



Grumble Free?

Numbers 16:1-35

Listen! “Gibson, when you hired on here you told us you were a tough hand. Now shut up and move the shoes.” Bob Fry at Scheel’s Hardware. 1974.

- **Question:** Do you know the biggest problem with complaining?

Major Idea: When I make verbal complaint against my leaders...I am also attacking the decisions and Person of God Who placed them in leadership. (Numbers 16:11)

Here is the spiritual outline of this event in Numbers 16:1-35:

- God made Aaron the priest—by His intentional choice—based on His wisdom and will.
- God gave the Levites the privilege of serving Him in the Tabernacle.
- Some of the Levites felt this service was not enough and desired the priesthood too.

Key Reality: The baseline sin involved in grumbling is the doubting of God and His wisdom.

For Instance: Titus 3:1, 2.

Some corollary ideas on grumbling against God and His leaders in our lives:

Grumbling is not:

- Raising concerns or asking hard questions with grace.
- Expressing alternative views with grace.
- Holding leaders accountable for their actions, words, or promises with grace.
- Asking questions about changes and future plans with grace.
- Going directly to a leader with your concerns and expressing them with grace.
- Disagreeing with grace and with respect for your brother or sister.
- With grace asking “Why?” to a change that has happened or is proposed.

Grumbling is:

- Raising concerns, disagreeing, or asking hard questions without grace.
- Holding leaders accountable for words, actions, or promises without grace.
- Complaining about leaders, parents, employers, or God to others.
- Talking about leaders, parents, employers, or God without going to them with concerns.
- A critical, judgmental spirit toward leaders, parents, employers, God, or others.
- Obeying parents with an attitude of rebellion.
- Assuming the position of master of another believer (while their Master is Christ).
- Obsessing on short-comings in others rather than on personal short-comings.
- Calling your leader, boss, parent, or civil authority a “jerk” or other derogatory name.
- Mentally ridiculing and crucifying a slow grocery checker.
- Criticizing God for some situation in your life.
- Criticizing people with concerns or alternative views.
- Disagreeing without grace and respect for your brother or sister.

Here are some realities of local churches that relate to grumbling. Churches have:

- Anxiety brokers and peace brokers.
- Gossip brokers and truth brokers.
- Discontentment brokers and encouragement brokers.
- Sins of disposition. (The older brother attitude.)
- Holy discontent—driven by God—expressed to the right people in the right way.
- Unholy discontent—driven by self—motivated by a demand to have my way.
- Confusion about who are my servants and who are Christ’s servants.

FOUR STAGES OF CHURCH LIFE by Steve Meeks:

Stage One: Initiation. “I like this place and everything is great.”

Stage Two: The Alienation. “They are doing things wrong or harming me.”

Stage Three: Transformation. “I see the problems but choose to love anyway.”

Stage Four: Incarnation. “We are flawed, interdependent people on a mission together.”

WHY AND HOW TO LEAVE A CHURCH by Steve Meeks:

- Appropriate reasons for leaving a church:
 - Calling: God is calling you elsewhere.
 - Vision: God is leading you one way and the church another.
- Inappropriate reasons for leaving a church:
 - Grievances: I don’t like something.
 - Offenses: I am offended at what someone has done or said.
 - Disappointments: I wanted something different to happen.
 - Wounds: I have been hurt by someone.
- How to leave a church:
 - Submit what you are feeling to a pastor or ministry leader.
 - Give the pastor or ministry leader a chance to respond to your issues.
 - Do this in person with an appointment and sufficient time to deal with the issues.

Idea Expanded: Many times when life feels like a desert to us we turn to grumbling—it is a severe temptation.

Application: Wrist bands for June as a reminder that I want to be “Grumble Free” and thus to honor God.

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Walking Papers

Practical helps for walking the Christian walk this week.

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Please take time each day this week to think through these questions and ideas:

- **Today:** Meditate and journal on the idea that grumbling against a leader, parent, or employer is actually attacking (gathering against) God Himself.
- **Monday:** Read the list called "Grumbling is" and ask God to show you any of those that that you are doing and repent of them.
- **Tuesday:** Ask God to bring to mind anyone whom you need to approach and rebuild a relationship or restore fellowship or confess grumbling against.
- **Wednesday:** How does being a broker of anxiety, gossip, or discontent violate the model of Christ when He walked on the earth? What was Jesus brokering?
- **Thursday:** Ask God to bring to your mind any way in which you are a broker of anxiety, gossip, or discontentment in the "systems" in your life and then confess them. (Your "systems" include your family, your church, your school, your workplace, your clubs, your extended family, your neighborhood association, and your network of friendships.)
- **Friday:** Read and meditate on 1 Peter 2:23.
- **Saturday:** In preparation for tomorrow's message read and meditate on Numbers 21:1-9.

"Jesus was not a Broker of grumbling, anxiety, discontent, retaliation, criticism, or gossip."