

How to conquer complaining

Philippians 2:14-15 *"Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe."*

Intro: We have all done it and if we ask our friends and they were honest with us, they would say we have done a lot of it.

There he came in the door. What would he complain about today? But this day we were really prepared. We followed Pizza Hut procedures to the (T) and even went the extra mile in our service to him. So when he checked out I knew there couldn't possibly be anything to complain about today. When he came to check out I asked how everything was and he said pretty good. I knew right then that we had it made, He was pleased for the first time since he had been a customer. But to my disappointment, he then took a breath and said, the water tasted a little funny.

Thought: Complaining is a kill-joy. It makes you unhappy, and everybody else around you unhappy. We are conditioned by society. Bad news makes the headlines. We are bombarded continuously with what's wrong with everything. By our own nature and by our conditioning we tend to develop the habit of complaining. The Bible says God wants Christians to be different as we just read in Philippians 2:14,15.

I read of an old Persian fable about a hen, a mouse, and a rabbit who lived together in a little house. They were happy and contented because they shared all the work. The rabbit cooked the meals. The chicken carried in the firewood. The mouse brought the water from the nearby brook. Each did his work faithfully and contentedly. But one day while the hen was going to the forest for wood a busybody crow asked her what she was doing.

When she told him, the crow complained that the hen was doing the hardest part of the work and that the rabbit and mouse were making an easy-mark of her. Try as she would, the thought kept rolling over and over in the hen's mind. When she returned home with her load of wood and her still heavier load of discontent, she cackled: **or in other words complained** "I do the hardest work ever. We ought to change our jobs." Discontent and complaining spreads, as you know, and immediately the rabbit and mouse also thought they had been doing the hardest work.

Well they agreed to change jobs: the mouse would cook, the rabbit would gather the firewood, the hen would bring the water. One day as the rabbit hopped into the woods, a big fox trailed him, caught him, and ate him. The chicken put the pail into the creek, but the current pulled the pail down under, and the chicken with it. The mouse wondered why they did not come back, but not for long. While he was sitting on the edge of the big pot of soup, he lost his balance and fell in.

Through discontent and the subsequent complaining, all three not only lost their happiness but their very lives. Complaining is a killer. It kills friendships. It kills enthusiasm. It kills compassion. It kills most things it comes in contact with.

As someone noted: Whenever you are tempted to tell your troubles to other people, remember that half your listeners aren't interested, and the rest are glad you're finally getting what's coming to you. Lets look at this problem that afflicts so many folks and see what we can learn about it and how to conquer it before it destroys us. Lets look at

I. Common types of complainers.

A. Whiner

These people wake up negative. *Instead of rise and shine, they rise and whine. David did that.* Notice Psalm 73:13 *Was it for nothing that I kept my heart pure and kept myself from doing wrong? All I get is trouble all day long; every morning brings me pain.*

The tell-tale sign of the whiner is: "It's not fair. I don't deserve this. Everybody else gets all the breaks." That's the way the workers were in the story Jesus told of the workers who got different wages in Matthew 20:11-12

Lord Jeffery, a Scottish judge and literary critic once said, *"The tendency to whining and complaining may be taken as the surest sign symptom of little souls and inferior intellects."* One day A socialist came to see Andrew Carnegie and soon was complaining against the injustice of Carnegie having so much money. In his socialist view, wealth was meant to be divided equally. Carnegie asked his secretary for an assessment of everything he owned and at the same time looked up the figures on world population. He did a little arithmetic on a pad and then said to his secretary. *"Give this gentleman 16 cents. That's his share of my wealth."*

The fact is, life is not fair. God never said it is going to be fair. It will be fair in Heaven. He will settle the score in Heaven and hell. As long as you complain about the fact that life is not fair it only makes you more miserable. But it will never change the fact that life is not always fair. Complaining simply does not work.

