

## “Conquering Complaining”

**Text: Philippians 2:14-15**

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Park Boulevard Presbyterian Church ([www.pbpc.org](http://www.pbpc.org))

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### PRAY!

Complaining is a kill-joy. It makes you unhappy and everyone else around you unhappy. The problem is that it is a hard habit to break. We are naturally negative. We tend to look at the bad things in life.

- 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. 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.”*

### I. THREE COMMON TYPES OF COMPLAINERS

#### 1. The “Whiner” – David

- A. These people wake up negative. They rise and whine. David whines all through the Psalms. Psalm 73:13, *“Have I been wasting my time? Why take all the trouble to be pure? All I get out of it is trouble and woe.”*
- B. In Matthew 20, Jesus tells the parable of the workers in the vineyard. At one point he says about the workers, *“They took their money and started grumbling against the employer... ‘We put up with a whole day’s work in the hot sun – yet you paid them the same as you paid us.’”* Matthew 20:11-12
- B. The tell-tale sign of the whiner is: “It’s not fair. I don’t deserve this. Everybody else gets all the breaks.” Life will not be fair until we get to heaven. Complaining only makes you more miserable.

#### 2. The “Martyr” – Moses

- A. Favorite phrase: “No one appreciates me.” They are pros at having pity parties.
- B. Numbers 11:11-15, *“Moses says to the Lord, ‘Why pick on me, to give me the burden of a people like this? I can’t carry this nation by myself! If you’re going to treat me like this, please kill me right now – it will be a kindness! Let me out of this impossible situation!’”*

#### 3. The “Perfectionist”

- A. Nothing is ever right for this person. It is never good enough. Favorite phrase: “Is that the best you can do?”

- B. Proverbs 21:19, *“Better to live in a desert than with a nagging, complaining wife.”* This refers to husbands too! Nagging perfectionists.

**HOW DO YOU CONQUER COMPLAINING?** The Bible says, *“Do everything without complaining and arguing.”* How do you do that?

### **I. ADMIT IT IS A PROBLEM**

- A. Admit it’s a problem for you, not for other people, but for you.  
Proverbs 28:13, *“A person who refuses to admit their mistakes can never be successful. But if they confess and forsake them, they get another chance.”*
- B. Often the most difficult part in learning how to handle complaining is recognizing it in yourself. 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.” You’ve got to admit it’s a problem for yourself.
- C. “Admit” and “Confess”! Complaining isn’t just a bad habit; it’s a sin. We need to confess it. It’s a sin and it’s serious.
1. Complaining was the sin that kept many of the Israelites out of the promised land. God destroyed them in the desert because they grumbled. They were complainers. That’s how serious God says complaining is. Admit it.

### **2. ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY OWN LIFE**

- A. Many times complaining is just an attempt to blame other people for the problems I’ve created. Proverbs 19:3, *“Some people ruin themselves by their own stupid mistakes and then blame the Lord.”*
- B. Do not complain how the ball bounces if you drop 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 not to accept the fact that I caused this situation.
1. We reap what we sow. When I reap what I sow I have no legitimate right to complain about the results.
  2. You are free to choose what you want to do in life. God has given you the freedom of choice. But once you have made the choice, you are no longer free. You’re free to make the choice, but you’re never free from the consequences of that choice.
- C. I hear so many people complaining about debt. Is it possible you were irresponsible about spending and saving? That you made a purchase you really shouldn’t have made?
- D. I hear people saying, “I’m just not appreciated at home.” Maybe you don’t appreciate the others at home. We reap what we sow.

**Whatever you want in life, you've got to give it out. That is an inviolable rule of God.**

1. If you want friends you've got to be friendly.
  2. If you want appreciation at home you've got to give appreciation.
  3. If you want to be put first in your marriage, you need to put your partner first in your marriage. We reap what we sow.
- E. Accept responsibility for my own life and the choices that I make. The change that is going to take place is because I choose to change.

**3. DEVELOP THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE**

- A. 1 Thessalonians 5:18, *"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."* God says "I want you to be thankful in all circumstances." It does not say "for all circumstances". You cannot always be thankful for the circumstances, but you can be thankful *in* the situation. I know that God is working all things for good. He has a pattern and he fits even the bad things in our lives into that pattern for good. God's purpose for my life is greater than my problems, so in everything I can give thanks. Not for but in.
- B. I develop the attitude of gratitude and I learn to be grateful for what I have. It's 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. Why is it that we often don't value what we have in life until it's gone?
- C. We, in America, have so much to be grateful for. Yet we take it so much for granted. Overseas, American tourists are known for their complaining. But Christians are to be different, doing everything without complaining and arguing that we may shine as lights in the world.
- D. CPC at Crystal Cathedral

**4. LOOK FOR GOD'S HAND IN CIRCUMSTANCES**

- A. If you want to get victory over complaining, look for God's hand in your circumstances. 2 Corinthians 4:17-18, *"This small and temporary trouble we suffer will bring us a tremendous and eternal glory, much greater than the trouble. So we fix our attention not on the things that are seen, but on the things that are unseen. What is seen lasts only for a time, but what cannot be seen lasts forever."*
- B. Paul is saying there are problems that come into our lives, no doubt. But the way you look at them determines your attitude. Because God is working these things for good in your life and the good that you're going to get out of them will last longer than the problem. The problem is temporary in light of how long you're going to live in eternity. So look for God's hand in the circumstances. Positive people

realize that God is controlling circumstances. God is fitting everything into a pattern and his purpose is greater than your problem.

- C. 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.

## 5. PRACTICE SPEAKING POSITIVELY

- A. 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."*
- B. The Bible says we're going to give an account for every idle word. Paul is saying don't let any junk come out of your mouths but only that which helps people with their needs, that benefits them. If you can't say something good, don't say anything at all. Replace your criticism and complaints with compliments.
- C. This is a crucial factor in parenting. Parents, do your words help or hinder your kids? Are you building them up or tearing them down. Be positive in your speaking. Appreciation always works better than nagging.
- D. YAS and Robert Schuler

### What are the results of complaining?

- A. *"Do everything without complaining or arguing ..."* and then Paul gives us three results.
1. *"so that you may become blameless..."* This means that when you don't complain, nobody can find fault with you. Nobody can point a finger at you. "
  2. *"...and pure..."* The Greek word here means "having integrity". Non-complainers are people of integrity.
  3. *"children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation in which you shine like stars in the universe."*  
When you find a person who is genuinely positive they stick out like a sore thumb in our negative culture. They shine like a star in the middle of a dark night. The contrast is obvious.

**The point of the passage is Paul is saying that Christians are to react differently to the circumstances in life. A complaining Christian is a bad witness. A positive attitude is a great witness; it has impact.**

**PRAY!**