Part 3)

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Series: Living Lessons From Proverbs

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Messages from Murmurers

(Part 3)

In Philippians, chapter two, verses 14 and 15, the apostle Paul gives us a clear warning followed by an equally clear reason for the warning concerning murmuring. He says this:

Do all things without murmurings and disputings
[REASON]:

That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God,
without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse
nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world:

Holding forth the Word of Life: (Philippians 2:14-16a)

What Paul is saying is this: God's goal for the believer is that he be blameless and harmless, that is; that his life be so transparent, so guiltless, so sensitive to others that he would never do or say anything that would needlessly offend another nor would he ever do or say anything that could even give honest ammunition for those who are desiring to accuse or destroy him. To accomplish this, Paul says, two things are essential:

- 1) Don't ever under any circumstances murmur.
- 2) Don't be guilty of possessing an argumentative spirit.

These are essentials. Paul goes on, because (now) you are lights in a dark world. You are the beacons through which others come to the light. Murmuring makes the light flicker, sends out an unsure signal in the darkness. So for the Christian who wants his life to count, really count, murmuring is out. It's not even acceptable on a now and then basis.

MURMURING IS OUT!

That's why we're studying this subject so carefully as we wind our way through the issues and answers the Bible raises about the tongue. We've been told by James that this flame of fire we call the tongue so often confuses the world because one minute it's broadcasting praise to God, and the next it's sending out garbage: signals of dishonesty, or obscenity, or discontent.

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One minute that tongue testifies of a sovereign God, the next it murmurs over the circumstances that sovereign God has allowed to come into its life, and the world is confused. They feel like they're listening to a radio station that intersperses Gospel programming with filth. No one would listen to a station like that. The Gospel programs would have no credibility, and that's the way the world views the testimony that issues forth from a murmuring tongue. It has no credibility.

So we're looking at what messages murmurers really send to the world. "Messages from Murmurers" is our title. This lesson is the third and final part of that study. And we are (on our outline) continuing our look at Part 3, "The Marks of a Murmurers".

We have examined the first six. Now we'll look at the last four. Then in part four we'll examine:

IV- A Message to Murmurers

A- How God Feels About Murmuring and

B- How God Deals With Murmurers

And lastly, we'll listen to some "Messages from Murmurers" in Part V, and try to discover what our murmuring tongues are really saying to the world. A murmurer, you remember, is someone who utters indistinct or indirect expressions of dissatisfaction or resentment. A murmurer is a complainer who's gone underground. His life transmits a subtly negative signal through words and through expressions, a signal that generates an atmosphere of discontentment. The subtle message his life reflects can be summed up in one phrase, "Why me, Lord; Why me?"

To the murmurer, even the sunshine is too bright. When business is good, there's too much to do. When business is bad, somebody else is always to blame. To the murmurer, the government's corrupt, the boss is unfair, the weather is always too "something", and "I could be happy if only..." is a phrase too often uttered or implied. And the Murmuring Syndrome is contagious. (We can see that by observing the world's most classic Murmuring Brigade, God's woebegone Wandering Wonders, and the Israelites.)

So dry and parched were their spirits that only a spark of discontentment would spread like wildfire in a moment's notice. Hymns of Hallelujah's turned to Choruses of Complaining the

very second God was not parting a sea or splitting a rock, or otherwise tangibly holding their attention by demonstrating His power. “See what our God has done!” would fade into “What’s our God done lately?” at the mere movement of a murmurer’s tongue.

But don’t be so hard on our Hebrew Heroes. Those things were written for our examples, and yet we mock them and go right on murmuring over circumstances much less punishing than our fickle friends experienced in their wilderness wanderings. What we apparently fail to grasp on a day-to-day basis is just what messages we murmurers are sending to a lost and searching world that is listening to us—trying to hear an undistorted Gospel.

We’ve been examining these past two weeks, the Marks of a Murmur, the kinds of things we Christians use as excuses to question the sovereignty of God. So far, we’ve looked at six, and most of us have been able to painfully identify with at least some of them. (For the sake of time) we’ll only mention them in passing as we pass on to the final four.

1- We murmur over the glories of Egypt.

