

Grace Notes

Dogbone Underwear

9.01.10



***[The ungodly] are grumblers and fault-finders;....
Jude 16***

It's my favorite all-time line from the sit-com, *Cheers*. Norm walks into the bar and, when asked about his day, replies to all his friends, "It's a dog-eat-dog world out there, and I'm wearin' dogbone underwear."

Ever feel like you've been chewed up & spit out? Maybe a better question would be, *How many times* have you been chewed up & spit out? Not all days are bad. Most are good I would imagine. However, every now and then the "grumblers & fault-finders" in our lives are in top form and, for whatever reason, we become the target. Does the Bible have anything to say about how we handle those "dogbone underwear days?" Absolutely it does.

1. Remember that Jesus experienced those same kinds of days. Mark records in his gospel, "Some of [the Pharisees] were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely...." (3:2)
2. "Respond" rather than "react" - J. Oswald Sanders once wrote, "[A believer's] humility will nowhere be seen more clearly than in the manner in which he [responds to criticism]."
3. Trust God—Few biblical examples of "dogbone underwear days" outshine the story of Nehemiah. Nehemiah was simply obeying God when he got blasted repeatedly by local "grumblers & fault-finders." Rather than give up on his faith, Nehemiah encouraged himself & his friends with this truth: "Do not be afraid of [our critics]. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome." (4:14)

Longtime pastor & humorist, Charles Lowery wrote an article years ago on this very topic:

A new arrival in heaven was surprised to see a suggestion box along Main Street. He turned to a more seasoned resident and asked, "If everybody is supposed to be happy in heaven, why is there a suggestion box?" The experienced tenant replied, "Because some people aren't really happy unless they complain." Critics are everywhere, even in the church. They weren't born again – they were born against. At the beginning of every meeting you feel like calling on them for a word of criticism just to get it over with. Someone has said that any fool can criticize and condemn and complain, and most fools do. For every step forward, there is an equal and opposite criticism. Most all folks are criticized. Winston Churchill received a standing ovation, and a lady commented how flattering it must be to receive that kind of applause. "Yes," he said, "but also know that if it were my hanging, the crowd would be twice the size." What do you do with critics? Remember that critics who try to whittle you down are only trying to reduce you to their size. Take the rocks thrown at you and build something. Everybody's not out to get you. Don't quit going to football games because you think they are talking about you in the huddle.



Soli Deo Gloria, Nick