

When You're Tempted to Complain, Remember This Truth

Have you ever heard the expression, "count your blessings"? I like to purposely take time to count my blessings and think about the goodness of God in my life. In fact, I keep a book of remembrance of special little things God has done for me over the years to remind me of His goodness.

It's easy sometimes to forget about all of the good things God has done for us, and this becomes a problem when we focus too much on what we don't have and not enough on what we do have. Living with this wrong mindset is dangerous because it leads us down the road of grumbling, complaining and fault-finding.

A good example of this is the story of the Israelites and their 40 years journeying through the wilderness on their way to the promised land God had for them. Now, it could have been an 11-day journey, but it took much longer because of their unhealthy mindsets.

God had done so many good things for them, such as delivering them from slavery in Egypt and miraculously parting the Red Sea so they could escape Pharaoh's army. But they didn't focus on what they should be thankful for, and when things were not going the way they wanted, they quickly became impatient and murmured and complained. (See Ex. 14-16.)

Overcoming the Temptation to Complain

It's so easy to complain when our circumstances aren't exactly what we want them to be. But we need to diligently resist the temptation to be negative and complain because it can damage our relationship with God, our relationships with other people and even our relationship with ourselves.

Philippians 2:14 (AMPC) clearly tells us, "Do all things

without grumbling and faultfinding and complaining [against God] and questioning and doubting [among yourselves].”

Whenever you’re tempted to complain, just think how much better it would be to remain thankful and say, “God, I remember the good things You’ve done for me, and I’m thankful for the breakthrough that I know is on the way.” It’s that mindset and attitude that will keep you moving forward, toward the good things God has in store.

Set Your Mind and Keep It Set

We can have right mindsets that will benefit us, and God’s Word gives us direction on how to cultivate them.

Colossians 3:1-2 (AMP) says, “If you have been raised with Christ [to a new life, sharing in His resurrection from the dead], keep seeking the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind and keep focused habitually on the things above [the heavenly things], not on things that are on the earth [which have only temporal value].”

These verses direct us to get our mind on what is really important, rather than wasting our time thinking about things we can’t control or that don’t really matter. I firmly believe in setting my mind and keeping it set on God and His plan for my life every day.

Interrupt Wrong Thinking

It takes time and practice to develop a habit of right thinking. One of the ways I’ve found to interrupt wrong thinking and set my mind in the right direction is by saying something that the Bible says.

Many years ago, I was extremely negative. I always say that if I thought two positive thoughts in a row, my mind would get in a cramp. But as I spent time in God’s Word, my mindset began

to change, and instead of focusing on the negative, I found myself focusing on more positive things, like the promises God had for me.

When you spend time studying the Word, renewing your mind with the truth, it helps you set your mind in the right direction so you can have a more peaceful, joyful and positive life. As this new way of thinking gradually renews your mind, it dilutes the old thinking and transforms your mindset and attitudes.

I want to encourage you to begin developing this habit of right thinking. Begin your day by asking for God's help. Even if it's only for five or ten minutes at first, take some time each day to renew your mind with truth in His Word.

It's easy to complain—it's what comes naturally if we don't pay attention. There are things that happen every day that we can murmur about, but they really aren't worth the effort it takes to get upset and gripe about them.

Psalms 100:4 (ESV) says, "Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!"

Make it your goal to have a constant attitude of gratitude. Resist the temptation to complain and instead praise and thank God for who He is and all He's done for you. By God's grace and through His strength, you can overcome complaining and live each day with a thankful heart.