

THANKSGIVING
THE CURE OF A COMPLAINING SPIRIT!
PHILLIPPIANS 2:14-15; 1 CORINTHIANS 10:10

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Introduction

*Did you hear the story about little Johnny that was four years old and his parents were concerned because he had never uttered a single word. Then one morning his mom put biscuits on the table for breakfast that were a little bit burned on the bottom. He looked up with disgust and said very clearly, “**The biscuits are burnt!**” They raved over him having finally spoken and asked him why he had never talked before. He said, “**Up until now everything's been all right!**”*

Last week we began talking about a problem that is becoming more and more prevalent in this world in which we live—**Having A Complaining Spirit!**

THE CAUSE OF A COMPLAINING SPIRIT

Reaction (To Difficult Circumstances—harder than you expected)

Rebellion (Against God and His best for you!)

Rejection (Of God...especially His Word, His Will, His Ways)

THE CURSE OF A COMPLAINING SPIRIT!

A Complaining Spirit Is Contagious...(It Spreads Easily!)

A Complaining Spirit Is Contentious...(The Spirit Of It Is All Wrong!)

A Complaining Spirit Is Costly...(It Can Adversely Affect Our Health, Our Reputation, And It Can Cost Us God's Best For Our Life!)

Then as we closed last week we looked at our text today and just touched on this briefly and said we'd come back and look at it more in depth!

THE CURE OF A COMPLAINING SPIRIT! (Philippians 2:14-15)

*1 Timothy 6:6—“But **godliness with contentment** is great gain.”*

*1 Timothy 6:8—“And having food and raiment let us be therewith **content.**”*

Now, let's think about this...The **CURE** for a **COMPLAINING SPIRIT** is tied very closely to something called **CONTENTMENT!** It was only about six weeks ago that I preached on the **CONTENTMENT AND THE BELIEVER** from **Philippians 4:9-13** on a Sunday Evening! If you weren't able to be here for that message and didn't go listen to it our **SermonAudio** page or our **YouTube** channel, or on a **CD** then you have **NO CLUE** as to what I'm talking about! That's why it is important to be faithful to the services!

It is important that if you have to be out for some good reason—Sickness, Work, Out of Town—then you need to catch up on what you missed out on! Because it matters! Public service announcement over...Back to the message...

So in the last two weeks, we've seen the Apostle Paul say pretty much the same thing to two different Churches he wrote for them **NOT to MURMUR!** **Philippians 2:14—“Do all things without murmurings and disputings.”**

1 Corinthians 10:10—“Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

Now are these **WARNINGS** or **COMMANDS**? Yes...to both!

So, if these are **WARNINGS and COMMANDS**, how do we accomplish such a thing?

Paul told the Philippians that **their lives were on display to the crooked and perverse nation they lived in!** Guess what, **our lives are also on display to this crooked and perverse nation we live in!**

We should not be guilty of things which do not bring honor and glory to God! **MURMURINGS (i.e. Complaining)** and **DISPUTINGS** do not bring honor and glory to God! So just **STOP IT!** That's easier said than done...Right?

We Are To Do ALL THINGS Without MURMURINGS and DISPUTINGS! **ALL things** ... not some things or certain things ... but do **ALL THINGS** without **MURMURINGS** and **DISPUTINGS!**

How we respond to the situations that we find ourselves in says much to those around us about **who we are** and **Who we live for!**

*“Do all things without **murmuring**...”*

The word **“murmuring”** means **“a grumbling.”** (i.e. **“a complaining.”**)

So, Paul doesn't tell us **HOW** to do this specifically in either of these passages of Scripture, but that doesn't mean that the Scripture doesn't offer us help!

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I. RECOGNIZE IT AS THE HEART PROBLEM THAT IT IS AND DEAL WITH IT AS SUCH!

Listen to what Jesus said in *Luke 6:45* –“*For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh!*” (i.e. “*GIGO*”)

A *grumbling* in one's heart, if not dealt with, will spill out to a *murmuring* of the mouth and/or even to a *murmuring or complaining* in an open forum!

A. Complaining And Disputing Can Stem From Bitterness!

Job 7:11–“*Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.*”

(i.e. Job got his heart off of the LORD and on to his own circumstances and that caused him to develop bitterness!)

