

Does Complaining Ever Help?

<u>Psalm 55:2</u>: (NASB) Give heed to me and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and am surely distracted.

Complaining...everybody does it. Occasionally, we complain from a positive perspective for the purpose of effecting change and that is good. But most of the time we complain because someone or something is irritating us, or putting pressure on us, or challenging us or contradicting us. Most of our complaints are not for the purpose of truly solving any issue; rather, they are for the purpose of being heard, of having our position or circumstance or opinion verified. We complain for attention, for sympathy and to reinforce our ego. We often use complaining as a tool of destruction against those we oppose. For the most part, complaining does not sound all that productive. What do we do about it? How do we stop our complaining or transform it into something good?

(Jonathan is out today and our CQ Team Member, Julie, is filling in.)

(Source: Merriam Webster Dictionary) Complain:

1. to express grief, pain, or discontent

2. to make a formal accusation or charge

Complaining can be good...

Effective complaining, How Complaining Can Improve Mental Health, Dr. Romie, Fox News, Orlando

- (Reporter) You've probably heard it a million times in your life don't complain. But there is new research that shows that advice may be wrong. Turns out that complaining can actually be good for your health sometimes. So, how does that all fit in, this complaining? How can it possibly be good for you?
- (Dr. Romie) It is. Well, in this recent study, Tom, in the Journal of Social Psychology, what they actually were finding was that when we combined mindfulness which is being in the present moment, learning how to be happy, and knowing how to effectively complain, people were much happier and had more self-esteem.
- (Reporter) So, what do you mean by "effectively complain?"
- (Dr. Romie) When we want to complain, it's about using facts and logic and knowing who to complain to, Tom. People who know how to complain effectively it's because they are doing it from a calm place without heated emotion, number one; and number two, they're complaining to the people who they know can possibly create an effective change in their life for whatever the situation may be.
- (Reporter) So, therefore there is a positive outcome on the other end. Is that the thinking and that's why it has health benefits?
- (Dr. Romie) It is. Sometimes there's a positive benefit, but if not, it's just knowing that you voiced your concern in a logical way is actually helping to release it.



Complaining can be bad...

(Source: The Institute of Clinical Hypnotherapy Ireland) Robin Kowalski, a professor of psychology believes there are three different types of complainers:

- 1. <u>Venters</u>: This is a dissatisfied person who is not interested in hearing any solutions to help them.
- 2. <u>Sympathy Seekers</u>: They believe they've got it worse than everyone else and look for others to comfort them.
- 3. <u>Chronic Complainers</u>: These people live in a constant state of complaint, complaining about the same thing over and over.

Whenever we complain, thousands of neurons are triggered and form a neural network. The mind then finds it easier to follow this established network when reacting to everyday life. It is important we catch ourselves when we complain, but making sure we don't berate ourselves. Practice to create a new neural network for pleasant feelings instead of complaining and start to live a happier life.

In the Psalms, David seemed to do a lot of complaining. But he also did a lot of praising. What if we combined both approaches to try and drill down into the anatomy of a positive complaint?

<u>Psalm 55</u> is a Psalm of Complaint written at the time of Absalom's rebellion and was most likely focused on the part that David's former trusted advisor, Ahithophel, played in that rebellion:

<u>Psalms 55:1-3</u>: (NASB) ¹Give ear to my prayer, O God; and do not hide Yourself from my supplication. ²Give heed to me and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and am surely distracted ³because of the voice of the enemy, because of the pressure of the wicked; for they bring down trouble upon me and in anger they bear a grudge against me.

(Please see our podcast "Is Bitterness Ruining Your Life?" from August 25, 2013 for more on the story of Ahithophel.)

David was bothered to the point of physical unrest.



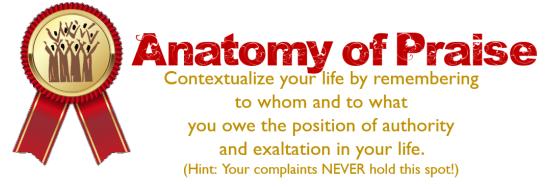
<u>Psalm 34</u> is a Psalm of Praise written after David escaped the wrath of King Saul by feigning madness among the Philistines:

<u>Psalm 34:1-3</u>: (NASB) ¹I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. ²My soul will make its boast in the LORD; the humble will hear it and rejoice. ³O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together.

