

The Cure for Complaining

Air Dates: February 13 - February 17, 2023

Day One

Have you ever thought about the consequences of complaining? I mean, don't most people consider complaining their right? Surely there's something in our Constitution about free speech which says we have the right to complain about anything or anyone at any time—right? In fact, anyone who doesn't complain on a somewhat regular basis must not be normal! That's how lots of people look at it.

Well, I want to talk about this contagious disease called *complaining*, and I want to give you the antidote—the cure—for complaining. Here's the facts about this very common and widespread disease: It affects your brain and your physical health in negative ways. When you indulge in complaining, it brings on a sense of sadness or melancholy, and causes real dissatisfaction with your life.

There's real proof that negative stress like complaining can also exacerbate chronic health problems, such as diabetes or asthma. It literally can increase your headaches, your joint pain, and be a major cause of depression.

Now, I'm not talking about ignoring the negative issues of life. We don't live in a perfect world, and we have to confront negative people and situations for the purpose of finding relief and solutions. So, I'm not suggesting that you "put on a happy face" and pretend nothing's wrong. But I am advocating a change in your attitude toward complaining. I hope to convince you—if you are not already convinced—that complaining does you more harm than good and it is a contagious disease that causes lots of problems for lots of people.

And, of course, the more important issue is that it keeps you from the joy that is yours when you are rightly related to Jesus Christ, by grace through faith, and you have chosen to follow Christ. The Bible tells us that the joy of the Lord is our strength; habitual complaining destroys your joy and saps your energy, slowing you down and keeping you from doing what God put you here to do.

But the good news is, we can cure this disease of complaining when we turn to the Lord for help and follow his principles. So, would you like to be set free from complaining? Have you allowed it to have a place in your life so long that it is now almost an addiction? Well, there's hope for you.

Day Two

Would you like to stop complaining? I have a message of great hope for you. You can be set free from the curse of complaining; you don't have to continue to suffer from this very contagious disease. In fact, if you are a Christ-follower, you have been given a clear directive to get rid of complaining in your life.

Philippians 2:14 puts it very simply: "*Do everything without grumbling or arguing.*"

I pointed out that complaining can be addictive, and it can cause you real mental and physical problems. There is no doubt that you would be much better off if you would get rid of complaining, and because it is a contagious disease, everyone around you would be better off as well.

So, how do you cure complaining? I have five powerful cures to give you.

1. Make thanksgiving a part of your everyday routine.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:18 we read, “*Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.*” It is God’s will that you become a thankful person; so put it on your to-do list; add it to your daily schedule. Thank God intentionally and continually throughout your day. And please make sure you begin each day with thankfulness. Make the first words out of your mouth—even the first thoughts in your head each morning—words and thoughts full of thanksgiving.

You’ll probably have to train yourself to do this, if you’ve been in complaint mode very long. It is replacing bad habits with good habits, but if you are a Christ-follower, you have a mandate to give thanks in all circumstances, so I would just say, get with the program starting today.

2. Adjust your expectations.

If you’ve been expecting life to be fair and easy and you live under the assumption that everyone should march in your parade and do what you think they should do, you have unrealistic expectations. So, adjust to the fact that you don’t have a perfect job, a perfect mate, a perfect child, a perfect church. Life is just plain messy and it’s not fair. And if you’ve been thinking that life owes you a smooth journey, throw those thoughts out and determine to focus on the good things in your life instead of majoring on the negative ones.

Remember, don’t complain about anything today.

Day Three

Can you think of someone you know who you would describe as a negative, complaining person? I’m guessing you probably can, but here’s the harder question: Would people who know you put you in that category of a habitual complainer?

Well, even if you’re not totally consumed with complaining, you may have allowed a complaining spirit to creep into your mind and heart. I’m talking about how to cure the contagious disease called *complaining*.

