

Complaining:
“The **Evil Enemy** of Contentment and Joy in Christ”

Introduction:

Why is complaining such a big deal?

- Complaining is the _____ of contentment and it _____ discontent
- Complaining is a _____ which indicates how much _____ is inside you?
- Complaining is a _____ of the devil to _____ our joy in life and our _____ in God

Seven Evils of Complaining

1. Complaining is the opposite of _____ and _____
 - 1 Peter 2:9-10
 - Psalm 118:24
 - Psalm 136
 - James 3:8-10
2. Complaining _____ the corruption in our soul and it _____ us
 - Matt 15:18-19
 - James 3:13-4:1
 - Gen 3:12
3. Complaining is the mark (_____ !) of an ungodly and rebellious _____
 - Matt 5:45 → to Jude 14-16
 - Exod 3:7-8; Exod 14:10-12; 15:22-27; 17:1-7
 - Psalm 95 (1-7, 8-11)
4. Complaining flies in the face of the entire work of our _____
 - a) Forgets how much we were _____
 - Matt 18:23-27
 - b) Forgets how amazing _____ is
 - Phil 1:21-23 → Rev 22:1-5

- c) Forgets the commitment we made at our conversion to _____ for Christ
 - 2 Cor 5:15
 - Gal 2:20-21; 6:14
 - d) Forgets that Jesus has become our eternal _____ of joy
 - John 4:13-15
 - John 15:4-5
 - e) Expresses _____ that we ever gave our lives to Christ
 - John 6:60-61; 66-69
 - Exod 16:2-3
5. Complaining is _____ of a child of the King of kings, forgetting all the _____ we have already received and will receive.
 - 1 Peter 1:3-5 → 6
 - Lamentations 3
 6. Complaining sets a bad _____
 - Phil 3:17; 4:9
 7. Complaining makes _____ want to be like you... especially _____
 - Phil 2:14-15
 - 1 Peter 3:15

How to remove the evil of complaining from your life (20 Practical suggestions)

1. You can only succeed at this if you are a born-again believer in Jesus Christ (Eph 2:1-3)
2. Stop making excuses for your complaining
 - "I'm not complaining, I'm just venting"
 - "God has abandoned me"
 - "No one knows what I'm going through"
 - "I didn't expect things to be like this"
 - "I don't deserve this"
 - "I can't help it"
3. It's a learned skill (Eph 6:10; Phil 4:11-13)
4. Live for today, not yesterday or tomorrow
5. Abide in Christ (John 15:4-5)
6. Memorize and recite scripture (John 15:7; Psalm 119:9-11). Try Psalm 139
7. Make a daily devotion time a priority (above food) (John 4:21-34)
8. Delight in Christian contentment. Buy books on contentment and read them (try the Puritans)
9. Ask for contentment (for you and for others) (1 Pet 5:6-7)
10. Give thanks for all things (Eph 5:20)
11. Make contentment a focus of your family life. Be disgusted at complaining (stand out).
12. Be quiet, slow things down (Psalm 141:3; James 1:19-20)
13. Study the heroes of church history (especially the Puritans)
14. Be involved in World Missions (Giving, Praying, Going)
15. Fast regularly from worldly pleasures (Food/Eating out, Phone, Social Media, Shopping: Amazon, Entertainment: TV/Netflix/Video Games)
16. Get involved in new ministries that will stretch you and serve in areas that are "thankless"
17. Visit the elderly, the sick, the dying, and comfort the grieving
18. Give stuff away (1 Tim 6:6-10; 17-19)
19. Seek accountability and prayer support for contentment
20. Beware of the danger of the internet AND the danger of your cell phone

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you like being around someone who is a “serial complainer?” Why or why not? What does it make you think of that person? How does it affect you?
2. What effect do you think your complaining has had on yourself and others?
3. From the list of “Seven Evils of Complaining,” pick two that really stand out to you, and explain why.
4. As you consider the truths in the two you chose from question #3, does it make you think differently about your own complaining? If so, how? And how do you think you might change?
5. What effect do you think complaining has on contentment? Why do you think the devil would want to tempt people to complain, especially about God?
6. From the list of “How to remove the evil of complaining from your life,” circle a few of them that you would like to incorporate into your life. Explain why and also how you will do this.
7. From the list of excuses people tend to make for complaining which one do you tend to use? Or is there another excuse not on this list that you use?
8. 1 Peter 5:5-7, in my opinion, describes a principal for how we can bring a legitimate and godly complaint before the Lord. Explain the principle given and how it might be applied.

Matthew 11:28-30 –

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden (*discontent, wanting more*), and I will give you rest (*contentment*). Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls (*satisfaction*). For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

1 Cor 10:6ff

“Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. 7 Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” 8 We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. 9 We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, 10 nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. 11 Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction”

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1 Peter 2:9-10 –

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, *but now you have received mercy*”

James 3:8-10 –

“but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. 10 From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, **these things ought not to be so.**”

Jeremiah Burroughs, Puritan pastor in 1642 –

“As contentment reveals much grace in the soul, strong grace, beautiful grace... so murmuring reveals much corruption, strong corruption, vile corruptions in your heart.”

Matthew 15:18 –

“What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.”

Andrew Davis, "The Power of Christian Contentment"

"This is how you must see complaining... as a bleeding wound in your soul, through which the power of the Spirit drains out of you until you repent of it."

Psalm 95:1-7a –

Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! 2 Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! 3 For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. 4 In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. 5 The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. 6 Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! 7 For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

Psalm 95:7b-9 –

“Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, 9 when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.”

Exodus 17:1-7 –

“All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. 2 Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?” 3 But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” 4 So Moses cried to the Lord, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.”

Exodus 17:1-7 – cont'd

“5 And the Lord said to Moses, “Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 6 Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the Lord by saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

Psalm 95:10-11 –

“For forty years I loathed that generation and said, “They are a people who go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways.” 11 Therefore I swore in my wrath, “They shall not enter my rest..”

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Niagara Falls



2 Cor 5:15 – “and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.”

Gal 2:20-21 – “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”;

Gal 6:14 – “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

John 6:60-61 –

“When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” 61 But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this?”

John 6:66 – cont'd

“After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him...

John 6:67 – cont'd

“So Jesus said to the twelve,

“Do you want to go away as well?””

John 6:68 – cont'd

“Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life, 69 and we have believed,
and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”

1 Peter 1:3-5 –

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

1 Peter 1:6 – cont'd

“In spite of all of these blessings, you complain and grumble over even the smallest difficulties and minor annoyances of life (calling the wa'ambulance), forgetting all of the things I just mentioned that you will receive and keep for all of eternity!”

Actual 1 Peter 1:6 – cont'd

“In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials”

Lamentations 3 –

“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; 23 they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 24 “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.”

Philippians 1 –

“in my imprisonment... I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel... and in that I rejoice”

Phil 2:14-15 –

“Do all things without grumbling or disputing, 15 that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world”

20 Practical suggestions

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- No one knows what I'm going through
- I didn't expect things to be like this
- I don't deserve this, or I DO deserve this
- I can't help it

3. It's a learned skill

4. Live for today, not yesterday or tomorrow (Matt 6:34)

20 Practical suggestions, cont'd

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Two more quotes from "The Power of Christian Contentment"

"Contentment is a force on your soul, pulling you upward toward Christlikeness."

"Complaining is a repulsive state of being" dragging you down into the abyss of despair. (mine)