When we complain, we are magnifying something. Here we are supposed to *magnify the LORD*. Exalting God is the great equalizer for complaining. To the



extent we magnify one, there is no room to magnify ourselves with our complaining.



David in writing the Psalms complained a lot. Was he setting a good example by his complaining?

We absolutely believe he WAS setting a good example. As we go through his Psalm about being betrayed by his good friend and advisor, we will see how what might sound like chronic complaining to some was actually well-placed and mature reasoning and recounting of great difficulty.

(1)) Organized complaining, How Complaining Can Improve Mental Health, Dr. Romie, Fox News, Orlando

- (Dr. Romie) The other interesting thing the study did find was that people who suffered some kind of trauma, Tom, like gone through divorce or abuse, that if they complain in an organized way, meaning to somebody that is neutral in an organized way as like journaling, that's also the emotional release. Where complaining doesn't benefit is if you're starting an argument and using emotion towards the other person.
- (Reporter) So, if you're doing it that way, I would imagine that if there are positive benefits to doing it the right way, then there's probably negative benefits doing it the wrong way?
- (Dr. Romie) It is, it is. Number one, it is negative to a relationship between the two people complaining. I mean, you know this Tom, right? There's those people in our lives who call and all they do is complain, and you don't even want to take the phone call. Because what does it do? It makes the person receiving the complaints feel bad and feeds into depression and anxiety - not only to the person complaining but into the person that is having to listen to it all the time.

We influence a LOT of people in one day, children, co-workers, our spouse or friends - reinforcing a behavior of complaining encourages others to either see this is an okay behavior OR that we are someone to avoid.

A positive benefit of "journaling" your complaint is an emotional release. Isn't that what David did? Not only did he journal his complaints, he directed them to the Eternal Complaint Solver, God. Our complaints need to be discliplined.

Many of our choices have led to the predicaments we are presently complaining about. – Monica Johnson

In other words, it's my own fault, so quit whining!



(Psalm of Complaint) David had just given voice to his complaint:

<u>Psalm 55:4-8</u>: (NASB) ⁴My heart is in anguish within me, and the terrors of death have fallen upon me. ⁵Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror has overwhelmed me. ⁶I said, Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. ⁷Behold, I would wander far away, I would lodge in the wilderness. Selah. ⁸I would hasten to my place of refuge from the stormy wind and tempest.



(Psalm of Praise) David had just exalted God in His majesty!

<u>Psalm 34:4-7</u>: (NASB) ⁴I sought the LORD, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears. ⁵They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces will never be ashamed. ⁶This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. ⁷The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them.



(Source: How Complaining Rewires Your Brain for Negativity by Dr. Travis Bradberry) When you have something that is truly worth complaining about, engage in solution-oriented complaining. Think of it as complaining with a purpose. Solution-oriented complaining should do the following: Have a clear purpose. Before complaining, know what outcome you're looking for. If you can't identify a purpose, there's a good chance you just want to complain for its own sake, and that's the kind of complaining you should nip in the bud.



Complaint test: Is the following complaint legitimate? If not, what went wrong?

<u>Luke 19:1-10</u>: (NASB) 1 (Jesus) entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax

collector and he was rich. ³Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, and was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature. ⁴So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see him, for he was about to pass through that way. ⁵When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house. ⁶And he hurried and came down and received him gladly.

This seems like a wonderful event! What could be worth complaining about here?



⁷When they saw it, they all began to grumble, saying, He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner. ⁸Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much. ⁹And Jesus said to him, Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.



(Please see our podcast "Is Your Heart Looking for Jesus? The Story of Zaccheus," from November 3, 2016 for more on this story.)

As a tax collector, Zaccheus was looked down upon and was in a position to defraud people. *They all began to grumble* - perhaps they should have asked what Jesus saw to be so special in this man and try to get invited to his house as well!

How did Jesus handle the complaint? He, too, is a son of Abraham - Jesus verified Zaccheus had a right to Jesus as much as they did. He explained why - the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Was their complaint legitimate? We can see why they were upset that they or someone they knew did not get picked for this special honor. The delivery of the complaint was off. The reason for the complaint becomes important.

What about when a whole bunch of people have the same complaint? Is there strength in numbers?

This is actually a very common occurrence both now and historically. To an extent, there is strength in numbers, but there is never *infallibility* in numbers or automatic truth in numbers. As we shall soon see, the basic principles of complaining always exist, but is the complaint venting, sympathy seeking, or chronic? Does it have a basis in more than how a group of people feel?

