

**Scripture Reference: Philippians 2:12-16**

**Date: October 13, 2013**

**Title: "The World..."**

**Focus:** The corrupting influence of the world (Series 1 of 3)

**Intro:**

1. I want to take a look at resistance this morning.
2. Video clip: Dave Scott dropping the hammer and feather on the moon. - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mTsrRZEMwA>
3. The difference between objects falling on earth and in a vacuum is the issue of resistance.
4. Resistance is an issue disciples of Jesus must be familiar with as well.
5. What has resistance to do with discipleship? It is the cause behind the *effort* of being a disciple.

**Body:**

**Paul wrote the Philippian believers to "*work out their salvation*" (v. 12).**

This is not a call to earn salvation, but to *invest effort* in realizing what God has placed in those who have entered into relationship with Him (v. 13).

This effort is not to be directed towards salvation, that can't be earned (Eph. 2:8-9)

Neither is it required to keep a relationship with God, He carries the responsibility for that (John 10:28-29).

Furthermore, this effort is to be rendered without "*grumbling and disputing*." Paul recognized whenever effort is involved people tend to grumble and argue.

Why does discipleship entail effort? Because those who follow Jesus experience *resistance*.

This resistance is directed at the disciple's movement towards being a person who is in the image of God.

The Bible speaks of three sources of resistance disciples face: *the world, the flesh, and the devil*.

While each shares a common characteristic, the attempt to impede a disciple's movement towards obedience, they each come from a different place and therefore need to be separately addressed.

## **The World.... (2:15)**

Paul encouraged the Philippians to *strive* in their discipleship because of the world in which they lived.

v. 15; "*so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a*

*crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,"*

It takes effort for the disciple of Jesus to be blameless and innocent. But, as children of God what other characteristics should our lives reflect?

This is not a call to be *sinless* and *perfect*, but *blameless* and *innocent*. There is a difference.

To be *blameless* is to be free of accusation.

1 Peter 2:12; "*Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.*"

By definition, the follower of Jesus is living a life reflective of His. As they spoke ill of Jesus, they will speak ill of His disciples. But, when they do, effort must be expended that their accusation are not true.

A Disciples of Jesus will not be *perfect*, but he or she can be *innocent*.

Innocence is the idea of being unpolluted, like silver that contains no other metal.

One of the recurring sins of Israel was *syncretism*. This was the habit of mixing the worship of God with the practices of the pagans. As a result, they did sinful things in YHWH's name.

This is such an easy habit to slide into – if a disciple is not making efforts against it.

Believers live in a world that lures people to sinful and compromising lives. It is one that says wrong is right, up is down. It is *crooked* and *perverse*.

In such a setting, a life of personal holiness offered as a sacrifice to God, shines out a light in the darkness.

### **Closing:**

1. A life that reflects the person and nature of God does not *just happen*.
2. It takes *effort* because the disciple of Jesus is going against the flow. The world has never been a place where being a follower of God is easy and it never will be.
3. Because the systems of the world, the hearts of many around us, and the corrupting influence of sin, the tide is against living a life of devotion to God.
4. It will only happen as the saint of God determines in his or her heart to live a life reflective of what God has placed within, His very Spirit.