I gave you two important cures: Make thanksgiving a part of your everyday routine and adjust your expectations. I want to add a couple more suggestions:

3. Stop trying to control the uncontrollable.

Control freaks like me get very focused on fixing things and setting things straight. But one of the best gifts you can give yourself is to let go of that drive to control the uncontrollable. When you think about it, there’s not a whole bunch of things in life you can control except yourself, is there? But my guess is that a lot of your complaining is probably about the uncontrollable things and people in your life. What a futile exercise that is! Here’s a good thought to keep in mind: If you will control the controllable—namely *you*—you will be able to cope with the uncontrollable. And you’ll stop complaining about all those things beyond your control. It will make a difference.

4. Let go of yesterday and tomorrow.

Much of the complaining you hear every day is about what happened yesterday or what might happen tomorrow. Jesus told us that we are not to worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. He reminded us that each day has enough trouble of its own (Matthew 6:34). And yesterday is past history; you can never change it, so complaining about either yesterday or tomorrow is a pointless

exercise. Live in today; focus on making today as good as you can, so you won't have anything to complain about it tomorrow!

Don't you think that we often allow ourselves to get into the complaining pit without even realizing it, and before we know it, we've caught that destructive disease. But there is a cure and if you and I will just change a few of our bad habits, and ask God to help us, we can be set free from complaining.

Day Four

How do we get rid of the bad habit of complaining? I've given you four effective ways to cure the contagious disease of complaining in your life and they're not hard to do. You just have to remember to do them; pray about them; seek God's help to remember not to complain, and then watch the transformation in your own life when you are no longer a complainer!

Let me give you one more really good cure for complaining:

5. Learn to practice the 24-hour rule.

What is the 24-hour rule, you ask? It's simple: When you're starting to complain and you're getting frustrated or impatient, ask yourself this one question: *What difference will this make in 24 hours?* And then, the rule is that if it doesn't make a real difference in 24 hours, you are not allowed to complain about it.

I promise you, from my own life experience, that this will go a long way toward curing the complaining disease. A great majority of what you and I complain about today won't matter at this same time tomorrow. When I began to practice this rule, I was a complainer. I was travelling a lot and I found much to complain about with late airplanes, poor customer service, bad hotels—and so I complained, both verbally and in my own mind. Of course, my complaining didn't change anything, it just made me a miserable person. I suffered from this disease of complaining but I also passed it on to others, I'm sure, because complaining is a very contagious disease.

That's when I got smart and began to practice this 24-hour rule—and I do so to this day. I talk to myself and make myself obey the 24-hour rule—if it doesn't matter in 24 hours, don't complain about it. I challenge you to try it. I think it will work for you too.

These five cures for complaining that I've given you are biblically based principles that will truly help you to become a more joyful, pleasant person, and you will be a better representative of Jesus Christ in every area of your life—and most especially where you work.

Day Five

Do you know how to be a good complainer? I want to show you how to complain. For sure, life is full of things we don't like, things that aren't good, and sometimes we just need to complain. Well, here's how to do it.

In Psalm 142:1-2, David said "*I cry aloud to the Lord; I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy. I pour out before him my complaint; before him I tell my trouble.*"

King David had some genuine complaints, but he knew where to go with them. He poured them out before the Lord. Do you take your complaints to the Lord and actually verbalize them to him? You should, because he understands you, he cares about you, he's always there to listen, and he has answers. Instead of complaining to everyone around you, why not tell the one person who invites you to bring all your cares and problems to him, because he cares for you?

I notice as David spelled out his complaint to God, he heard his own words, and that led him back into right thinking. He says in verse 5 and 7a, "*I cry to you, O Lord; I say, 'You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living...Set me free from my prison that I may praise your name.'*"

I find that when I pour out my complaints to God, I start to gain perspective and I realize that they're not as big as I thought they were. I also realize that I'm a captive to my own complaining spirit, and once I see that, then God can set me free from that prison of griping and complaining.

Philippians 2:14 says we are to do everything without complaining or arguing. But listen to the great benefits of practicing this biblical principle: "... *so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation."* Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life." (Philippians 2:15-16a). We will shine like stars and show others Jesus as we learn to do everything without complaining.

What a great testimony Christians would have especially in the marketplace if we truly took our complaints to the Lord—to him only—and replaced our complaining spirits with his joy and peace.