

20 Days of Trouble

Topic #11 – Complaining

Textbook Def:

Expressing dissatisfaction, pain, uneasiness, censure, resentment, or grief; finding fault.*

Real-Life Look:

It's just not fair. I work really hard yet it seems like everyone else is doing better than me.

My computer is stupid slow. I'm never going to get this report done in time.

I hate him. I mean I really, really hate him!

My foot is killing me. I haven't had time to get it checked out but I can barely walk on it.

She is being mean to me. I'm so sick of being treated like dirt.

I have no idea how the professor expects us to complete all the work assigned by the end of next week. It's completely impossible.

I hate being fat. It's not my fault my family has fat genes but I have to suffer the consequences.

My mom just doesn't understand. And my dad doesn't have time for me. Life sucks!

There's never enough time in a day to get it all done. I'm overworked, overwhelmed and overtired.

It's too cold out. It's too hot out. It's too windy out. It's too rainy out. It's too smoggy out.

I don't want to go to the concert. It'll be crowded and I'll be miserable.

My marriage is in shambles. There's no love or joy to be found. I do my best to suffer through each day but it's getting harder and harder to bear.

Sword of the Spirit:

“Do all things without grumbling or disputing,” Phil 2:14

“And the people complained in the hearing of the Lord about their misfortunes, and when the Lord heard it, his anger was kindled, and the fire of the Lord burned among them and consumed some outlying parts of the camp.” Numbers 11:1

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.” James 1:2-3

Breaking It Down:

For today’s trouble topic, we are referring to:

- A. The habitual complainer
- B. Those who seek out reasons to complain
- C. Those who don’t miss an opportunity to jump on the complaint bandwagon
- D. Those who complain due to the poor choices *they themselves* have made.
- E. Those who complain instead of attempting to fix the problem.

Before we continue, I must ask though, is *all* complaining unwarranted? Nope, not by a long shot.

Some people suffer from physical ailments which leave them in horrific pain. Others are dealing with devastating situations. It would be highly unreasonable not to expect a complaint to sneak out here and there from either of these circumstances. And realistically, none of us are exempt from having a bad moment, or even a bad day. Sometimes it just feels good to let one rip! A complaint that is... So there are certainly situations which warrant a legitimate gripe, but we must not permanently park there.

Are you a complainer? Take an honest personal assessment, not only of what *you* think about your behavior, but what *others* think as well. If you’re hearing a repetitive theme from those you love, trust, and respect, it’s a good idea to give their concerns some consideration.

If you are a complainer, ask yourself the following questions:

What trips you up? What triggers your complaint button?

Are your complaints valid? Is there really something to complain about?

Are your complaints pointless? Would it be best to ignore the situation and spend your energy on something more positive?

Is there anything you can do to rectify the situation instead of simply complaining about it?

For me, I complain most when someone has disappointed me. In those moments, you'd do best to steer clear of my sharp and unceasing tongue. I have a particularly difficult time keeping quiet when someone falls short of expectations. Or is hurtful to others. Or lies.

But are my complaints helpful?

Generally not. *I can be right all day long but repeating my dissatisfaction over and over again does nothing to rectify the situation.* It only serves to fuel my fire of aggravation. When I think of the time and energy wasted complaining about people and situations I can do nothing to change, I realize that I've given away a large part of my life I can't recover. And I haven't been obedient to God.

So who is this hurting more? Them or me? *Precisely.*

In contrast, however, last year I was suffering from a random abdominal pain. I tried with all my might to overcome the discomfort but there were times the agony was just too much to bear. And I complained. But I also did something about it. I visited a couple of doctors in an attempt to diagnose and alleviate the problem. Thank goodness we figured it out. In this case, I'm thrilled NOT to have something to complain about any longer. When I was in the midst of the problem, however, my complaints were reasonable. In fact, they were helpful. Had I ignored the issue, the outcome might not have been so favorable.

The point? Recognize the issue, *if one exists*, and fix it. But if that isn't the case, *ditch the complaining*. No good can come of it.

- Complaining breeds negative attitudes and behaviors
- Complaining turns people off and turns them away
- Complaining robs you of a 'can-do' spirit
- Complaining sets you up for failure
- Complaining wastes time and energy
- Complaining will compromise your health and well-being

None of these are qualities any of us aspire to have. So one way or the other, declutter complaining!

The Benefit in Decluttering Trouble:

When incessant complaining is decluttered, there's an increased opportunity to turn your attention to more positive outlets. Stepping out of the cycle of ongoing grumbling frees your heart and mind to embrace a clearer perspective, make rational, reasonable decisions, and most importantly, act upon them.

It's not healthy to be consumed by negativity and dissatisfaction, but it's also critical not to miss warning signs or opportunities to help, encourage, or support someone. **Use your complaining as an invitation for self-growth and awareness.** Take an intentional approach to breaking down and understanding the issue and decide the healthiest next step.

To fix or forget, that is the question! What's your answer?

@2016 www.actionplanministries.com Permission granted to reproduce this document providing website is not removed.