B. "Martyr" - in this case Moses

This kind of complainer uses this for their favorite phrase: "No one appreciates me." Numbers 11:11-15 *And Moses said to the LORD, "Why are you treating me, your servant, so miserably? What did I do to deserve the burden of a people like this? Are they my children? Am I their father? Is that why you have told me to carry them in*

my arms--like a nurse carries a baby--to the land you swore to give their ancestors? Where am I supposed to get meat for all these people? They keep complaining and saying, 'Give us meat!' I can't carry all these people by myself! The load is far too heavy! I'd rather you killed me than treat me like this. Please spare me this misery!"

The people that react this way are pros at having pity parties. When they are sick or under pressure they want everybody to know about it. How do you react when you don't get your way? Do you start a complaining campaign? Have you ever had a pity party?

C. "Cynic" In this case Solomon is our example

The cynic's favorite phrase is: "Nothing will ever change." Ecclesiastes 1:2-4,9
"Everything is meaningless," says the Teacher, "utterly meaningless!" What do people get for all their hard work? Generations come and go, but nothing really changes.

History merely repeats itself. It has all been done before. Nothing under the sun is truly new. In other words, The world stays just the same ... what has been done before will be done again."

Actually, this last phrase probably refers to picking up after children. What's the use?

D. "Perfectionist"

Nothing is ever right for this person. It is never good enough. Their favorite phrase happens to be: "Is that the best you can do?"

Proverbs 27:15 *"A nagging wife is like water going drip, drip, drip on a rainy day."*

Proverbs 21:19 *"Better to live out in the desert than with a nagging, complaining wife."*

Now before you ladies get too upset and start complaining I want you to know that this refers to husbands, too!

Nagging perfectionists. Nothing is ever right. Always arguing. Nothing destroys the harmony of the workplace like complaining. Nothing destroys the warmth of a home faster than complaining. Nothing destroys the harmony of a marriage faster than complaining. Nagging doesn't work. It just makes everybody upset. If your kids are complaining continuously, ask yourself if you are setting the example. As Geoffrey F. Fisher: said of Perfection when you aim for perfection, you discover it's a moving target.

II. How to conquer complaining

Remember the bible says in Philippians 2 *"Do everything without complaining and arguing."* But just how do you do that? Lets look at 5 suggestions that will help us. First,

A. Admit it is a problem

Often the most difficult part in learning how to handle complaining is recognizing it in ones self. If someone recorded you for a week, what would it reveal about your speech. How much time do you spend griping, grumping, complaining, arguing, and saying "life stinks."

To get victory, the first thing is we've got to admit it's a problem for us. Complaining isn't just a bad habit; it's a sin. We need to confess it. It's a sin; and it's serious. Did you know that complaining was the sin that kept the Israelites out of the promised land. God destroyed them in the desert because they grumbled. Seven times, Scripture says, "they murmured."

The reason the children of Israel never got into the promised land was because they were complainers. That's how serious God says complaining is. Listen to the words of Scripture in Numbers 14: 26-29

And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me. "Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you; your corpses shall fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me.

B. Take responsibility for my own life

Many times complaining is just an attempt to blame other people for the problems I've created. Or excuse myself and put the focus on somebody else. I brought the problem into my life, I'm the cause of it, but if I complain maybe I can shift the focus onto somebody else and it will make me feel just a little bit better.

We like to pass the buck and it makes us feel better. Prov. 19:3 reminds us *"Some people ruin themselves by their own stupid mistakes and then blame the Lord."* Don't complain about how the ball bounces if you are the one who drops it! When I bring problems into my life, I have no legitimate right to complain. Many times complaining is just an excuse to be irresponsible and to not accept the fact that I caused this situation. We reap what we sow.

When I reap what I sow, I have no legitimate right to complain about the results. We are free to choose what we want to do in life. God has given us the freedom of choice. But once we have made the choice, we are no longer free. We're free to make the choice, but you're never free from the consequences of that choice.

I hear people complaining about being in debt. Is it possible they were irresponsible about spending and saving? That they made a purchase they really shouldn't have made? I hear people saying, "I'm just not appreciated at home." Maybe they don't appreciate the others at home and then reap what they sow. Accept responsibility for my own life and the choices that I make. The changes that are going to take place is because I choose to change.

