

CONQUERING COMPLAINING GOD'S WAY

PART TWO:

In part one, we discussed Philippians chapter 2 that 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*. 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.* Then we looked at verses 12 through 18 which is talking about being light bearers.

THE MESSAGE reads this way- *Be energetic in your life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before God. That energy is God's energy, and energy deep within you, God himself willing and working at what will give him the most pleasure. Do everything readily and cheerfully—no bickering, no second-guessing allowed! Go out into the world uncorrupted, a breath of fresh air in this squalid and polluted society. Provide people with a glimpse of good living and of the living God. Carry the light-giving Message into the night so I'll have good cause to be proud of you on the day that Christ returns. ..*

We will look at the four types of complainers in this series. In part one, we studied the WHINER. Today we will look at the second type of complainer, the MARTYR.

You hear the martyr saying things like this: *"Look at all that I do. No one appreciates me. Look at all the sacrifices I make and nobody cares. I tell ya, nobody appreciates me. They don't even know half of what I do. People just use me all the time and then give the credit for things I do to someone else. They just take me for granted. I can't do everything by myself, but everybody expects me to."*

Moses is a good example of this attitude. He's dealing with all these whiners in the wilderness and for 40 years he had listen to their whining and complaining. No matter what God did, the Israelites weren't happy campers and Moses; their leader bore the brunt of it. In **Numbers chapter 11**, read how the Israelites were constantly voicing their complaints to poor Moses. It's not easy being in leadership is it?

Look at the example of the manna. God sent them manna to eat and the people started complaining. The manna wasn't the food they wanted. They didn't like these flat cakes that tasted like they had been cooked in olive oil. Would you agree that this Manna was definitely not hitting the spot?

Verse four (NIV) says, *"The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, 'If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!'"* whine, whine whine! Isn't it interesting to note that it was the foreign rabble who initiated the complaining and the Israelites soon followed suit.

Moses, now weary and tired of it all starts whining himself. It's easy to yield to the spirit of complaining, to be pulled into it, if you are listening to others complain and you don't walk away. Verse 11- listen to what Moses said, to the Lord. "... *Why have you brought this trouble on your servant? What have I done to displease you that you put the burden of all these people on me? Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant, to the land you promised on oath to their forefather? Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, 'Give us meat to eat!' I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how you are going to treat me, put me to death right now—if I have found favor in your eyes—and do not let me face my own ruin.!*" Talk about a martyr complex! Sounds like Moses had it.

People who are in this martyr complex are pros at having a pity party. And you will hear them say, *Poor, pitiful me. Look at my life now, it's just not fair—life isn't fair! Why me?* Moses gets to the point when he says, *Hey, Lord, just kill me. Get it over with. With all your people are putting me through, I can't handle it any long, just kill me or spare me the misery.* That's like the hypochondriac who had written on his tombstone, "I told you I was sick!"

Nobody cares about me. Nobody wants to listen to me, poor, pitiful me. How many of you find yourself caught in that martyr complex from time to time? Like the time when the kids are giving you fits and you are saying, *Oh Lord, why did you make me a parent?* Or the times at work when everything is going wrong and you say, *Lord, why did you give me this promotion? I was perfectly satisfied with my little job in the back room and now look at all the hassle I am going through being the boss.* If you look for things to complain about, believe me, you will find them, and it will drive you right into THE WHYS! *Why is this happening to me? Yada, yada, yada!*

Next, we have the number three complainer—the CYNIC.

Nothing is ever going to change, I don't care what happens, it won't change a thing! Living in the world is a downer. It's never going to get better. I mean it may start out looking good, but the hammer is ready to drop on my head any minute. It always happens. The cynic is this negative person, the complainer. And the cynic is convinced, thoroughly convinced that nothing will ever change for the better.

Solomon is a prime example of the cynic. Solomon wrote the book of Proverbs. In it he talks a lot about life, and we see wisdom woven throughout the book. But then he writes Ecclesiastes and some many see it is a downer book. Whoa, life's a bummer. In fact, if you will look in Ecclesiastes chapter 1, I have lumped some verses together just to give you an idea. *Everything is meaningless,* says Solomon, the teacher, *utterly meaningless! Generations come and go but nothing really changes. Everything is so weary and tiresome. Nothing under the sun is truly new.* It's like picking up after your kids, it never changes. And Solomon is talking about this cynical attitude of life. Do you find yourself caught in this negative attitude of life at times?

Maybe you are a WHINIER, maybe you are a MARTYR, maybe you are a CYNIC, and if you say, no to them, perhaps you fall into this type of complainers, the PERECTIONIST. I'm down to meddling now aren't I?

Number four—The PERFECTIONIST. Now for years, I had to raise my hand on this one. I had it down pat in my life. I can tell you all about being a perfectionist. Then with God’s help I was able to recognize it, admit it and deal with it and I’ve come a long way baby, as the old ad says, but I am still working on it from time to time. The really sad thing is that some people actually take pride in being a perfectionist. They brag about it. They make no bones about being one. I was one of these people. It is a twisted kind of PRIDE! Reality wise, it is big time BONDAGE.

A classic example of a perfectionist and their attitude shows up when you hear people say things like, *is that the best you can do? I mean, come on, is that really the best, the very best you can do?* These statements are usually accompanied with the rolled eyes look. *Maybe if you tried a little harder... or Oh here! Let me fix it, your way will never work. I can’t believe you did it like that. Yada, yada, yada!*

Was Paula perfectionist? Some would say yes. I admire Paul and most of us after studying the life of Paul, would probably want to be like him. But remember when Paul and Barnabas were going to go on another missionary journey? Vs. 36 (NIV) reads- *some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, and Paul chose Silas and left...*

Paul had this idea that everything had to be perfect. He wasn’t willing to take someone with him that would mess up.

Dear reader, I wonder how many of you are the same way. You have these perfectionistic tendencies that bring bondage into your life and the lives of those around you. It’s stressful to be around a perfectionist. They fall into the realm of complaining because nobody can measure up to their standards, including themselves. Perfectionists actually set themselves up for failure—as no one person is perfect—save our Lord Jesus.

WHINIER, MARTYR, CYNIC or a PERFECTIONIST the majority of people fall into one of these categories.—it’s our old human nature. It is not what we want to do, but at times we may get pulled into being a complainer. Take your right hand and just lift it into the air, come on, just lift your right hand into the air. Now say, *I am a complainer!* Say it again, *I am a complainer!* Now say it to the Lord, *I am a complainer!* It feels good to admit it, especially to the Lord. But now the question is—HOW DO YOU CONQUER COMPLAINING?

There are five things you can do and You just did the FIRST one. You admitted it. Admitting it’s a problem for you—not your kids, your boss, your spouse, whomever—it is YOUR problem. You must recognize it in yourself. Most people would say, *I’m not a complainer. I just have a few justified gripes in my life and that’s all.* God says, *Admit it, you are a complainer.* Face it! If you had to wear a tape recorder for a week and everything you spoke was recorded, you would be amazed at the number of times you were caught complaining. You may now be thinking, WOW! This is a great message, a great message for my wife, my boss, the neighbor next door, a

great message for my kids; they really need to read this. No, my friend, this is a great message for you. It is a great message for me.

In Proverbs—Solomon tells us, *Blessed are those who have a tender conscience, but the stubborn are headed for serious problems.* We become stiff-necked in our stubbornness and that kind of pride will cause chaos in your life. Choose not to be a stiff-necked, stubborn fool, admit you have a problem and invite the Holy Spirit to be part of the solution. In part three we will learn the **second thing** we can do to conquer complaining.