Discontent, blaming, complaining, self-pity cannot serve as a foundation for a good future, no matter how much effort you make. – Eckhart Tolle

(Psalm of Complaint) David had just described the internal effects of his complaint:

<u>Psalms 55:9-11</u>: (NASB) ⁹Confuse, O Lord, divide their tongues, for I have seen violence and strife in the city. ¹⁰Day and night they go around her upon her walls, and iniquity and mischief are in her midst.¹¹Destruction is in her midst; oppression and deceit do not depart from her streets.





David's complaint had a large domino effect for many people within Israel that needed to be described. If my complaint only affects me, it is best handled one-on-one with the person I am bothered by. If there are external effects, give it to your complaint handler. Ultimately that complaint handler is God. But trusted people around you can be used as long as they will help you take the emotion out of the equation and redirect you to exalt God through growth and positive action. If they are going to feed the complaint or absorb the complaint, they are not a handler.

(Psalm of Praise) David had just personally sought his exalted God:

<u>Psalms 34:8-14</u>: (NASB) ⁸O taste and see that the LORD is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! ⁹O fear the LORD, you His saints; for to those who fear Him there is no want. ¹⁰The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing. ¹¹Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. ¹²Who is the man who desires life and loves length of days that he may see good? ¹³Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. ¹⁴Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.



Complaining monk, Do Everything without Complaining and Arguing, Pastor Greg Laurie

• I heard a story of the man who decided to join a monastery and become a monk. And he had to take a vow of silence, and at the end of the year he would be allowed to appear before the head priest, but he could only say two words. So, after one year after being in this monastery the monk said, "Bed's hard." Another year passes. He meets the head priest and he says, "Food's cold." After the third year he comes before the head priest and he says, "I quit." The head priest says, "Well, it's no wonder. Since you arrived you've done nothing but complain."



(Source: How Complaining Rewires Your Brain for Negativity by Dr. Travis Bradberry) Start with something positive. It may seem counterintuitive to start a complaint with a compliment, but starting with a positive helps keep the other person from getting defensive. For example, before launching into a complaint about poor customer service, you could say something like, "I've been a customer for a very long time and have always been thrilled with your service..."



Complaint test: 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, and yet...

Exodus 16:1-3: (NASB) ¹Then they set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the sons of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure from the land of Egypt. ²The whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. ³The sons of Israel said to them, Would that we had died by the LORD'S hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

Hmmm...they had just left Egypt with flocks and herds, a very large number of livestock (Exodus 12:38) no more than 30 days prior and already they were complaining. Do we expect our Heavenly Father to provide our every need, miraculously, even when we have the capability to provide for our own needs?

Was there legitimacy to the complaint? Yes, they were hungry. Was there legitimacy to the DELIVERY of the complaint? No, it revealed a deep lack of faith, patience and reverence. They were not respectful of Moses and Aaron and what they were trying to do for them. They were ungrateful in their complaining. This complaint lost its legitimacy by the way in which it was delivered.

Beware of "group think" complaining, as it is most often illogical and emotiondriven and not principle-driven.

We feel so entitled to having everything and everything right now. Therefore, if I do not have what I want right now, you are going to hear about it. Part of our entitlement is to be able to just spout off with whatever level of emotion we have.

A reasonable complaint is delivered in an unreasonable way. How does God respond?

While we may look at the experience of Israel in this instance and think, "shame on them," their reaction really is a telling example of how we all can and do respond to difficulties. So often we see the need, the lack or the challenge, but as we communicate what we see, we insert our emotional passion which is easily a corrupter of clear truth!

Complaining is an insult to God. – Monica Johnson



Now THAT is some perspective! As Christians, we know that God has a plan. We should be the LEAST likely to be bothered by things, so maybe if we think of it in terms of when we complain God views it as insulting and ungrateful - none of us want to be like that.

Stop! Is what I am saying and how I am thinking magnifying God? If I am not magnifying God, I am making the Creator of All Things second or third or fifth.



How does God respond? He uniquely fulfills their need:

Exodus 16:4-7: (NASB) ⁴Then the LORD said to Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction.

...but not without a test of faith and loyalty...

⁵On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily. ⁶So Moses and Aaron said to all the sons of Israel, At evening you will know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt; ⁷and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, for He hears your grumblings against the LORD; and what are we, that you grumble against us?

They could only collect enough for the day and had to work for it. They had to show loyalty and be forced to trust it would keep coming each day except for the day of rest. He answered the complaint but without drawing them to a higher level. Here we have grace and accountability all rolled up into one neat package they called "manna."