Egypt, to the believer, represents the life we came out of when we came to Christ. The world glorifies that life, and when we become blinded by double-mindedness, we long “for the good old days” when, perhaps, we ate better from the world’s perspective, and when the warfare was not so intense. Of course it wasn’t. We were on the enemy’s side then (and why should he make life miserable for his own?) But those were not the “Good Old Days”. We were estranged from God, in bondage to sin, and destined for an eternal hell, separated endlessly from the love of God. Satan has painted a mirage on our mirrors to confuse us.

The Truth is:

The Worst is Behind Us!

The Best is Before Us!

And Christ is Inside Us!

How Dare We Murmur!

2- We murmur over our wages or our jobs.

We compare our salary with someone else’s whose education or experience doesn’t measure up to ours and suddenly we

picture ourselves as paupers, unappreciated, undiscovered gems lost in a marketplace of the commonplace.

Jesus set a different standard. He portrayed our jobs as mission fields and as training stations in character to teach us how to respond to authority; how to relate to our peers; and how to develop discipline, faithfulness, humility, and contentment. He told us not to make comparisons, but to labor diligently and to labor gratefully as unto Him. For He is the Sovereign God who is in control of our destiny, in control of our bosses, in control of our salaries, who sets up one and puts down another, and who (as Sovereign God) gives us no cause to murmur.

3- We murmur when our privacy or our schedules are interrupted as if we owned time for our benefit.

He told us to be hospitable without grumbling, to be available without murmuring, the way He is available to us.

4- We murmur over problems in the church.

Our group is being overlooked, we complain, or our program is being set aside. We'll quibble over soft seats, fluffy flowers, cantankerous committees, or modes of music while a hungry world stands outside our gates longing for a look at unity so it can find the peace it seeks. And instead of hearing choruses of "He Is Lord" in unison, they hear the rumblings of murmuring tongues...and walk away.

5- We murmur over the demands of discipleship.

Like the first century followers, so often we want the benefits of blessings without the cost of commitment. We've been given an undeserved commission as an officer in the King's Army. We murmur over the trauma of the training, the risk of the battlefield, and the dangers and the demands that accompany the responsibilities. Instead, we ought to be honored that we are chosen and humbled that we are considered worthy to be called a disciple. When Jesus turns to us and says, "Wilt Thou, too, go away?" "IS this too hard?" we like Peter ought to exclaim, "Lord, where would we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." The mere thought of that reality ought to put an end to our murmuring.

6- We murmur over our health.

The innocent question "How are you feeling today?" releases

within us varying degrees of discontentment over the disturbing state of this temporary temple in which we reside. But we learned in the last lesson that God has a purpose in sickness, a purpose far deeper than our physical comfort. We took a God's eye look last time at illness only to discover that God often allows our bodies to suffer so our spirits can soar, that He sometimes allows pain to produce power, trauma to produce trust, sickness to demonstrate His sovereignty. We learned that through these physical trials that so cause us to murmur, He changes our perspective, transforms our character, and releases within the Body of Christ the spiritual healing that comes only when one member hurts and others feel the pain.

God is at work through even our sickness. So like Paul, we ought to rather "glorify God through out infirmities" that the power of Christ might rest upon us. Certainly the last thing we ought to do is...murmur.

7- We murmur over our failures.

Probably no refrain
Evokes more pain
Than this painful song
We've sung so long

It goes like this:

Woe is me;
I'm a portrait of sin
I've tried and I've tried
But I've failed again.

For any poor fool
It's plain to see,
That even God
Could never use me.

But as Christians we ought to be singing this song:

In the eyes of the world,
I'm a failure for sure.
If I'm chosen for greatness,
The choice seems so poor.

But the world cannot see
(Nor perceive if they could)
That even my failures,
God's planned for my good!

And my God uses failures,
So there's no mistaking
I'm not a failure,
I'm success in the making!

How the world must wonder at the double-tongued dialogue of the Christian. On the one hand, praising Him that a sovereign God uses all things in His plan and all our mistakes to make us His man. Then, they hear us murmuring at what rotten failures we are.

Beloved you may fail, but you're not a failure. You are, in Christ, the world's success story. You have been translated from darkness into light. Your life's direction has changed from hell to heaven, and your God has pledged to you that He that began a good work in you will finish what He started. No, you can't take credit for it, but taking credit for it isn't the issue. Success is the issue, and using real success as your measuring stick, you are not a failure and never will be. So don't confuse yourself or the world by murmuring.

8- Christians murmur over their trials.

We've already discussed sickness, but that's really only one of life's murmur-producing circumstances. The others involve nearly every aspect of life from car trouble to finances to marriage problems to the routine day-to-day irritations.

