

Words of Truth

Do You Really Want To Be A Complainer?

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One sad failure I have seen in a lot of so-called “Christians” is a lack of contentment. The Apostle Paul had the right mindset when He wrote: *“Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”* (Philippians 4:11-13).

Most complainers would agree that Paul had the right attitude towards his life in this world. Yet, those who would agree often fail to live up to that standard. How can we read Scriptures that tell us that godliness with contentment is great gain (I Timothy 6:6), but find things to complain about all of the time? How can we have the command to be content with food and raiment (I Timothy 6:8), but complain about how things aren’t working out right? How can we read Scriptures that tell us to be content with our wages (Luke 3:14), but then complain about how little money we make? How can we read Scriptures that show us to be content with God’s grace, but then complain about carnal illnesses (II Corinthians 12:6-10)?

If you step back and think for a moment, we really do not have any reasons to complain. Even if all things in this world fall apart around us, we still have the spiritual blessings in Christ (Ephesians 1:3) that cannot be taken from the faithful (John 10:27-29). When you spiritually consider physical things of this world, they are all vanity anyway (Ecclesiastes 1:14). When you weigh all the vain things, you realize that the only thing that matters is our purpose in pleasing God and being rewarded in the end (Ecclesiastes 12:8-14 and John 5:28-29).

As we proceed in this study, please consider the Scriptures you’ll be reading. This subject matter is really simple, yet often ignored. We are going to consider, in addition to the points we’ve already seen, how God views complainers.

God’s View Of Complainers

Notice in the following account how God views complainers and also how you ought to be careful in what you desire. At times, we complain and do not consider that sometimes the alternative might just be worse than the reason we’re complaining. Here is the text for our consideration (For your studies, please open your Bible and read the whole chapter to grab the whole context): *“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... And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the*

leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes... And say thou unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow, and ye shall eat flesh: for ye have wept in the ears of the LORD, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt: therefore the LORD will give you flesh, and ye shall eat. Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; But even a whole month, **until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the LORD** which is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt... And there went forth a wind from the LORD, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth. And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers: and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp. And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD smote the people with a very great plague" (Numbers 11:1; 4-6; 18-20; 31-33). **Note: Keep in mind that God does not work directly now as He did back then.*

When people complain, God is obviously displeased. Paul makes this point clear when he penned these inspired words: "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer" (I Corinthians 10:10). We should be able to do everything without griping (Philippians 2:14). Like all sins, there is a motive behind complaining.

What Makes People Complain?

The word of God gives us the reason people complain: "*These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage*" (Jude 16). The Scripture just mentioned is talking about false teachers. That being said, the motive is still the same for all complainers. This verse makes it abundantly clear that people complain because they serve their own desires.

When you know the root of a problem it becomes easier to solve that problem. Since complaining is rooted in a person seeking to please his or her self, the solution is to cease being self-centered. Hey, guess what? Christians are not supposed to be self-centered people! Jesus said: "*Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me*" (Matthew 16:24). If our affections are on Christ (Colossians 3:1-4), we'll realize that anything we'd be tempted to complain about is really a meaningless thing. Like any other work of the flesh (cf. Galatians 6:19-21), we have to avoid all of the carnal desires that would tempt us to become complainers (I Peter 2:11).

Conclusion

God's people are supposed to be happy people (Psalms 144:15). When people hear a so-called "Christian" complain and gripe about things, they see hypocrisy. Christians are supposed to have a peace that passes common understanding (Philippians 4:7). How can a complainer begin to claim that they are at peace? We have seen that God is not pleased when He finds His people complaining. We have identified the core issue behind complaining. The only remaining question is to each one of us. As you examine yourself, in light of the Scriptures we've seen in this study, do you find that you are a complainer? If so, you know you're not pleasing to God and it's time to change (Luke 13:3; 5).