



COMPLAINING AND GRUMBLING

1. Most of the Bible's teaching on complaining comes from the Exodus generation (Exod. 15, 16, 17; Num. 14, 16 17).
2. Complaining often comes
 - a. from fear and a lack of faith (Red Sea, Exod. 14:10–12).
 - b. from unpleasant circumstances (increased suffering, Exod. 5:21), unfulfilled desires ("It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates" Num. 20:5), or life-threatening circumstances (bitter water, Exod. 15:22–24; no food, Exod. 16:2–3).
 - c. when expectations are not met, when things get worse instead of better, when it seems God is slow keeping his promises (increased bondage, Exod. 5).
 - d. from comparing present discomfort with past comforts (manna, Num. 11:4–6). We tend to remember the good things from difficult times and forget the bad—idealizing the whole disagreeable period.
 - e. from discouragement, exasperation, and impatience—you're tired of putting up with miserable conditions ('and the soul of the people was short' Num. 21:4).
 - f. when God meets our needs, but not our desires; we want more than what God is willing to give (manna, Num. 11:4–6).
3. Complaining leads to making unjust accusations against God's chosen leaders. "May the LORD look upon you and judge you, for you have made us odious in Pharaoh's sight" (Exod. 5:21). "Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? (Exod. 14:11). "You have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger" (Exod. 16:3). "You have killed the people of the LORD" (Num. 16:41 NKJV).
4. Complainers look for someone to give them their desires, and reject those who don't (Num. 11:4).
5. Complainers first look for humans to blame, and then blame God.
6. Complaining against God's leaders is complaining against God (Exod. 16:8).
7. Complaining is catching: it infects others (Exod. 5:20–23).
8. Complaining is often accompanied with anger or weeping because we're not getting our way (operation crybaby, Num. 11:4–6; 14:1).
9. Complaining may lead to rejecting God's provision (manna, Num. 11:4–6).
10. Complaining is a poor witness for God. It shows you don't like the way God is treating you.
11. Complaining proves your eyes are on the problem and not on God.
12. Complaining angers God and brings about punishment (Num. 11:1).
13. God may put an end to your complaining by giving you something worse to complain about (fiery serpents and poisonous snakebites, Num. 21:5–6).
14. God often punishes complainers by granting their desires (quail, Num. 11:16–20, 31–34). This is his permissive will: punishment is coupled with fulfilling your desires.
15. Complaining may lead to the sin unto death (Num. 14:27–37).
16. Since God is ultimately responsible for adversity, grumbling is complaining about God's will for your life.
17. Instead of complaining, pray, have faith, and wait for deliverance, allowing God to act in his time—even if it's a last minute save.
18. The opposite of complaining is rejoicing in everything (1 Thess. 5:16)—delighting in weaknesses, abuses, distresses, persecutions, and difficulties (2 Cor. 12:10). Being content and not complaining is a long way from delighting and rejoicing.