There are three kinds of people in life: accusers, excusers, and choosers.

Accusers are always going around saying "It's your fault." Then there are the Excusers who say "I'm a product of my environment. It's not really my fault." Finally there are the choosers. They accept responsibility for their own decisions. When they reap what they sow they take it and move ahead. They don't waste time complaining about it.

C. Develop an attitude of gratitude

1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

When I develop the attitude of gratitude and I learn to be grateful for what I have I will discover that is it a tremendous antidote for complaining. Whenever we are complaining, we are usually being ungrateful. You can focus on either the negative or the positive. Is the cup half empty or half full? It all depends on how you look at it. And how you look at it will determine whether you complain or praise.

D. Look for God's hand in all of our circumstances

Positive people, people who do not complain, are people realize that God is controlling circumstances. God is fitting everything into a pattern and His purpose is greater than your problem. The reason why, over and over in the Bible, we are told not to complain is this, complaining is in essence rebellion against God.

When I complain about my circumstances that are beyond my control I'm really saying "If I were God things would be different. *If I were in charge the whole human race would be much better.*" That's rebellion and that's why it's so serious. God says don't do it.

E. Practice speaking positively

Complaining is a habit. Habits are only broken by replacement with something else. Take out the negative complaining and replace it with positive speaking. Ephesians 4:29 *"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."*

If you can't say something good, don't say anything at all. Replace your criticisms and complaints with compliments. Looking at that verse again, criticism and complaints do not help build or benefit those who listen, while complimenting does. We can say it this way. Complementing builds, Complaining kills.

I trust that this little look at complaining will not be something for you to complain about but that it will help us all to see just how bad it is and how annoying it is not just to other people but even to God Himself.

If however you are constantly surrounded by complainers maybe you can relate this little story to them. I ran across it from *Bits & Pieces*, January 9, 1992, p. 11. It may help them see what some folks think of complaining. **The story goes like this**

A guide at Blarney Castle in Ireland was explaining to some visitors that his job was not always as pleasant as it seemed. He told them about a group of disgruntled tourists he had taken to the castle earlier in the week. "These people were complaining about everything," he said. "They didn't like the weather, the food, their hotel accommodations, the prices, everything.

Then to top it off, when we arrived at the castle, we found that the area around the Blarney Stone was roped off. Workmen were making some kind of repairs." "This is the last straw!" exclaimed one lady who seemed to be the chief faultfinder in the group. "I've come all this way, and now I can't even kiss the Blarney Stone." "Well, you know," the guide said, "according to legend, if you kiss someone who has kissed the stone, it's the same as kissing the stone itself." "And I suppose you've kissed the stone," said the exasperated lady. "Better than that." replied the guide. "I've sat on it."

Lets continue to strive to be complimenters rather than complainers. We will get a lot farther in life and the trip will be more pleasant for all involved.

One final thought before we sign off. Maybe you are a complainer because you have never taken time to look for a brighter side in life. If that is you I would encourage you to read a few more lines, think about what they say and then follow the directions and suddenly you will have something other than complaining to think about.

Realize you are a sinner Romans 3:23

Understand that the payday for sin is death or eternal conscious separation from God.
Romans 6:23a

Know that there is a way of escape for you. Romans 6:23b and John 1:12

Desire to escape and pray this or a similar prayer.

"Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I am truly sorry for my sins, and I confess them all to You [name them]. Lord Jesus, forgive all my sins and come into my heart as my Saviour and Lord. I receive You right now. Help me from this time forward to live for You. Thank You for hearing and answering my prayer. In Jesus' name. Amen."

On the _____ day of _____ I became a Christian by inviting Jesus Christ into my life to forgive my sin.

Signed: _____

If you have further questions or have chosen to do this, be sure to let us know so we can help you, pray for you and encourage you in your new life.

You can reach us at lapeerchurch@gmail.com Subject line: (Salvation)