

THE PEOPLE MURMURED

Introduction

1. It has been said, "Nobody likes a complainer."
2. Moses was in the unenviable position of having to love and lead complainers.

I. Consider their complaints.

- A. They complained right before and right after crossing the Red Sea (Exodus 14:12 & Exodus 15:24).
- B. God rescued them from Egyptian slavery, but they complained about food and water (Exodus 16:2, 8 & Exodus 17:2).
 1. One would think that they would be more trusting of God!
 2. Being a little thirsty or hungry is a lot better than cruel slavery.

II. They thought they had a point!

- A. Do people complain for no reason at all??? I don't think I know the answer to that question. Some people are not happy unless they are mad at someone or something. Read Luke 7:33 and 34, and notice how impossible it was to please these people. Maybe those kind of people complain for no reason at all, but *surely* most people who complain feel like they are making valid points?!
- B. People rationalize their behavior. Read Exodus 17:4, and consider how these Israelites may have rationalized their hatred for Moses. Today people rationalize various behaviors including, but not limited to, the following:
 1. Gossip
 2. Quitting the church
 3. Malice

III. Consider the results.

- A. This complaining added to the stress already felt by Moses (read of his breaking point in Numbers 20:5-11).
- B. Consider the possibility that it created a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you tell yourself something long enough, you begin to create it for yourself.
- C. How did God feel about their complaining? How does He feel about our complaining?

"I COMPLAINED"

- ✓ I complained about no one visiting me until I realized I had done no visiting.
- ✓ I complained about the teacher of my child's Bible class until I tried to teach.
- ✓ I complained about the poor judgment of our leaders until I had experiences that proved my judgments were not always sound.
- ✓ I complained about many mistakes and faults of others, until I realized I had some faults of my own.

~Light For Living

WORDS: *What do they mean?*

Roy H. Lanier, Jr.

Preachers have an unusual opportunity to listen to people. In the course of their many conversations, many promises are given, statements made and offered. Perhaps it is easy to see, then, that some people do not “say what they mean.” Consider the following code words and phrases.

“They say”-usually means “I heard it from at least one source but ‘everybody’ believes it!”

“It needs to be done”-means “I’m not going to do anything about it but the church ought to!”

“I’ve heard some criticism”-usually means “I’m against it, but I don’t have the nerve to state my beliefs.”

“The whole church is upset”-usually means “Two or three loud mouths have turned their venom loose!”

“It might bring criticism”-means “I know it should be done, but it just takes too much effort for me to do it!”

“If memory serves me correctly”-really means “I’m going to say something I’m not sure of, whether true or false, but if somebody discovers I’m wrong, I can always blame my memory!”

“Preacher, I’ll be there if I am not providentially hindered”-nearly always means “If I’m not there you can blame God for it!”

“I’ll come every time I can”-usually means, “If I don’t have something better to do I’ll be there!”

“I’m still studying the question”-usually means “I want to stay in a position to agree with both sides.”

You can take it from here! Christians should be far more careful to mean what they say and say what they mean than people of the world. Jesus says a plain ‘yes’ or ‘no’ is suitable for a Christian’s word (Matthew 5:36, 37).

“But I say unto you, that every idle word that man speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matthew 12:36, 37).