Hebrews 12:14-15–“*Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;*”

1. Complaining Can Quickly Become A Way Of Life!

If we are not careful we will find ourselves critically *complaining* about almost everything in our lives!

Numbers 14:27–“*How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me.*”

2. Complaining Can Seal The Direction Of One's Life!

Numbers 14:36-37– “*And the men, which Moses sent to search the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land, 37Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the LORD.*”

How we respond to people and situations provides us with opportunities of either promoting or diminishing the Gospel. **How we respond in the heart** will often lead to how we react both inwardly and outwardly!

Complaining has the tendency to lead to arguing!

Between stimulus and response is the choice of how to react (or act)!

Complaining And Disputing Can Stem From Bitterness...

B. Complaining And Disputing Can Stem From Selfishness!

Look at what Paul said in *Philippians 2:2-8!*

You see how that it's not about us!?

It's about Christ and His Gospel!

It's about others that are lost and bringing them to Christ!

It's about others that are saved and edifying them in Christ!

Murmurings and *disputing* proves nothing other than our own selfishness!

C. So, This Problem Of The Heart Must Be Dealt With By The Same Means Of Other Problems Of The Heart—By SCRIPTURE AND PRAYER!

Hebrews 4:12–“*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*”

As Believers we are to cast down things that lead to

murmurings and disputings! *2 Corinthians 10:3-5*–“*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*”

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Our aim should be **to do all things** without *complaining* or *arguing* so that we might glorify God! *1 Corinthians 10:31-33– "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: 33 Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."*

The greater aim is to do all things that others might see Jesus in us so that it might eventually lead to their salvation if they are lost or lead to their spiritual growth if they are saved!

RECOGNIZE IT AS THE HEART PROBLEM THAT IT IS AND DEAL WITH IT AS SUCH!

II. RECOGNIZE IT AS THE FLESHLY PROBLEM THAT IT IS AND DEAL WITH IT AS SUCH! (Galatians 5:16-26)

This goes back to the first point!

A. As A Believer, Choose To Not Walk In The Flesh!

Acknowledge that a COMPLAINING SPIRIT is sinful!

Ephesians 4:29– "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

Seeing our negativity through God's eyes allows us to apply the principle of 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he (God) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." ("confess" = "to say the same thing")

Once we've **confessed** and **forsaken** our **COMPLAINING SPIRIT**, then we can ask God to help us gain victory over it!

B. As A Believer, Choose To Walk In The Spirit!

Let me give you five things real quick here to help you with this and we're done:

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1. Be Thankful Always In All Things!

1 Thessalonians 5:18– "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

Every time we are tempted to grumble and complain, we need to turn our face toward the LORD and let our grumbling be turned into gratefulness as we view His goodness to us!

There is ALWAYS something to be thankful for in every situation, but we have to train ourselves to look for it! As *gratitude* becomes a more frequent visitor in our hearts and minds, negative emotions find no place to rest. Eventually *gratitude* moves in as a permanent regular part of our walk!

2. Fight Selfishness!

An unselfish heart thinks of others ahead of itself. It gives instead of takes. It serves instead of demanding to be served.

That's going to take the whole armor of God because that's a spiritual problem we will battle every day!

Ephesians 6:10-13– "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

Philippians 2:4 – "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

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Philippians 4:13– “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

3. Believe That You Are Valuable And Loved!

Satan tries to get us to think that somehow the LORD doesn't love us anymore! He'll have us ***griping and complaining*** about the LORD **rather than praising** the LORD for His great love manifested in His Son!

When we fully grasp that God's love isn't dependent on our ability to earn his favor, we can stop measuring ourselves against everyone around us and find our value and self-worth in Christ.

It's not about earning Christ's love that we do this!
It's about wanting to **show our love** for Him!

4. Choose To Live In Joy Regardless Of Your Circumstances! (Cf. Psalm 100)

Philippians 4:4– “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”

Nehemiah 8:10– “...for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

5. Focus On The Coming Of The LORD!

The things of this life are only temporary!
What we have in Christ is eternal!

Colossians 3:1-4– “1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”