The dog gets sick; you murmur.
The TV breaks; you murmur.
The 'big deal' you were working on falls through.
The cake falls.
The utility bill rises.
A clerk is rude.
Your team loses.
Your wife is late.
The bill collector's early...

And you whine like you were rewriting Lamentations chapter three in the first person. There we read such negative cries as these:

I am the man who has seen the afflictions that come from
God's wrath.

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He has turned against me.

He has walled me in;

And though I cry and shout, but he will not hear my prayers!

He lurks like a bear, like a lion, waiting to attack me.

He has bent his bow and aimed it squarely at me, and sent his arrows deep within my heart.

My own people laugh at me;

He has filled me with bitterness...

...I have forgotten what enjoyment is.

(Lamentations 3:1,3a,7a,8,10,12,13,14a,15a,17b TLB)

Have you ever felt like that? Well, some of us have and some haven't, but in varying degrees that's the spirit of bitterness we articulate when we murmur. We are saying in essence, "Lord, You let my car stall on the freeway. Lord, You let Johnny get the measles (while Sammy still had the mumps). Lord, You let the roof leak on my new sofa. Lord, You're out to get me! Lord, Why me?" Instead of viewing each of life's inconveniences as gifts of grace, we murmur. But Lamentations goes on to reality.

Who can act against you without the LORD's permission?

Why then should we, mere humans as we are, murmur and complain when punished for our sins?

(Lamentations 3:37,39 TLB)

Much of our murmuring is over the incidental inconveniences of life. They vary in their intensity, and we vary in our responses. But always they have these five things in common.

1) They are basically circumstantial in nature. The car, the job, the TV set, the utility bill, all relate to incidents or circumstances that came upon us (usually unexpected) rather than to deep moral or spiritual issues. They are usually circumstantial.

2) They are usually beyond our control. Though sometimes our errors or weaknesses contribute, most of our murmuring is over the uncontrollable experiences of life, things we can blame on others and ultimately on God.

3) They are experiences that usually result in humiliation or inconvenience. Usually we are either put out or put down by the daily intrusions we experience into our perfectly planned existence and so we murmur.

4) Though other people are often involved, our underlying complaint is against God. HE let it happen. Either HE planned it or HE allowed it (we're not quite sure to which degree to blame Him). But we just know HE could have stopped that car from hitting me. HE could have kept the freezer running. HE could have given me that promotion. HE could have warned me and I wouldn't have broken my leg. We may mask it with spiritual jargon, but underneath it all, like Job, what our murmuring is saying is God is unfair. And my friend, either to say or to think that is dangerous business.

5) The last thing our murmurings seem to have in common is that timing always plays an important part in our irritations. "Why does everything come at once?" you say. Or, "I just can't handle one more thing." Remember, "While they were yet speaking," Job got his next bit of news. The truth is that the timing of our traumas simply confirms that they are an integral part of the warfare between Satan and God.

Timing is key to Satan's attacks. Read Job again. Satan almost always assaults you in waves the way he did Job. He wants to wear you down. Timing is key to God's purposes. The hours on the clock are His, and time is in God's favor.

So when you experience back to back trials, don't cry out with hostility over the inhumanity of it and murmur. Fall to your knees in awe at the spiritual significance of it. God has counted you worthy to allow Satan to launch a circumstantial offensive in your life. As with Job, it is not a condemnation, but rather a commendation. Fall down and worship, and taking the sword of the Spirit, stand. But don't murmur.

Remember! Your murmuring over life's unavoidable inconveniences is in reality a personal attack on the sovereignty of God. Like Job, early on, we must learn to respond,

...the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be
the name of the LORD. (Job 1:21)

That kind of affirmation of faith silences Satan's prompting to murmur.

9- We murmur over the Law or the rulings of those God has placed over us.

To complain about the law is to praise wickedness. To obey

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the law is to fight evil.

(Proverbs 28:4 TLB)

Romans 13, begins with this.

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

(Romans 13:1,2 NIV)

Now that passage is already familiar to most all of you, but what I want us to do is apply it in the area of murmuring. To murmur against the law is to praise wickedness, for that law and those who enforce it are God's instruments of justice. Thus to murmur about the inequities of the law is to accuse God, once again, of being either unfair or inadequate. What blasphemy that is. If you get a ticket you don't think you deserve, either pay it and praise God for the privilege, or follow the due process the law allows you to appeal it, but don't murmur.

