

CONQUERING COMPLAINING GOD'S WAY

PART ONE:

Philippians chapter 2 addresses something that we all struggle with from time to time; it could be called an epidemic in our society today and it is called *complaining*! Let's start with verse 13 (NLT) *For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him. In everything you do, stay away from complaining and arguing, so that no one can speak a word of blame against you. You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of crooked and perverse people. Let your lives shine brightly before them.*

Verses 12 through 18 is talking about being light bearers, shining brightly for Christ. The footnotes in the *Spirit Filled Life Bible* tells us that as the heavenly bodies shine forth in brightness against the blackness of the night, so the lives of true Christians lighten the moral darkness of the world. You are the light for Christ! I am the light of Christ. We can shine in Christ to help light the dark path of others along life's way.

I once heard about a woman who was committed to complaining. It was her goal in life to complain about everything and anything. Every day for three hours a day for ten years, she would call, write, or talk to anybody who would listen to her talk about what was wrong with the world. Call it what it is-*complaining*!

Complaining makes for miserable company. If I am in the presence of a group of people and someone starts complaining and won't quit, I just walk away. I really don't like to hear it as it tears down and not builds people up. I don't want to be a part of it even through listening. Yet, it seems to be human nature that we are involved in complaining from time to time in our own lives. Complaining is a killjoy for relationship.

Paul in verse 12 is warning us to desire to obey God and move in the power we have in Christ to please him. Complaining and arguing as the scripture shows, does not please God. It brings turmoil into lives, it steals our joy, our peace, and it causes coldness in your spirit and your light for Christ is dimmed. Paul says, **STAY AWAY FROM COMPLAINING AND ARGUING**. Paul is telling us what to do, and then he is telling us that we are to do it. To me, that means that I have all the resources available in Christ to do just that. It is not an impossible chore!

Stop complaining and arguing and choose to become a peacemaker, a comforter, an encourager, rather than stirring up muddy water and throwing it on people and getting them dirty. Have you ever stood on the edge of a curb in rainy weather and have a big mud puddle in front of you? Suddenly a car comes driving by and you are now wearing part of the mud puddle? Even if you see it coming, you usually don't have time to move out of the way before you are drenched in muddy water. This is the reality of the world we live in. Satan hates it when we are clean and sparkling white. He can't wait to cover us with muddy water.

COMPLAINING! Paul is warning and instructing us to stay away from it in these verses. WHY? Because many of us are by nature are negative people therefore, complaining can become a bad habit that is hard to break.

We tend to look at the glass of water as being half empty rather than half full. We tend to look at the bad things in life instead of the good. If you doubt that, read the newspaper headlines, listen to the news on the radio, watch it on TV. They all seem to focus on down things—tragic happenings. That’s what sells the news! Isn’t it sad that people are drawn to the negative things in life rather than the good? So, how do we conquer this bad habit of complaining? What is the answer? How do we avoid it and walk in God’s saving grace and power?

We are called to work into our lives, God’s saving work. God’s part in changing us is through the Bible, through the work of the Holy Spirit, and through circumstances that God will bring into our lives to get our attention. Would you agree with me that God certainly knows how to get our attention? We can choose to respond to the circumstances in our lives in a positive or a negative way. We have choices! Learn to make wise ones!

I once heard a sermon on four types of complainers that the pastor said he saw in the Bible. The sermon hit me right between the eyes like a sledgehammer. The Holy Spirit started talking to my heart about things I needed to take a look at, and change in my life. Over a period of time, I read and reread the notes I had taken, searched out and studied the scriptures this pastor shared. Through the process, I invited the Holy Spirit to come and help me make the changes necessary in my heart and mind; thus, going from a complainer to an overcomer and it totally changed my life. God always wants the very best for His children.

From my notes, I would like to share with you dear readers what I learned in a four parts series. I pray that your hearts will be touched also. Beloved, as I share with you God’s truths, be honest with yourself and see which one(s) fits you, and then invite the Holy Spirit to come and enlist His help for your personal changes .

Number one is the **WHINER** – “It’s not fair!” “Nothing ever works out for me!” “I never get picked first!” And so on and so on. This type of person wakes up negative instead of rising up and shining—they rise and whine! That’s like the man when asked if he wakes up grouchy in the morning replies, “No, I let her sleep in!” Whiners! Complainers! There are two approaches to life. You can say, “Good morning, Lord!” Or “Good Lord, its morning!” it is all a matter of choice, of attitude, of how you think.

Classic examples of whiners were the children of Israel. If you have read the Old Testament, through Exodus and Numbers in particular, you read about the Israelites and their whining nature. God raised up a deliverer in Moses and leads the people out of Egypt, they come to the edge of the Red Sea, the Egyptian army is pursuing them and closing in. the people start whining again and asking God if now they are going to die and why did he bring them to this place—it’s not fair. We know the story; God miraculously parts the Red Sea and delivers them.

After 40 years of wandering in the wilderness they get to the edge of the Promised Land, complaining the whole time) and this is what happens. They send ten spies to check out the surrounding area. Eight come back, with negative reports saying, “The land is unconquerable, it’s full of giants, we can’t do it, they’re stronger than we are, it’s too much of a challenge (forget what God told them to do; enter the promised land and conquer it).” Whine, whine, whine every step of the way.

Yet, two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, come back with positive reports saying, “Yes, there are giants in the land, but God has promised us this land, so He’ll help us to conquer the giants.” “Come on, don’t be afraid. Man, you gotta see the size of the fruit! Talk about big. And it’s a land flowing with milk and honey. And remember, if God is with us, who can be against us? Come on, let’s go do it!” I like the way these two men think—heroes in the making!

Look at Numbers 14:1-2 “then all the people began weeping aloud, and they cried all night. Their voices rose in a great chorus of complaint against Moses and Aaron. We wish we had died in Egypt, or even here in the wilderness. They wailed! They whined! Their continual whining and complaining brought grief to the life of Moses and Aaron, the chosen of God, and because of their complaining, God said to the Israelites, “*Why don’t you take another lap around the wilderness. Let’s see if we can work this out of you before you do get into the promise land.*” But, the Israelites chose to accept the negative reports and continued to whine, whine, whine. They even went as far as talking about stoning Joshua and Caleb. Read it for yourselves in Numbers 13 and 14. Therefore, that generation died in the wilderness. It was the next generation that entered the Promised Land. What you sow you reap. Their whining stopped one whole generation from entering into the Promised Land; they paid an enormous price for their whining.

1 Corinthians 10:10-11 – here is the history lesson we learn from the Israelites. *And don’t grumble as some of them did, for that is why God sent his angel of death to destroy them. All these events happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us, who live at the time when this age is drawing to a close.*

So God is saying, *Learn from the lesson, DON’T BE A WHINER!*

Delete the phrase, “*Life isn’t fair*” from your vocabulary and chose to not complain. Just be thankful for what the Master gives you; be content in all things. If you are a whiner, or you know a whiner, recognize this fact of life. Life is not fair!!! I know that may be a revelation for some of you; I know you may be shocked about that, but H E L L O! That is the reality of the world we live in. God never said it was going to be easy or fair on earth, that’s why he gave us the promise of heaven and all it entails, because this life on earth will and does get very difficult at time.

Let verse 15 keep washing its truth over you, *so that no one can speak a word of blame against you. You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of crooked and perverse people. Let your lives shine brightly before them.* Yes, child of God, with the help of the Holy Spirit sent from Jesus to be our Teacher, our Comforter, it is possible to turn from a negative person into a positive person. All things are possible to him that believes.

Next week we will be looking at the second type of complainer—the MARTYR.