

July 19– Grumbling and Murmuring Against God

Today's Reading

- The 40-Day Word Fast: Chapter 3 – *The Sarcastic Wounder and the Critic*
 - Exodus 14
 - Deuteronomy 9
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Opening Prayer

Ask God to reveal areas where grumbling, criticism, sarcasm, or complaining have taken root in our hearts and words. Pray for hearts that trust Him even in difficult circumstances.

Opening Question

Think of a time when you complained about a situation, only to later realize God was working through it. What did you learn?

Key Theme

Words of Destruction

Words of destruction tear down faith, relationships, hope, and trust. Grumbling and murmuring are more than complaints—they often reveal deeper issues of fear, unbelief, and dissatisfaction with God's provision.

Main Idea:

Complaining focuses on problems, while faith focuses on God's promises.

Scripture Focus

Proverbs 18:21

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits."

Discussion

- What kinds of fruit can grow from a habit of complaining?
- How can negative speech affect our faith?
- How can our words either strengthen or weaken those around us?

Leader Note: The words we repeatedly speak often shape our attitudes, perspectives, and actions.

Philippians 2:14-16

"Do all things without grumbling or disputing..."

Discussion

- Why do you think Paul specifically mentions grumbling and arguing?
- How does grumbling affect our witness to others?
- What does it mean to "shine as lights in the world"?
- How can gratitude replace complaining?

Leader Note: A believer who trusts God in difficult circumstances stands out in a culture that often complains.

Numbers 14:27

"How long shall this wicked congregation grumble against me?"

Discussion

- Why does God take grumbling so seriously?

- According to this verse, who were the Israelites really grumbling against?
- How can complaining about circumstances become complaining against God?

Leader Note: While the Israelites complained about Moses and their circumstances, God viewed their complaints as a lack of trust in Him.

Book Study: Exodus 14

Fear Produces Complaining

Read Exodus 14:10-12

"Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die?"

Discussion

- According to v.10, what happened that caused the Israelites to begin grumbling?
- How did fear influence their words? (v.10-12)
- Why do people often forget God's faithfulness when facing a new challenge?
- Have you ever found yourself focusing more on the problem than God's past provision?

Leader Note: The Israelites had just witnessed incredible miracles, yet fear quickly overshadowed their memory of God's faithfulness.

Looking Back Instead of Forward

Read Exodus 14:11-12

Discussion

- Why did the Israelites suddenly view Egypt more favorably than before?
- How does fear sometimes cause us to romanticize unhealthy situations from our past?
- How has discomfort or fear caused you to grumble even after God has delivered you from something?

Leader Note: Fear often distorts reality and causes us to question God's plans.

Moving Forward in Faith

Read Exodus 14:13-15

Discussion

- What does Moses tell the people in v.13-14?
- What does God tell Moses to tell the Israelites to do in v.15?
- Why do you think God commanded them to move forward rather than remain where they were?
- How has not moving on contributed to grumbling in your life?
- What other consequences has an inability to move on caused?

Leader Note: Faith requires movement. Remaining stuck in fear often leads to frustration, resentment, and complaining.

God's Faithfulness Despite Complaining

Read Exodus 14:19-30

Discussion

- Despite the Israelites' grumbling, what did God do for them?
- What does this teach us about God's character?
- How has God remained faithful to you even when your attitude was not?

Leader Note: God's faithfulness is not dependent upon our perfection. He continued to protect and provide for His people despite their complaints.

The Result of Trusting God

Read Exodus 14:31

Discussion

- What was the end result described in v.31?

- How did witnessing God's deliverance impact the Israelites' faith?
- How does remembering God's faithfulness help combat future grumbling?

Leader Note: Trust often grows after we witness God's faithfulness through difficult circumstances.

Book Study: Deuteronomy 9

Rebellion and Unbelief

Read Deuteronomy 9:23

"You did not trust him or obey him."

Discussion

- According to this verse, what was the root issue behind Israel's rebellion?
- How are trust and obedience connected?
- How can grumbling reveal a lack of trust in God?
- Have you ever recognized fear or unbelief beneath your complaints?

Leader Note: Grumbling is often a symptom. The deeper issue is frequently fear, unbelief, or resistance to God's leading.

Connecting the Themes

Fear, Grumbling, and Trust

Discussion

- What is the relationship between fear, grumbling, and trusting God?
- Why is it easier to complain than to trust?
- How does gratitude strengthen trust?
- What practical steps can help us replace grumbling with faith?

Leader Note: Fear focuses on what might happen. Faith focuses on who God is.

The Sarcastic Wounder and the Critic

Discussion

- How can sarcasm become a form of destructive speech?
- When does criticism become unhealthy?
- What is the difference between constructive correction and destructive criticism?
- Have you ever used humor or sarcasm to disguise hurtful words?

Leader Note: Sarcasm and criticism often emerge from unresolved frustration, disappointment, or pride.

Personal Reflection

Reflection Questions

- What circumstances most often tempt you to complain?
- Are your words characterized more by gratitude or criticism?
- What fears tend to fuel your grumbling?
- Have you become critical of God, others, or yourself?
- What evidence of God's faithfulness have you overlooked recently?

Activity

Complete the following statements:

1. I often complain about _____.
 2. The fear underneath that complaint is _____.
 3. A truth from God's Word that challenges that fear is _____.
 4. One thing I am thankful for today is _____.
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Weekly Challenge

This week, whenever you catch yourself complaining:

1. Pause and identify the fear or frustration underneath the complaint.
2. Replace the complaint with a statement of gratitude.
3. Recall a time God was faithful in a similar situation.

Consider keeping a "Gratitude Journal" and writing down three things each day that God has done.

Closing Prayer

Pray that God would:

- Reveal areas of unbelief and fear.
- Replace grumbling with gratitude.
- Help us trust Him when circumstances are difficult.
- Guard our speech from criticism, sarcasm, and destructive words.
- Teach us to speak faith instead of fear.

Theme Verse

Philippians 2:14-15

"Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish ... among whom you shine as lights in the world."