Why didn't you murmur all those times you were speeding and didn't get stopped? Those times you changed lanes without signaling? Turned right without stopping? We cry, "Justice!" but we don't want justice. Justice means we'd have to pay for every infraction, intentional or not, where no one saw us. We don't want justice. We just use justice as a scapegoat to ease our consciences. It isn't our role to murmur about the laws or the judges or the governing authorities.

Yes, some of the laws are unfair. Yes, some of the authorities are corrupt, and others are inept. But many are wise and honest, and all are there by God's sovereign choice. Given a chance, you vote your conscience and exercise your God-given freedom to choose; but once the people have spoken, God has spoken. Now respect them for the office they hold and honor them and pray for them as your God-ordained authorities. And whenever you see a policeman doing his job well, thank him. He's there for your good, Paul says. Unless, that is, you're a lawbreaker. And don't murmur about the President. Honor him. If you don't like him, vote against him next time, but until then, honor him. God placed him there for a reason. Perhaps you wouldn't have, but you're not God. But when you honor him, you honor God, so that leaves no room for murmurers.

10- We murmur when others don't do their share.

It's a cardinal principle in the home. Everybody thinks he does it all. It's the same thing on the job. It's the same thing in the church. The lie Satan bases this complaint on is the lie that if all men are created equal, then all men are created to carry the same load, "same load" being defined as a task equal to or the same as yours. It is true that all men are to do their share, but what is or isn't their share is God's business, not yours. And that lady in church you so murmur over because she never volunteers to bring a casserole to the covered dish dinners may spend hours on her knees in prayer. She's pulling her load and then some. That guy who's so talented but never shows up for choir may be spending hours caring for his elderly mother. That's pulling his load and then some.

Jesus had the same problem in Mark 14:5 while He was in Bethany at the house of Simon the Leper. Remember? A woman came out and poured a jar of expensive perfume on Jesus' head, and the move was met by a rash of indignation by His self-righteous followers. "What a waste," they cried. "That represents a year's wages," they murmured. "We could have used that money for missions," they complained. But Jesus said, "Leave her alone. What she's doing is precious to me."

Again in Luke, chapter 10, verse 40, Mary and Martha got into a confrontation because Martha thought she was doing all the work. (And in the kitchen she was!) But Mary meanwhile was spending all her time at the Lord's feet listening to what He said. Martha was angry, and in her anger she accused Jesus of unconcern.

"Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" (Luke 10:40b GNT)

She whined. (Sound familiar?)

"Martha, Martha", the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things,

but only one thing is needed— or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better..." (Luke 10:41,42 NIV)

Martha was the original "Kitchen Aid." And so many of us are like Martha, scurrying about doing, while all the while murmuring that we're having to "do it all." Meanwhile some of the Mary's of this world who seem to not be pulling their share

of the load may be choosing the better part. At any rate, it's our job to be faithful where God has placed us, not to murmur over those who appear to be doing less.

Those are some of the things we murmur about. There are many others, but these give us a foundation on which to build a pattern so we can recognize the basic areas of life that often cause us to murmur.

But the crux of the issue of murmuring is as yet unaddressed. It is the deeper issue of God's perspective and the world's perspective of murmuring saints. We've learned in detail what murmuring is and just what kinds of things we murmur over. The question is, how serious is it to God? And why does God feel the way He does. What difference does it make anyway if we want to murmur a little? It is fun and who's it gonna hurt?

Let's begin with question one: How serious is it to God? What messages does God have to give to murmurers? Let's look first at how He feels about it and then how He deals with it.

In Psalms 106, the Psalmist was teaching a history lesson with some deep underlying spiritual and moral lessons at their root. That's the way to teach history, incidentally. History is not the relating of facts. History is His Story, and the lessons we learn from history go deeper than who did what and who discovered what. History is a panoramic view of the lives of men and women and their relationship to the laws of God. What history teaches us is that God's laws are absolute. Those who obey them are blessed. Those who flout them suffer consequences. That's why Christian schools and Sunday school teachers must teach history from a moral perspective. The world tends to make heroes out of those who "succeed" no matter their moral principles and thus glorify achievement at the cost of integrity. That's wrong.

God never taught history that way. He always related history to obedience and the consequences that followed. Psalms 106 is no exception.

Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. (Psalm 106:1)

Who else can do what He does? Who can praise Him enough? (Psalm 106:2 paraphrase)

Then verse 3a sets the ground rules.

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Blessed are they that keep judgment,

God says we've got a cause and effect for real success in God's storybook. It's obedience. Then He proceeds to give them a history lesson as an example of the cause and effects of obedience. The Psalmist says, "Boy, we've sinned and so did our fathers." Then he takes us to the Red Sea for a quick reminder of what God did. He says, "Our fathers didn't appreciate those miracles."

Nevertheless He saved them for His name's sake, that He might make His mighty power to be known. (Psalm 106:8)

And having shared the reason for their salvation, He paints a picture of the results of that salvation. He saved them, and they believed His words. They sang His praise, but soon they forgot. They waited not for His counsel. They lusted in the wilderness. They tempted God in the desert, so He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul. Then comes the obvious result, idolatry followed. And verse 21 says,

They forgot God their saviour which had done great things in Egypt. (Psalm 106:21)

Yea, they despised the pleasant land [he'd given them], they believed not his, word:

But [instead they] murmured in their tents, and hearkened [listened] not unto the voice of the LORD.

(Psalm 106:24,25)

I want you to see how a murmurer looks to God. In this passage, three characteristics surface that led up to their murmuring. And these three characteristics will always be present in the life of a murmurer. Look at them:

1) They forgot what God had done. This is, in essence, the first ingredient in the makeup of a murmurer—a short memory. Christians who murmur about the past have forgotten what life was really like without Christ. Christians who murmur over their failures have forgotten how God used their failures in the past. Christians who murmur over the law have forgotten how God used the law in the past to protect them. Christians who murmur have often simply buried their book of remembrance beneath a stack of discontentment and forgotten the miracles, the majesty, and the mercy of their God. And that breaks God's heart.

2) Notice, secondly, they despised the land He'd given them.

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This isn't what they'd bargained for. They weren't looking for a land of giants. They were looking for a land of promise. They weren't mature enough to see that they were one and the same.

And when you and I murmur, we are saying to God, "This spiritual land you've given me is not what I bargained for. It's full of giants. It's full of tribulation. It's full of warfare. I had in mind big grapes and an easy life, financial prosperity, vocational success, physical health. This spiritual kingdom through physical suffering is not the land I had in mind." We despise our inheritance and murmur. And once again, we break God's heart.

3) Finally, it says, they believed not His Word. There is the essence of a murmurer's philosophy. You can't take the Word too seriously and be an effective murmurer, for as we shall see in a moment, every message a murmurer sends says in effect, "I know the Bible says this, but..."

So God sees murmurers as men and women with short memories, who are dissatisfied with His spiritual kingdom, and who do not believe the Word. It's no wonder, then, that those who persist in murmuring find that God does not take this transgression lightly. That's how God feels about murmuring.

What about how God deals with murmurers. We'll look very quickly at three passages of scripture to see just what measures God took to deal with His murmuring saints (the Israelites). The first is Numbers, chapter 11. We'll just read verse 1:

And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD:
and the LORD heard it; and His anger was kindled; and the
fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them
that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.

(Numbers 11:1)

Now turn to Numbers chapter 14, beginning with verse 26. There we read this:

And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron saying,
How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which
murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the
children of Israel, which they murmur against me.

Say unto them as truly as I live sayeth the LORD, as ye have
spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you:

Your carcasses shall fall in the wilderness...

...ye shall not come into the land. (Numbers 14:26-30a)

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The final passage is back in Psalms 106 where we see described God's response to their nagging and murmuring for something more than manna. We read it earlier. Verse 15 is the verse so familiar by now.

He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul. (Psalms 106:15)

So at least three things happen to murmurers:

1) God brings divine discipline into their lives. Their absence of contentment demands chastening until they come again to see as little children that their loving Father knows and does that which is best.

2) Secondly, God lets murmurers wander. He lets them find their own level of spiritual apathy and settle for second best. They do not trust His sovereignty, so they can't possess the land. They learn the principles, memorize the promises, but never experience the joy of abundant living. God lets murmurers wander outside the promised land.

3) Finally, God gives murmurers a taste of their own medicine. If they cry long enough for wealth, he may give it to them. But it'll turn bitter to the touch and in the process the spiritual things God was teaching them through poverty they'll never learn. He'll give them their request, but send leanness to their souls. They may murmur for success or acceptance or pleasure. God's patience has a point at which He says, "You wrote the prescription, you take the medicine, but the cure will not make you whole." So God has a message for murmurers. He says you have three basic sins.