Julie asks a question of Trish, Rick's wife: I have known Rick for many years and have talked to him for hundreds of hours. I know your life is not all unicorns and meadow flowers, and you two have had your share of difficult moments. But not once have I ever heard Rick complain. How is it that he has the discipline so many of us don't?

Trish: Well, he married me! (laughter) When the difficulties and frustrations of life bombard him, which can be a lot sometimes, we talk about it. He tells me his frustrations and concerns, but his faith and trust in God's direction and help is always the final answer. He always says at the end, "It's all good; we can do this." The "we" in that sentence is God, Christ, himself and me. That is who he is. He uses his faith. He practices what he preaches and he works really hard at it. I am really thankful for that.

Julie: Does Trish complain?

Rick: When the stresses of life happen, Trish will say, "I don't know what to do. This is hard," or "It's too big or too intense." But it is never about "this person said this," or "I can't stand this," never. It is always with the idea of "Maybe I need a little bit of help and focus to deal with this."

Julie: So you are her complaint handler?

Rick: Yes, and she is mine. I have lots of complaints swimming around in my head. One of the things I really work hard at personally is not giving those things the right to see the light of day, because they do not belong on the outside. They aren't going to help anybody, they aren't going to lift anybody up, they aren't going to solve anyone's problems...

Julie: ...and they won't magnify God!

Rick: Exactly. It comes down to magnifying God and not how I feel or what is wrong.

Trish: When you complain a lot, it usually ends up being a negative input towards somebody else, and that is something we have to work hard at - not complaining and speaking badly about other people.



Rick: The other thing we always talk about, especially when things are hard, I say, "The bottom line is I would not trade this for anything," especially the hard experiences. That is where the growing happens and where you can help change peoples' lives. That is where all the effects happen. That becomes a powerful tool to step forward, step up and step out. You walk away saying, "I am renewed, I am magnifying God, let's go do this."

(I)) Settle for sympathy, My Biggest Complaint About Complaining, Matthew Hussey

This is the problem with complaining - it is that most people would rather settle for sympathy then go for glory. Because the truth is, going after what you want, solving the problem, let's say, is the harder part in the short term. Actually solving the problem is the harder part. And I should say this: solving the problem is usually quite thankless. When you're off trying to solve something very often it's a lonely task. You're trying to make something happen, you're butting your head against a wall and no one is noticing. And not only that, but if you come to people in an empowered state where they say, "What's wrong?" and you say, "Nothing, I've got this issue that I gotta fix, but I'm on it, I'm fixing it, I'm there," people don't give you love for that. Most of the time people are like "Oh, cool. All right, sounds great." But, if you said, "Oh, I've got this big problem. I have to do this and I have to do this and I don't know how I'm going to get it all done today." They go, "Oh my G-d, you're stressing yourself. You really need to relax. You need to really take some time, and you know you do so much." It's all this instant gratification coming compared to when you're actually trying to do something and trying to solve something and you have the thankless task of doing that.

(Source: How Complaining Rewires Your Brain for Negativity by Dr. Travis Bradberry) Be specific. When you're complaining it's not a good time to dredge up every minor annoyance from the past 20 years. Just address the current situation and be as specific as possible. Instead of saying, "Your employee was rude to me," describe specifically what the employee did that seemed rude.

(Psalm of Complaint) David had just described the external effects of his complaint:

Psalms 55:12-15: (NASB) ¹²For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, then I could bear it; nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me, then I could hide myself from him. ¹³but it is you, a man my equal, my companion and my familiar friend; ¹⁴we who had sweet fellowship together walked in the house of God in the throng. ¹⁵Let death come deceitfully upon them; let them go down alive to Sheol, for evil is in their dwelling, in their midst.



Let them go down alive to Sheol - This is probably a reference to Numbers 16 where Korah and his sons rebelled against Moses. They were trying to take control of Israel and Moses separated the people, saying, "Everyone who is with Christian Questions ©2017 all rights reserved



Korah, stand over there. Everyone who is with God, stand here." There was an earthquake that swallowed up all those who opposed God. David was betrayed and likely using this example since they stood against everything that was good.

Complaining, when put in the right framework, can be constructive. This is good, but most complaints do not qualify for such treatment. How do we handle them?

Part 1, Complain©, Loni Boyd www.suitcasefullofgrace.weebly.com

When I turned on the television tonight The images on the screen shocked my sight.

