



Murmur Much?

Philippians 2:14-15: (KJV) ¹⁴*Do all things without murmurings and disputings:* ¹⁵*That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;*



Do you murmur? What does it mean to murmur anyway? Most of us don't use that word too often, but when you think about it, the word sounds like what it means... murrmmurr... sort of an under your breath, nondescript sound that reflects a negative outlook on something. With this in mind, coupled with the fact that we live in a culture that revolves everything around ourselves, chances are that we not only murmur, we murmur a lot! Stay with us as we figure out where murmuring and complaining belong in our lives and look at practical ways to put them there!

Questions for consideration:

1. How does the Bible describe murmuring?
2. What are some good examples of murmuring?
3. How do we avoid murmuring?

Here's a great Bible trivia question:
What do the following scriptures all have in common?

1. How does the Bible describe murmuring?



Ruth 1:16: (KJV) *And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou **lodgest**, I will **lodge**: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:*

Psalms 30:5: (KJV) *For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may **endure** for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*

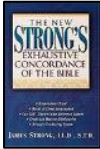
Psalms 91:1: (KJV) *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall **abide** under the shadow of the Almighty.*

Genesis 31:54: (KJV) *Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread: and they did eat bread, and **tarried all night** in the mount.*

Exodus 16:2: (KJV) *And the whole congregation of the children of Israel **murmured** against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:*



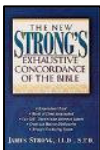
The word for "lodge," "endure," "abide," "tarried all night" and "murmured" is all the same word!



Murmur: Strongs #3885 luwn (loon); or liyn (leen); to stop (usually over night); by implication, to stay permanently; hence (in a bad sense) to be obstinate (especially in words, to complain):

So, our first Old Testament hint as to what murmuring is gives us great insight into the depth of impact that it can have on our life. It is something we can harbor inside of ourselves.

New Testament:



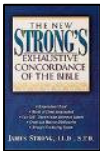
Murmur: Strongs #1111 gogguzo (gong-good'-zo); to grumble: AV- 1) to murmur, mutter, grumble, say anything against in a low tone 1a) of the cooing of doves 1b) of those who confer secretly together 1c) of those who discontentedly complain

John 6:41: *The Jews then **murmured** <1111> at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.*

John 6:61: *When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples **murmured** <1111> at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?*

Murmuring is something you don't necessarily audibly hear, but it can be seen. Teenage kids provide a great example of murmuring!

Is murmuring the same as complaining?

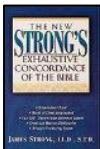


Complain: Strongs #7878 xys siyach see'- talk , meditate, speak, complain, commune, muse, to put forth, mediate, muse, commune, speak, complain, ponder, sing

Complaining is much more of an outward expression, while murmuring is a more inward expression, or privately with others.

Psalms 69:12: *They that sit in the gate **speak** <7878> against me; and I was the song of the drunkards.*

Psalms 77:3: *I remembered God, and was troubled: I **complained** <7878>, and my spirit was overwhelmed.*



Complain: Strongs #7879 xys siyach see'- akh meditation, prayer, talking, communication

Psalms 64:1: *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. Hear my voice, O God, in my **prayer** <7879>: preserve my life from fear of the enemy.*

Psalms 102:1: *A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his **complaint** <7879> before the LORD. Hear my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come unto thee.*

When we are afflicted and overwhelmed, we pour out our complaint before God. What a great way to deal with difficulty! Complaining can have value in its expression, helping us to find a solution or rise above a situation. However, there is no positive thing that comes from murmuring.



2. What are some good examples of murmuring?

The following are actual historical examples of murmuring on a large scale. The listener is cautioned to carefully listen to the lessons of these examples and apply those lessons to your life. DO NOT, we repeat, DO NOT try these at home, as they have been proven to be hazardous to any healthy attitude and to your well-being!

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WARNING

Israel's National Murmuring Over Food and Water

Here we drop in on a nation that was, just over a month ago, miraculously delivered from generations of slavery in Egypt. They saw the ten plagues, their release, and the parting of the Red Sea all as evidences of God's care for them.

Selected verses from Exodus 16:

Exodus 16:1-2: (KJV) ¹And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. ²And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:

There are a lot of people unhappy without addressing the issue. Murmuring sparks mutiny!

Exodus 16:3: (KJV) And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in



the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots (pots of meat), and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

Those who murmur have short memories for that which is good!

Exodus 16:4-5: (KJV) *⁴Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no. ⁵And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.*

God's kindness and willingness to continue to protect His people handled their needs - not necessarily their wants.

Exodus 16:6-7: (KJV) *⁶And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt: (They needed to be reminded! We also have short memories and need to be reminded about God's goodness to us.) ⁷And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD: and what are we, that ye murmur against us?*

God hears those things spoken in private and those things that we mull over in our minds and He still provides His answers - maybe not the exact answers we may want, but He answers nevertheless!

Murmuring leads to disaster because it has an undertone of building something bigger than it needs to be. Oftentimes we don't even know that we are doing it. Our minds can get stuck in a rut of constant complaining without any resolution.