"You have forgotten My miracles, despised my land, and believed not My Word." In other words, you have a short memory, an ungrateful spirit, and you don't trust what I say. Unless you repent, one or more of these three fates awaits you: Divine Discipline, A Life of Wandering, and Leanness of Soul in exchange for what you are murmuring for. It is hardly a pleasant prescription.

Well, why such strong medicine for what seems to be such a harmless disease? In closing, may I remind you that at the beginning of this lesson we heard Paul's assessment of the gravity of murmuring? His word was this: It's a NO! NO! You are to be lights in a world that's sinister and dark. If your lips of

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praise alternate with murmuring messages; your trumpet call is uncertain. The light in your life begins to flicker, and a confused world, looking desperately for a life so transformed it can rest in a Sovereign God will not follow the likes of a murmurer. In other words, a murmurer's testimony is void of power. For though he may share God's promises, he nullifies them every time he murmurs.

For instance, every time you murmur about your wages, what you are saying is this: "My God does not supply all my needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

You say, "I'd never say that, that's a direct contradiction of Philippians 4:19." Of course, you'd never say that, but when you murmur, that's the message you send. So one minute, you're saying God does supply your needs, the next you're complaining that He hasn't. As James said, "Beloved, this ought not so to be." (James 3:10b)

And every time you murmur about your health, or your trials, you send a message to those about you. Decoded, it says this: "All things do not work together for good to them that love God and are the called according to His purpose."

You say, "I'd never say that!" That's in direct contradiction to Romans 8:28. Ah, but you do say that when you murmur about those all things that come into your life. That's the message murmurers send, and the world wants no part of it.

And when you murmur about the law? Your message loud and clear is this: "The powers that be are not ordained of God."

I know, I know, Romans 13:1. You'd never say that. But don't you see? You do when you murmur! No wonder our friends are confused.

And when you murmur about your time or the cost of discipleship? Your message is clear. "I cannot do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

I know, I know. It contradicts Philippians 4:13, right? You'd never say that, right? Wrong! You do say that when you murmur.

And when you murmur about things you wish you had, do you not send out this message: "Godliness with contentment is not great gain. Having food and raiment is not enough."

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I know! I Timothy 6:6 says otherwise. But that's still the message murmurers send.

And a confused world hears these messages from murmurers, too, when you murmur over your marriage. Here's your message: "When thou vowest a vow unto God you *have an option* whether or not to pay it."

When you murmur over your pressures, here's the message: "There are some tests taken you that *are not common to man*. So God is *not always* faithful. He *may allow* you to be tempted beyond your ability to bear."

When you murmur over the things you can't control, listen to your message! "You can *be anxious for some things*, for in those things there is *no value* in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. And the peace of God *may not always* keep your hearts in Christ Jesus."

You say, "Blasphemy!" I agree. But as the world filters its way through our theological smokescreen, those are the messages they really hear when we murmur.

Is it any wonder God takes murmuring so seriously? Isn't it about time we took murmuring as seriously as God does?

ISN'T IT TIME WE STOPPED MURMURING?

Isn't it time we stopped murmuring?
Aren't we confusing the lost?
Aren't we just casually murmuring,
Without really counting the cost?

Isn't it time we stopped murmuring?
And thought of the message we send?
Ought we not to but guard our lips
Lest we but stumble a friend?

Do not our murmuring messages
Say to the world—indeed
No matter what the scriptures say
God won't supply all my need.

Do not our murmuring messages say
We'd love to rejoice if we could
But we'd rather murmur, because we're not sure
All things work together for good.

Do not our murmuring messages cry
When through the truth they've been strained,
About the law—I'm just not sure,
That the powers of God are ordained.

Oh, beloved Christians
With all of our fervor unfurled
We say one thing—but murmuring lips
Are confusing a dying world.

So isn't it time we stopped murmuring?
And at last celebrate a new day?
A day when the world hears our message
And knows what we're trying to say?

We're trying to say—God is Sovereign!
He'll give purpose and joy to each test
We're trying to say—God cares about you!
And He only desires your best.

The world will hear that message,
And trusting in Him, will find peace;
But first you and I must learn the truth
That our murmuring has to cease.

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