Children starving halfway around the globe Children with no future and no hope. Living in fear of bombs falling from the sky Too emaciated and dehydrated to even cry. And I...

For some reason I can't explain Can still find cause to complain.

As I sit in comfort with a roof over my head, Somewhere someone cowers in dread Facing panic and sheer hatred and war Or disease and pain too severe to ignore, What's more...



Loni with her father

It doesn't seem to take much for me to be discontent And at some small inconvenience lament. In spite of all the ways God blesses me I seem to find something that distresses me.

I complain when the weather is too hot; I gripe when the food is too cold; I complained when I was too young to do things, Now I bemoan that I'm getting old.

I complain I have to work, But I'd complain if unemployed. Sometimes it makes me wonder If God isn't utterly annoyed!

(Psalm of Praise) David had just experienced the blessing and power of God:

<u>Psalms 34:15-18</u>: (NASB) ¹⁵The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and His ears are open to their cry. ¹⁶The face of the LORD is against evildoers, to cut off the memory of them from the earth. ¹⁷The righteous cry, and the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. ¹⁸The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.





Detailing our complaint with integrity is important. Does David take it any further than that?

As you might expect, David takes this process all the way home. It is utterly inspirational to see that he detailed his complaints to God in such a positive way, and it is even more inspiring that he instructed many of his productive complaints to be put to music and played for the people. Not only did he learn from his complaints, he taught with them as well!

The best thing is to accept the circumstances, not take them personally, deal with them, stop complaining, and give everything your best. - *Sushant Singh Rajput*

(Source: How Complaining Rewires Your Brain for Negativity by Dr. Travis Bradberry) End on a positive. If you end your complaint with, "I'm never shopping here again," the person who's listening has no motivation to act on your complaint. In that case, you're just venting or complaining with no purpose other than to complain. Instead, restate your purpose, as well as your hope that the desired result can be achieved, for example, "I'd like to work this out so that we can keep our business relationship intact."

(I))Your significance, My Biggest Complaint About Complaining, Matthew Hussey

• And I would argue that if you want to break the spell of complaining, change where you get your significance from. Do you get your significance from how many problems you have, or the size of your problems, or do you get your significance from your ability to be creative in solving them? One piece of advice, if you decide to take your significance from the latter you have to get good at giving yourself the validation because far fewer people will give you the validation for going out and solving problems than they will for having problems in the first place. So, that's it for today my friends. Complaining is healthy when it is an emotional response to a situation that warrants emotion, but it becomes unhealthy when it becomes a relentless moaning about something that you are not trying to change.

(Psalm of Complaint) David just revealed the destructiveness of his complaint:

<u>Psalms 55:16-21</u>: (NASB) ¹⁶As for me, I shall call upon God, and the LORD will save me. ¹⁷Evening and morning and at noon, I will complain and murmur, and He will hear my voice. ¹⁸He will redeem my soul in peace from the battle which is against me, for they are many who strive with me.

I will complain and murmur - because this is hurting me, but I am going to complain and murmur only to God; He will deliver me.



¹⁹God will hear and answer them - even the one who sits enthroned from of old - Selah. With whom there is no change, and who do not fear God. ²⁰He has put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him; He has violated his covenant. ²¹His speech was smoother than butter, but his heart was war; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords.

God will deal with this enemy. The power of that is, "I do not have to." It is in God's hands. When David complains to God, it is a handing over of the emotion. He transferred those complaints so He can handle it for David. David trusted God would deal with the complaint in whatever manner was according to His will. Therefore, he had peace. That is the way to complain!



David fully handed over the complaints, knowing God would handle it in the time and circumstances in which He saw fit. David had peace with whatever the outcome.

Part 2, Complain©, Loni Boyd www.suitcasefullofgrace.weebly.com

I can wear a frown like a crown That allows me to be down on the ground Where I wallow in my woe, Oh, I will have you know I am rarely tardy to my own pity party Where I bellyache and eat my cake without a break Oh, for Heaven's sake, I can criticize and agonize And not even realize How much I rationalize Because I'm stuck feeling too traumatized to apologize. And what is it all for? No more. If I am prone to continue to moan and groan and drone On and on and on like before I will fall to my knees on the floor and cry, "No more!" and implore:



Lord, when complaints from my lips abound Help me to hold my tongue... and look around.

I could develop more gratitude and respect if I learn to view things in perspective.