Exodus 16:10: (KJV) *And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.*

More evidence of God's care for those who have doubted... but instead they focused of the fact that they were in the wilderness with no food.

Exodus 16:11-12: (KJV) *¹¹And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ¹²I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God.*

God again reminds them of two things - I hear what you are thinking and I am caring for you! The continual recounting of the murmuring seems to indicate that it has become a mindset.

Exodus 16:13-15: (KJV) *¹³And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. ¹⁴And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. ¹⁵And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.*

So God is again as good as His word. Again!!!



Observations about murmuring so far:

- It is quiet and consistent - kind of like a continual muttering under your breath;
- It can be powerful - the constant rehearsing of our perceptions yields a clear bias;
- It can be contagious - others who have the same circumstance are easily drawn into it. (Ever notice how easy it is to drag people into negative thinking than positive? It's our natural propensity.)



The Promised Land

After journeying through the wilderness for a short period of time, they now have the Promised Land before them:

Numbers 13:1-2: (NRSV) ¹The LORD said to Moses, ²"Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites; from each of their ancestral tribes you shall send a man, every one a leader among them."

So the spies go and return:

Numbers 13:25-33: (NRSV) ²⁵At the end of forty days they returned from spying out the land. ²⁶And they came to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the Israelites... they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. ²⁷And they told him, "We came to the land to which you sent us; it flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit."



The Land showed itself to be all that God had described, BUT...

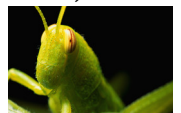
Numbers 13:28-29: (NRSV) ²⁸Yet the people who live in the land are strong, and the towns are fortified and very large; and besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there. ²⁹The Amalekites live in the land of the Negeb; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live by the sea, and along the Jordan."

Numbers 13:30: (NRSV) But Caleb (one of the ten spies) quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it."

Faith clears away the doubt - the Land was as God had described, He had provided for them to this point - why wouldn't God follow through with what He already said he would do?

The murmuring produces a fierce bias which overrides the faith Caleb expressed:

Numbers 13:31-33: (NRSV) ³¹Then the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against this people, for they are stronger than we." ³²So they brought to the Israelites an unfavorable report of the land that they had spied out, saying, "The land that we have gone through as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people that we saw in it are of great size. ³³There we saw the Nephilim (the Anakites come from the Nephilim); and to ourselves we seemed like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them."



An Important Sidebar to this story:

The people had originally wanted spies to precede their entry:

Deuteronomy 1:22: (NKJV) ²¹Look, the LORD your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the LORD God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged. ²²"And every one of you came near to me and said, 'Let us send men before us, and let them search out the land for us, and bring back word to us of the way by which we should go up, and of the cities into which we shall come.'

God had already "searched out" the Land for them!

Ezekiel 20:6: (NKJV) ⁶On that day I raised My hand in an oath to them, to bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, 'flowing with milk and honey,' the glory of all lands.



More observations about murmuring:

- It is quiet and consistent - kind of like a continual muttering under your breath;
- It can be powerful - the constant rehearsing of our perceptions yields a clear bias;
- It can be contagious - others who have the same circumstance are easily drawn into it. (Ever notice how easy it is to drag people into negative thinking than positive? It's our natural propensity.)
- Once spread, it is an almost unstoppable force as it takes on a new identity called bias. Murmuring takes away our objectivity so that we aren't able to clearly see where we are supposed to go.
- It can dramatically alter the outcome of events - the consequence of no faith was 40 years of wandering!

Bias: An inclination that prevents an unprejudiced consideration of a matter.



Jonah as an Individual:

Jonah 1:1-4: (NKJV) ¹Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ²“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.” ³But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. ⁴But the LORD sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up.

Jonah is given a command and decides to go the opposite way.

Jonah 1:17: (NKJV) Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

(This is kind of like being sent to your room to think about what you did!)

Jonah 2:7-9: (NKJV) ⁷“When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the LORD; And my prayer went up to You, into Your holy temple. ⁸“Those who regard worthless idols forsake their own Mercy. ⁹But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.”

Jonah's murmurings become praises to God - after all, what is the alternative?

God hears his prayer and gives him a chance to do what he is obligated to do:

Jonah 3:4-5: (NKJV) ⁴And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” ⁵So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them.

It worked...but this didn't make Jonah happy.

Jonah 4:1-4: (NKJV) ¹But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. ²So he prayed to the LORD, and said, “Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing



harm. ³Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!" ⁴Then the LORD said, "Is it right for you to be angry?"



Murmuring is just like static - it diminishes the clear signal we are striving for.

Lamentations 4:39: (ESV)
Why should a living man complain, a man, about the punishment of his sins?



When we are complaining, others around us are not getting a good Christian example.

1 Thessalonians 5:18: (KJV)
In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.



Jesus is our model and he never once murmured. Keep your mind on him.

Philippians 4:11-13: (KJV)
...in whatsoever state I am...be content...I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound...

This is a sad, sad account of one whose inner voice brought him to a point of utter despair - even wanting to die - in spite of God's care. This story is repeated over and over again in our world today.

