

## Dgroup Discussion Guide for June 3, 2018

### Minefield of Complaint-itis

Scripture: Philippians 2:14-16

***Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life – in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing.***

We live in a society that likes to complain a lot. Because of our natural predisposition for selfishness, we develop an attitude of entitlement and this often leads to discontent. . . which leads to a complaining spirit. This is also a landmine because if we persist and thrive on complaining and discontent this will ruin not only our lives but our relationship with God as well. Even people in the Bible like Adam, Jonah, Moses, Aaron and Miriam among others had their share of complaining.

#### WHAT IS COMPLAINING?

Complaining is defined as an expression of grief, pain, dissatisfaction and discontent. The person who complains is one who is discontented with his lot in life.

Biblically, complaining is a self-centered expression of discontent, failing to trust God and submit to His sovereign plan for our lives. **Complaint-itis** is a spiritual sickness of people infected with self – pity, frustration, disappointment, and most of all a lack of trust in God. To express discontent in an ungodly manner is displeasing to God. This is a serious sin against God.

There are different forms of complaining. In Exodus 5:22-23, we see Moses complaining to God for not doing what he wanted Him to do. Likewise Jonah in Jonah 4:9-10, complained to God for saving the Ninevites but in Numbers 12, we see Aaron and Miriam complained about God's choice of Moses as their leader. Moses and Jonah complained TO God while Aaron and Miriam complained ABOUT God. There is a very thin line between the two.

Romans 9:20 warns us about complaining against God. ***O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it?*** The clay just conforms to the will of the Potter, it cannot question the plans of the Potter for it.

#### WHY SHOULD WE STOP COMPLAINING?

1. **It is a serious sin against God.** Not all complaints are sinful. It is not a sin if we bring up our complaint to the right person who has the ability and authority to make things right, or when our purpose is to give information, to seek advice or take action to solve a problem.
2. **It steals peoples' joy.** When we complain our family, friends and others, we are robbing them of their joy. Selfishly, we are influencing them to sympathize with us and this can make them feel as hopeless as we are.
3. **It vandalizes peoples' view of God.** Whenever we complain, we paint a one-sided picture of God's apparent weakness. This can distort and destroy people's impression of who God really is and what He can actually do.
4. **It is contagious and it infects others.** The ten spies who made a bad report about the Promised Land infected the rest of the Israelites who ended up grumbling.

## 5. **No one will listen to the gospel message we proclaim if we ourselves do not display our trust in God.**

In this dark world of evil and sin, people can see Christ through the witness of our lives. However, if we do not have the Spirit of God in us, the light of Christ will not shine naturally from within us. (2 Corinthians 4:6) That is why we must rise up, shine and live like Christ through the word of life (Philippians 2:15-16). We must be like a lighthouse shining brightly in this dark world giving lost people clear directions how to go to the shores of safety – an eternal life with Jesus Christ. The light of God is the life of God in us. Our transformed life is the best advertisement for the gospel. When we stop complaining, we start proclaiming God's sovereignty over the problem.

### HOW DO WE STOP COMPLAINING?

To stop complaining, it will take more than repeatedly saying "I'm not going to complain". It doesn't work that way. We need to have the right perspective and respond accordingly. Here are some ways to help us stop complaining:

1. **Take responsibility** - if we have legitimate complaint, let us take responsibility by learning to take our problems to the right person who can help solve the problem or can bring about change.
2. **Trust God** – When we see the situation hopeless cannot find any person to help us, go to God and trust Him. Do not go to God with protest, but with prayer. Not with doubting but with dependence. Not with fists held high but with faith, believing and trusting Him in all things.
3. **Thank God** – replace your complaints with thanksgiving (Philippians 4:6). Find things to thank God. Despite your situation, there are endless reasons why you can be thankful. Count your blessings one by one.

Stop complaining to God about how big your problems are and start telling your problems how BIG your God is. Our God is the almighty God. He can make things right. So cast all your worries on Him. Bring to Him all your complaints as an admission of helplessness and dependence. Trust Him and His sovereignty.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What are the things that you are still complaining about? Are you complaining to God or are you complaining about God?
2. What are the things that you still cannot entrust to God? What is hindering you from completely placing your trust in Him?
3. In what specific ways can you turn your complaining into proclaiming.
4. What can you do to become a light in this dark world? How can you effectively share the gospel to others through your attitude towards dissatisfaction, discontent, pain and grief?