Teach me to refocus and reframe Because I am filled with remorse and shame At how I find reasons to complain.

I pray that next time I am in the mood to brood Forgive me, as I work to be renewed, And melt my complaints into thanks and gratitude.

When we magnify God, we can learn to live with gratitude.

(Psalm of Praise) David had just acknowledged God's watchfulness:

<u>Psalms 34:19-22</u>: (NASB) ¹⁹Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all. ²⁰He keeps all his bones, not one of them is broken. ²¹Evil shall slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned. ²²The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, and none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned.



David had just been given peace and reason to stop complaining. What follows? Praise.

A Psalm of Complaint has now become a Psalm of Praise:

<u>Psalms 55:22-23</u>: (NASB) ²²Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken. ²³But You, O God, will bring them down to the pit of destruction; men of bloodshed and deceit will not live out half their days. But I will trust in You.

There is great similarity in how <u>Psalm 55</u> (Psalm of Complaint) and <u>Psalm 34</u> (Psalm of Praise) end. That tells us how our complaining should end. David turned it into a positive.





David published many of his songs of complaint as inspirational tools to show others how to put their complaints in the hands of God. Our complaints should bring us to a place where we can praise and magnify God!

We choose how we act in the face of adversity. We can choose to be bitter or we can choose to be better.

Choose to let your complaints eat you up with emotion or choose to eat up your complaints with constructive direction. Which way do you go? Psalms of Complaint are actually Psalms of Praise!



YouTube Subscribe to our YouTube channel and check out CQ's "Moments that Matter!" These two-minute videos give you something positive to ponder on throughout your day or before you go to sleep. ChristianQuestions.com/youtube or search YouTube for "cqbiblepodcast."

It is the idle man, not the great worker, who is always complaining that he has no time or opportunity. - Orison Swett Marden

My core belief is that if you're complaining about something for more than three minutes, two minutes ago you should have done something about it. - Caitlin Moran



What do the following Scriptures all have in common?

<u>Ruth 1:16</u>: (KJV) And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest <3885>, I will lodge <3885>: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

<u>Psalms 30:5</u>: (KJV) For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure <3885> for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

<u>Psalms 91:1</u>: (KJV) He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide <3885> under the shadow of the Almighty.

<u>Genesis 31:54</u>: (KJV) Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread: and they did eat bread, and tarried all night <3885> in the mount.

Exodus 16:2: (KJV) And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured <3885> against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

The word for *lodge*, *endure*, *abide*, *tarried all night* and *murmured* is all the same word.

Strongs #3885, to stop (usually over night); by implication, to stay permanently; hence (in a bad sense) to be obstinate (especially in words, to complain)

Our first Old Testament observation as to what murmuring and complaining are gives us great insight into the depth of impact that they can have on our life, as the very meaning of the word shows its tenacity.

A couple of other looks at the complaining issue: First let's look at what NOT to do. Jonah the prophet was a great example of a man who was godly and faulty at the same time. He is given a task to preach to Nineveh, the enemy of Israel, and decides to go the other way. God grabs Jonah's attention by having him swallowed by a great fish.

It is in this context of certain death that Jonah prays:

Jonah 2:7-9: (NKJV) ⁷When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the LORD; and my prayer went up to You, into Your holy temple. ⁸Those 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 became praises to God - after all, what is the alternative?

God hears his prayer and gives him a chance to do what he was 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 works! Mission accomplished, murmuring defeated and complaining crushed...right???

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 and complaining are back in the driver's seat!

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!

A sad, sad account of one whose inner voice brought him to a point of utter despair, in spite of God's care.

Now a look at what TO do. Here is David again in another Psalm...

Sometimes we become so overwrought we need to complain - where should we focus?

<u>Psalm 77:1-20</u>: (KJV) ¹I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and He gave ear unto me. ²In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted. ³I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.

Our experience can sometimes cause us to question even the most basic and solid parts of our lives - it is here that we approach a crossroad in our complaining to God:

⁴Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak. ⁵I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. ⁶I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search. ⁷Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? ⁸Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? ⁹Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah

When murmuring and complaining meet faith and actual history, here is what can happen:

¹⁰And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High. ¹¹I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. ¹²I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings. ¹³Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God? ¹⁴Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people. ¹⁵Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah

To "uncomplain" we observe reality in faith, accept it unconditionally, feed our inner mind with it (combats murmuring) and speak it out (combats complaining).

¹⁹Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. ²⁰Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Then we walk as those who were faithful before us.