" If you have time to whine and complain about something then you have the time to do something about it."
- Anthony D'Angelo

Jonah 4:5-9: (NKJV) ⁵So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city. There he made himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city. ⁶And the LORD God prepared a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So Jonah was very grateful for the plant. ⁷But as morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it so damaged the plant that it withered. ⁸And it happened, when the sun arose, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah's head, so that he grew faint. Then he wished death for himself, and said, "It is better for me to die than to live." ⁹Then God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?" And he said, "It is right for me to be angry, even to death!"



The Pharisees:

John 6:40-44: (NKJV) ⁴⁰And this is the will of Him who sent me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." ⁴¹The Jews then complained about him, because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." ⁴²And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he says, 'I have come down from heaven?'" ⁴³Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. ⁴⁴No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day."



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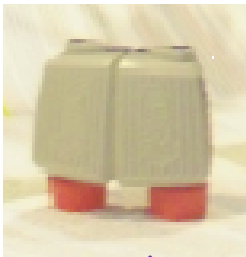


- Once spread, it is an almost unstoppable force as it takes on a new identity called bias. Murmuring takes away our objectivity so that we aren't able to clearly see where we are supposed to go.
- It can dramatically alter the outcome of events - the consequence of no faith was 40 years of wandering!
- Murmuring can lead to a pollution of your conscience;
- A polluted conscience leads to a completely unrealistic view of reality.

3. How do we avoid murmuring?



MAGNIFY
GOD
AND



MINIMIZE THE MURMUR!

The story of Domenic and the binoculars: Rick's grandson has a pair of child's binoculars (pictured). He first put them to his eyes backwards, making everything he saw smaller. "Papa" Rick corrected him, showing him how to properly hold them to make everything he saw bigger. Domenic had a

great time switching back and forth, back and forth. "Papa's BIG!" "Papa's widdle!" This is the way we see God. When we murmur, we've turned the binoculars around and are looking through them backwards and made Him small rather than big. We have to just turn our God-viewing eyes around so that we can make God big again. When God is big in your life, there is no room for murmuring anymore. Turn it around and change your perspective!





We can choose which way we look through the binoculars of our life!

- Gratitude makes God larger and more real to our thinking than the problem or obstacle!
- The question is: what are we magnifying and what are we minimizing?
- The Israelites magnified that which should have and could have been minimized! The result was the enemy looked like giants and they saw themselves as grasshoppers.

Psalms 69:29-33: (NKJV) ²⁹*But I am poor and sorrowful; Let Your salvation, O God, set me up on high. ³⁰I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving. ³¹This also shall please the LORD better than an ox or bull, which has horns and hooves. ³²The humble shall see this and be glad; And you who seek God, your hearts shall live. ³³For the LORD hears the poor, and does not despise His prisoners.*

If we can focus on being thankful, murmuring has no place. You can't be thankful and murmur at the same time.

1 Peter 4:7-10: (ASV) ⁷*But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore of sound mind, and be sober unto prayer: ⁸above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves; for love covereth a multitude of sins: ⁹using hospitality one to another without murmuring: ¹⁰according as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God;*

Theme text:

Philippians 2:13-15: (ASV) ¹³*for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure. ¹⁴Do all things without murmurings and questionings: ¹⁵that ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world.*

This is a perspective-setting scripture so that we can look forward in our lives.

The following is a GREAT EXAMPLE of the avoidance of murmuring and disputing:

Nehemiah 1:1-2: (NKJV) ¹*The words of Nehemiah... It came to pass in the month of Chislew, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the citadel, ²that Hanani one of my brethren came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.*

The state of Jerusalem and its people was weighing heavily upon the heart of Nehemiah.

Nehemiah 1:3: (NKJV) ³*And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire."*

The news was about as bad as it could be. It was in shambles and the people were barely getting by.

Nehemiah 1:4: (NKJV) *So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.*

Nehemiah's prayer was one of magnifying praise! He knew God could handle it even though he had every opportunity to murmur.



Four months later:

Nehemiah 2:1-4: (NKJV) ¹And it came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, that I took the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had never been sad in his presence before. ²Therefore the king said to me, "Why is your face sad, since you are not sick? This is nothing but sorrow of heart." So I became dreadfully afraid, ³and said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire?" ⁴Then the king said to me, "What do you request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven.

Nehemiah's prayer and faith over this four months had come to a point of opportunity - not only was he continually aware of the problem, he was systematically preparing for the solving of the problem to rebuild Jerusalem. He was ready when the opportunity arose.

The Anatomy of Murmur Minimization:

Psalms 34:1: (NKJV) *I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.*

If we are always praising God with our words, it would be hard to murmur under our breath.

Psalms 34:2: (NKJV) *My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; The humble shall hear of it and be glad.*

If our very life is crediting God with all that is good, it is even harder to mutter and complain.

Psalms 34:3: (NKJV) *Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together.*

When we magnify God, by default we minimize murmuring down to nothing!

*So do we murmur much?
For Jonathan and Rick (and Domenic) and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

