

# Complaining Demonstrates Spiritual Immaturity

**Exodus 15-17; Numbers 11, 13, 14  
Life of Moses**

*Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea and they went into the Desert of Shur. For three days they traveled in the desert without finding water. **Exodus 15:22***

*When they came to Marah, they could not drink its water because it was bitter. (That is why the place is called Marah.) So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What are we to drink?" **Exodus 15:23-24***

**The Characteristics of  
Complaining**

**1. Complaining is an expression of spiritual immaturity. It shows we have not learned trust God to provide.**

*In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. Exodus 16:2*

*The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the Lord’s hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.”*  
**Exodus 16:3**

**2. Complaining glamorizes the past.**

*So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, “In the evening you will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of Egypt, <sup>7</sup> and in the morning you will see the glory*

*of the Lord, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?” Exodus 16:6-7*

**God is the one who permits and even makes our circumstances.**

**When we grumble about circumstances, we are really grumbling against God.**

*The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. So they quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” Exodus 17:1-2*

**3. Complaining forgets God’s providence.**

*Characteristics of Complaining*

*The LORD answered Moses, “Walk on ahead of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.”* **Ex. 17:4-6a**

*So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the LORD saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”* **Exodus 17:6b-7**

*Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the Lord, and when he heard them his anger was aroused.*

**Numbers 11:1a**

#### **4. Complaining invokes God's wrath.**

*Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the Lord, and when he heard them his anger was aroused. Then fire from the Lord burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp. Ex. 11:1*

*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. Numbers 11:4-5*

*But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!" Numbers 11:6*

#### **5. The complainer is never satisfied.**

## **The 12 spies report returning from Canaan**

*But while the meat was still  
between their teeth and before it  
could be consumed, the anger of  
the Lord burned against the  
people, and he struck them with a  
severe plague. Therefore the place  
was named Kibroth Hattaavah,  
because there they buried the  
people who had craved other food.*

**Numbers 11:33-34**

*They gave Moses this account:  
“We went into the land to which  
you sent us, and it does flow with  
milk and honey! Here is its fruit.*

**Numbers 13:27**

**But** *the people who live there are  
powerful, and the cities are  
fortified and very large. We even  
saw descendants of Anak [Giants]  
there.* **Numbers 13:28**

*That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert!*

### **Numbers 14:1-2**

*Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt."*

### **Numbers 14:3-4**

*The Lord said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have*

*performed among them?*

**Numbers 11:11**

**6. Complaining negates accomplishment.**

*Characteristics of Complaining*

*These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.*

**1 Corinthians 10:11**

*And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.*

**1 Corinthians 10:10**

**The Cure to Complaining is the Right Kind of Faith.**

**1. Admit the problem.**

**2. Repent from complaining and grumbling.**

### **3. Be deliberately positive about people and circumstances.**

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

**Romans 8:28**

### **Use the word, “but” in a positive way.**

*But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me. 1 Corinthians 16:8-9*

*“Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?” John 6:8*

*Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” There was plenty of grass in that place, and the men sat*

*down, about five thousand of them. Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. **John 6:10-11***

**Replace the word, “but” with “and.”**

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

**Acts 8:1**

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. **John 14:6 (KJV)**

Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in

the Lamb's book of life.

## **Revelation 21:27**

*Do everything without complaining or arguing, 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 as you hold out the word of life—*

## **Philippians 2:14-16a**

*for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

## **Philippians 4:11a-13**