

Respectable Sins

Complaining: What's the Key to Repenting and Changing?

Grace Fellowship Church, Pastor Brad Bigney, March 20, 2011

Matthew 12:34 "... out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."

Romans 6:6-14

Step #1 You'll Have to Learn to Submit to Authority – Starting with God

Numbers 9:15-23

"The beginning of a proper response to frustrating circumstances is a clear recognition of who's in charge. To handle frustration by reminding you how much God loves us is a good second step, but not the first one. We must take our place as a creature before our Creator and then explore the wonder of our Creator's loving character. An awareness of God's love casts out our fear, but subjection to His authority deals with our demandingness."

"The passage in Numbers repeats one theme again and again: When the cloud moves, you move; when the cloud stops, you stop. I wonder if God is saying something like this:

'I know My ways will seem to ignore your concerns at times. I want you to trust Me when you feel unusually tired and I call on you to get up. I want you to trust Me when you're eager to serve and I put you on hold. But you will never learn to trust Me until you come to terms with My authority. Trust will never emerge from a demanding spirit.'" Larry Crabb, *Inside Out*, p. 136

A demanding, unsubmitive spirit is so often what's fueling a complaining mouth!

- Do you know how to be under authority? Even when you don't agree? Even when you don't understand? Even when it makes no sense to you? Even when you think you have a better idea?

Step #2 You'll Have to Feed Your Faith by spending time with the Right Kind of People!

- Start with Biblical Examples

Hebrews 11:3, 6 "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible... But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

- **Wake Up to Some of the Great Contemporary Examples We Have**
 - Dietrich Bonhoeffer – German pastor killed by the Nazis in WWII (Suggested reading: **Bonheffer~ Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy**, Eric Metaxas)
 - Corrie Ten Boom – Dutch woman in WWII who’s family hid Jews from the Nazis and were sent to concentration camp where only she survived (Suggested reading: **The Hiding Place**, Corrie Ten Boom)
 - Elizabeth Elliott – missionary whose husband was speared to death by the Auca Indians – the very ones they were trying to reach with the Gospel in South America (Suggested reading: **Through Gates of Splendor**, Elisabeth Elliot)
 - The Heavenly Man – Chinese pastor in the ‘80s who survived multiple imprisonments (Suggested reading: **The Heavenly Man**, Brother Yun)
 - The Roots of Endurance – book by John Piper on the suffering of John Newton, Charles Simeon, and William Wilberforce (Suggested reading: **The Roots of Endurance**, John Piper)
 - The Hidden Smile of God – book by John Piper on the suffering of John Bunyan, William Cowper, and David Brainerd (Suggested reading: **The Hidden Smile of God**, John Piper)
 - Winston Churchill – Prime minister of Great Britain during WWI and II (Suggested reading: **Never Give In**, Stephen Mansfield)
 - Stonewall Jackson – godly man and general during the Civil War (Suggested reading: **All Things for Good**, J. Steven Wilkins)
 - The Lone Survivor – story of Navy Seal, Marcus Luttrell, and all that he endured trying to get out of Afghanistan after his entire unit was killed and he was left alone on a remote mountainside, surrounded by a Taliban army (Suggested reading: **Lone Survivor**, Marcus Luttrell)

- **Zero In On the Example of Christ**

Hebrews 12:1–3 “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.”

Our Savior didn't complain even when He was cruelly and unjustly crucified!

Isaiah 53:3,7 "He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him... He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth."

Step #3 You'll Have to Cultivate an Appetite for the After Life

If you stay obsessed about right here... right now... with little or no view of eternity, then you'll struggle to stop the flow of complaining that's gushing out of your mouth.

2 Corinthians 3:18 – 4:18

Step #4 You'll Have to Stop Making Excuses!

- **"I'm not complaining: I'm just stating the facts!"**
- **"I'm trying not to complain, but I just don't feel like God is with me!"**

Just because you're suffering doesn't mean God has left you.

Isaiah 43:1-3 "But now, thus says the LORD... Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine. ² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you. ³ For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior..."

So God is there, but sometimes believers don't feel it because their complaining spirit has driven away any sense of God's presence!

Psalms 22:1-3 "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My groaning? O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; and in the night season, and am not silent. But You are holy, who inhabit the praises of Israel."

If you want to feel close to God, be quiet and submissive!

- **“But this caught me by surprise! I never expected this.”**

1 Peter 4:12-13, 19 “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy... **v. 19** Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.”

The Message v. 12-13 “Friends, when life gets really difficult, don’t jump to the conclusion that God isn’t on the job. Instead, be glad that you are in the very thick of what Christ experienced. This is a spiritual refining process, with glory just around the corner.”

- **“Nobody else has it this bad! My problems are worse than everyone else’s”**

When people see how you trust Him and choose joy in the midst of the problem... they’ll praise God and be encouraged to trust Him with their own problems.

1 Peter 3:15 “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear”

Romans 5:20 “Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.”

Questions to consider:

- What two or three things about your life right now would you most like to change?
- Are you trusting God? Are you resting? Are you lamenting? Or are you complaining out loud and below the surface?
- Are you accepting or resisting?



Our very own J.D. Rogers has created a “Stop Complaining” app that you can download to your iPhone or iPad or iTouch. Just go to the "app Store" icon on your device and search for ‘Stop Complaining.’

<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/stop-complaining/id424711932?mt=8&ls=1>