

# The Silver Lining of Grumbling

Dark Clouds, Silver Linings-part 8

November 23, 2014

## DAY 1: Complaining

1. Let's review, for the last time, the core of this series, Dark Clouds, Silver Linings.
  - a. **The Ecclesiastes Experience**--Only God can meet our deepest needs. Nothing else we try will do. A deep sense of loneliness, emptiness or discouragement are dashboard lights, telling us our heart is trusting something other than drawing close to Christ and reflecting Him to others.
  - b. **The Job Experience**--Fear, anger and depression are also dashboard lights but point us to something different--a deep-seated commitment to SELF, to get the "life" we think we need and deserve without having to depend on God. This is the taproot of every sin.
  - c. **The Hebrew Experience**-- Failure and grumbling are dashboard lights that point us to (1) I'm trusting something other than Christ for my deepest needs, and (2) I'm committed to self and the "life" (feelings) I believe I need and which I deserve, without having to depend on God.

*Philippians 2:14 Do everything without complaining or arguing, ...*

2. This verse may be hard to hear, because when you're discouraged there are few things in life that feel so good as complaining!!! ☺
3. This is one of the hardest commands in scripture to obey. Go to a little league game sometime and just listen to parents. If you don't hear any outward complaining, you can hear a lot of mumbling and murmuring.
4. The Greek word for "complaining" is "gong-usmos."  
Yep! The root is our English word "gong!" It is a word where the definition of the word is suggested by the sound or pronunciation of the word!
5. When you think of a "gong" what kind of sound comes to mind?
6. Do you remember, "The Gong Show?" When a performer came out on stage, they could continue to perform up until the moment that one of the judges walked over to a large gong and banged it with a mallet!
7. The Greek word is translated in any of the following ways in the New Testament depending on the context: murmuring, muttering, grumbling, saying something in a "low tone." Why do you think Paul says that there should be NO complaining?

## **DAY 2: Complaining exposed**

*Philippians 2:14 Do everything without complaining or arguing, ...*

1. There are different kinds of drivers that produce complaining. We'll look at a few today and tomorrow.

### **2. The Whiner.**

a. The cry of the whiner is, "It's not fair."

*Matthew 20:11-12 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."*

b. The word translated "grumbling" is the same Greek word as "complaining" in Phil. 2:14

c. What is exposed in the workers in Jesus' story in Matt. 20? What attitudes do you sense in the workers?

d. Do you have a current "It's not fair" attitude about something? What is it?

### **2. The Martyr.**

a. The cry of the martyr is, "No one appreciates me."

*Numbers 11:11-15 Moses said 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!"*

b. Think of a time when you played the "martyr card."

(1) What was the situation?

(2) What was it that you wanted from someone that you didn't get?

(3) Could you smell the odor of entitlement? A "quiet" demand? A silent demand?

(4) What's exposed is an inner NEED to be met by someone that only God can really satisfy.

### **DAY 3: Complaining: two more drivers**

#### **1. The Cynic.**

The cry of the cynic is, "What's the use? Nothing ever changes."

*Ecclesiastes 1:2-9 "Life is useless ... you spend your life working and what do you have to show for it? ...the world stays just the same... what has been done before will be done again."*

2. It's easy to be cynical about a lot of things in this world:

a. We live in a fallen world. There are always things and people that disappoint, fall short of expectations, don't satisfy, that go wrong, etc.

b. This world is not my home.

"Home" is the place for which we long, a place where things go "as they're supposed to go," and things turn out "like they're supposed to turn out." "Home" is the place you can count on in which you can let down your guard and know you are enjoyed.

We get little "tastes" of "home" every once in a while. You might wonder why God doesn't bless us with more "home" experiences. (1) We would have an even more entitled spirit than we already do, and (2) He uses these to build an anticipation for the banquet we'll one day enjoy.

3. What is the difference between someone who is cynical and someone who is realistic about events and people? Simple answer:

The cynic is mad because he's not getting the life he thought he'd get and deserves. The realist is not counting on anyone to meet his deepest needs. He knows only God can do that.

#### **4. The Perfectionist.**

a. The cry of the perfectionist is, "Is that the best you can do?"

*Proverbs 21:15, 19 A nagging wife is like water going drip, drip, drip on a rainy day.... Better to live out in the desert than with a nagging, complaining wife.*

b. Sorry ladies. I used this verse because of its graphic imagery.

c. The perfectionist is just not happy until the people in his life have "buttoned everything up like it's supposed to be. They carry around with them the aroma of, "Maybe one day you'll finally do something like it's *really supposed to be done!*"

5. Which of these two do you most resonate with? The Cynic or the Perfectionist? Why?

#### **DAY 4: Arguing, and getting dirty rotten attitudes turned around**

*Philippians 2:14 Do everything without complaining or arguing, ...*

1. "Arguing" comes from the Greek word, "dialogismos." It also has a number of different translations depending on the context. Here, it means "disputing," or "arguing."
2. What Paul is talking about are not things like arguing in court or simple disagreements. He is talking about an attitude that is "alive" in the human heart that is proud and stubborn as a mule.
3. When was the last time you were in an argument? Briefly describe it.

4. "Arguments" are destructive. Place a check next to any of the results of arguing you have experienced:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hardens the heart   | <input type="checkbox"/> Creates more suspicion                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creates greater distrust  | <input type="checkbox"/> Gives "permission" to question someone's motives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Makes it less likely that you will be humble or listen to that person |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creates distance in the relationship                                  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exposes my demanding spirit   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |   |

5. What comes to your mind as you think through this issue of arguing? What kind of person do you wish you could more quickly morph into?

6. Sometimes we change because we see the damage we've done to someone else, either through our complaining, arguing, demanding spirit, perfectionism, cynicism, etc.

7. Where have you seen the effects of some of these things in your relationships?

8. If you had a magic wand, and could "roll back the clock" what do you wish you would have done differently in that relationship?

9. Has God put His finger on complaining and arguing in you this week? Ask His forgiveness.

## DAY 5: The antidote to complaining: GLAD serving.

1. Sometimes change in us occurs when we see the damage we've done to others.
2. Other times, change begins to occur when we get a fresh vision of what we could become!

*Philippians 2:14 Do everything without complaining or arguing, (15) 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**...*

3. What vision is Paul painting for us? What could we become? What difference could we make?

*Philippians 2:17 But **even if I am being poured out** like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, **I am glad** and **rejoice** with all of you.<sup>18</sup> So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.*

4. The opposite of "complaining" and "arguing" is "**glad service**." Why would that be the opposite of complaining?

5. What change of mindset would you need to have in order to do your duties as a glad servant?

6. Paul gives us an illustration of glad service in Timothy...

*Philippians 2:19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you.<sup>20</sup> I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare.<sup>21</sup> For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.*

7. Underline the words or phrases that strike you about Timothy's glad servant mentality.

8. Paul gives us another example, below. Underline the words or phrases that strike you...

*Philippians 2:25 But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs.*

<sup>26</sup> *For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill.*

<sup>27</sup> *Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow.*

<sup>28</sup> *Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety.*

<sup>29</sup> *Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him,*

<sup>30</sup> *because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.*

9. Complaining vs. Glad Serving. Ask God to do this work in you! You may want to have coffee with someone this week who you see this "glad serving" mentality in them! You can speed up the change process!!