

You can't Throw Shade and fully Shine the light of Jesus into your world. Therefore, we are being very careful not to participate in Speaking Maledictions or Offending others and we have learned how to handle things when we are offended by someone else. Today we are going to talk about Complaining. As it is with Maledictions and Offenses, Complaining is like opening up an umbrella and blocking the light of Jesus, in us, from shining on others.

How many of you would say, honestly, that you complain often? Raise your hand if that is you. It is incredibly easy for us to slip into a mindset of finding the negative things in life and complaining about them, rather than searching for the good things.

EX: *Complaining Lady in grocery store wanting to buy half a head of lettuce. The produce manager complained to the clerk, “Some old bag who’s just a pain, like you would not believe, wants to buy a half a head of lettuce.” Then he looked up and saw that lady right by him, and he said, “And this fine lady would like to buy the other half of that head of lettuce.”*

Yes, it’s so easy to slip into the mental cycle of complaining. We find fault with everything and everyone when we complain about big things, or we complain about small things.

But this is what Paul said to the church in Philippi.

Philippians 2:14-15 Do everything without complaining and arguing, (Say it with me) Why? **so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people.**

OUR WORDS REVEAL THE CONDITION OF OUR HEART

Our words are only a symptom of the real issue that takes place in our heart. The heart is the main issue.

Matthew 12:34 ... For out of the overflow of (what?) **the heart** (what happens) **the mouth speaks.**

From a negative complaining heart overflows negative complaining words which generally become negative actions resulting in a miserable life.

Have any of you ever met a joyful complainer? I haven't.

You want to hate your job for the rest of your life?

- Complain about it every single day. / Complain about the commute to work
- Complain about the people that you work with. / Your idiot boss.
- Complain about the lousy benefit package. / Complain about how you are undervalued.
- Complain about your work environment, and I guarantee you, you will hate your job.

Do you want to hate your life?

- Complain about everything. The weather, the economy, the prices of gas,
- Complain about your physical features. Complain about the misplacement of your hair.
- Complain about the way people drive ...complain and complain and you will be miserable.

Do you want to mess up a perfectly good marriage?

- Nitpick your spouse to death. Find big things, find small things, and nitpick them. (Examples)
- Zero in and complain about everything, and I guarantee you, you will mess up a good marriage.

Think about it. When you are dating, you spoke words of life.

- “I love you, honey bunch, sugar pie, ... you’re so good looking. I want to be with you.”
- Then years later, “You can’t do anything right. I’m sick and tired of you.”

Proverbs 21:19 NLT It is better to live alone in the desert than with a crabby, complaining wife.

EX: U.S. News and World Report article said that in your marriage, if you speak one in ten of your statements with a negative tone towards your spouse, your marriage has better than a ninety percent chance of ending up in divorce.

NEXT STEP: If I find myself constantly complaining, I will ask myself, “What is in my heart?” and I will ask Jesus to help me deal with the issues.

SAME EVENT, DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

- **The Same Old Manna: Numbers 11:1-6**

The Israelites were in bondage for years, in slavery in Egypt until God used Moses to lead them out. Day after day, God miraculously provided manna from heaven, meeting every one of their needs. Yet, the Israelites did what so many of us do; they started complaining. *“God we are sick and tired of this manna. We want meat! If only we could go back to Egypt where the fish were free.”* Complaining.

Same event, different perspective. Moses says, *“Did you forget that when you were in Egypt, you were slaves? Shouldn’t you be overcome with thankfulness?”*

- **The Expensive Perfume: Matthew 26:8-10**

A very sinful woman who was forgiven by Jesus took a very expensive jar of perfume and broke the jar open and poured this valuable perfume (or oil) over Jesus in an act of worship. The contents of this jar were valued at, literally, about a year’s worth of wages. Judas looked on and said, honestly, *“Woman, you’re being stupid. Why didn’t you sell that and give the money to the poor? You are wasting it.”*

Same event, different perspective. Jesus said, *“You’re missing the point entirely. What this woman has done is one of the most beautiful things that I have ever seen. What she has done will be told about her for generations to come.”*

- **The Overwhelmed Host: Luke 10:38-42**

Mary and Martha were hosting Jesus in their home, and Martha was stressing out! She went to Jesus complaining, *“Jesus, Mary, she’s just sitting at your feet and not helping at all. Tell her to help me out.”*

Same event, different perspective. Jesus looks on and says, *“Martha, Martha. You are worried and upset about many things. Mary has chosen what is better and it will not be taken away from her.”*

- **The Worshiping Prisoners: Acts 16:25-34**

Paul and Silas were preaching about Jesus when they were arrested, stripped down naked, beaten, put in prison, and locked by their feet in shackles. All the other prisoners were complaining, but Paul and Silas, at midnight after their very bad day, started worshiping God and singing hymns. God showed up, brought this big earthquake. All the doors flew open and the shackles fell off. The jailer looked on and said, *“I’m as good as dead. I might as well kill myself.”*

Same event, different perspective. Paul and Silas said, *“You don’t understand. Jesus did this.”* Then they led him and his whole family to Christ. This event led to the beginning of the church in Philippi.

NEXT STEP: This week I will look at the same things I’ve been complaining about but look at them from a different perspective.

POSITIVE PROMISES

1) I WILL NOT HANG OUT WITH NEGATIVE PEOPLE.

Negativity is contagious and spreads very, very quickly. **1 Corinthians 15:33...Bad company corrupts good character.**

- Janet and I discovered that every time we hang out with friends that complain, we tend to complain too. We are tempted to join in with them. So, we don't hang out with complainers anymore.
- Watch out for complaining blogs, podcast, and social media. It will affect you.

2) I WILL SPEAK WORDS OF LIFE.

Proverbs 18:21 The tongue has the power of life and death I will speak words of life and light.

- When I could knit pick, I am going to speak words of blessing and encouragement.
- I am going to praise my family and friends publicly; and even more privately.

Ex: A Negative Usher complained about the pastor to a new lady guest. *“Young man, do you know who I am?”* The usher said, *“No, I don't have a clue.”* She said, *“I am the pastor's mother.”* Shocked and stunned the usher looked at her and said, *“Ma'am, do you have any idea who I am?”* And the mother said, *“No, I don't know.”* And he said, *“Praise the Lord!”*

3) I WILL BE THANKFUL FOR WHAT I HAVE.

I will be thankful for what I have, instead of complaining about what I don't like or don't have or want to be different.

Instead of complaining, which is so easy to do, I will give thanks in all things.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Can you see the common thread? 1) “Do everything without complaining.” 2) “Speak words of life” and 3) “Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.”

How does this play out in everyday life?

- So, you're having a bad hair day. When you are tempted to complain about your hair, thank God that you have some. Same event, different perspective.
- When you are about to whine about gas prices, realize you are in the richest three percent of the people in the world if you own an automobile. Same event, different perspective.
- You aren't happy about how well the church meets your needs. “We are trying to win the world for Christ, and you are complaining about WHAT?” Same event, different perspective.

NEXT STEP: This week I will apply these three positive promises and maybe make a few more that I will strive to keep.

Our words reflect our heart.

No more complaining for us, because that's a reflection of a heart that's not right with God.

And if our words are characterized by complaining, let's let God do a work in our hearts today.

Prayer Time

Salvation Call