

# ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

## 111. What We Are Really Doing When We Complain

You are listening to episode 111 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, What We Are Really Doing When We Complain. Welcome to the podcast. I thank you for joining me today. A few weeks ago, the weather turned extremely warm here in eastern Iowa, like 98 degrees warm for days. Just in time for the first week of school. Me being a summer-loving girl, I didn't mind the heat. I usually don't, unless it's combined with high humidity, and I am sleeping in a tent during the week-long bicycle ride across Iowa in July. Which happened this year, but that's another story for a different day. That episode is coming soon. But whether it was in person or through social media, I heard and saw numerous people complaining about the heat. The complaining really began to bother me, and it got me thinking. So here we are, discussing it in a podcast episode. What are we really doing when we complain? Let's take a deep dive today and find out together. Hang with me here for this next short while and we'll find hope and encouragement for our real lives today. Let's get to it.

Her words on her social media post said it all, "I hate this weather!" I guess I feel the same about winter, but last year Jennifer Dukes Lee, a self-declared winter evangelist and fellow Iowan, helped me see another side of winter I was missing. She helped me view winter as a gift. Even though Iowa winters can be brutal. (I guess Iowa summers can be for some, too. But typically, not for this girl.) Some of it is perspective, I'm sure, but some of it is just expected. It's where we live, and we just deal with it. I'm assuming you might experience something similar with the weather where you live. I don't know. But one thing I do know is this:

**Complaining about it doesn't help anyone feel better about it.**

Isn't that with anything in life?

I can't think of a single instance where complaining helped someone feel better about something-- anything! Complaining makes us feel worse. It is discouraging, disparaging, and down-right damaging. I'm not sure there's anything that can change a mood faster than complaining.

Don't get me wrong. I can complain with the best of them. But I'm learning not to. I've been asking God for some time now to keep me from complaining. To help me be grateful in all circumstances and to look for the good. So often, however, it's easier for me to see the things that aren't so good. Is this the same for you?

If you've been around here a while, you know I like to define words. So I looked up the word complain. Dictionary.com defines it as to express dissatisfaction, pain, uneasiness, censure, resentment, or grief; find fault. Thesaurus.com added the synonyms of criticize, gripe, grumble, and lament. Interestingly, the opposite of complain are words such as praise, be happy, be content, delight, approve, and compliment.

Two words in these lists stand out to me. Okay, three: be content and grumble. Opposites of each other. When we're content, we don't grumble. And when we grumble, we're not content.

### **I'm reminded today of a group who grumbled.**

Maybe you're thinking of this too.

In Exodus chapter 16 we see the results of grumbling. As the Israelites left Egypt and their lives of slavery, Moses and Aaron led them into the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land. But the Israelites began to grumble against Moses, saying it would have been better if they stayed in Egypt, and in slavery, than to be hungry there in the wilderness.

Yet, in God's grace and love, He heard their grumbling and provided food: quail for them at night and manna for them each morning. But the thing is, their grumbling truly wasn't centered on who they were grumbling to, namely Moses and Aaron. Reading this chapter and others beyond this one, we find out they were actually grumbling against the Lord. Were they aware they were?

*So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, "At evening you shall know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your grumbling against the Lord. For what are we, that you grumble against us?" And Moses said, "When the Lord gives you in the evening meat to eat and in the morning bread to the full, because the Lord has heard your grumbling that you grumble against him—what are we? Your grumbling is not against us but against the Lord." Exodus 16:6-8 ESV*

Yikes.

### **Who dares grumble against the Lord? Against God, Himself?**

Wow. Well, sadly, we do. We as a society do. Maybe you don't, and I hope that's the case. But we don't have to look too far to see the complaining. It might be from our own lips! Our grumbling isn't really against what we're grumbling about. It's not against our lives, our circumstances, or really anything else. When we complain and grumble, we do it against God.

Why? Well, as with the Israelites, God is in control and provides all you and I need. When we complain and grumble about the hand we've been dealt, or God's provision we don't want, or the situations we find ourselves in, we are grumbling against God. Not intentionally, possibly, but that's what we're doing.

When we complain, in essence we are saying, "God, I want something else. What You've provided isn't good enough." Which truly means, "God, You're not good enough."

### **This is what we are really doing when we complain.**

Get this, though. In Numbers chapter 11, it gets worse. The Israelites continued to grumble, except here they grumbled about the manna. God had enough of their grumbling in chapter 14.

*And the Lord spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, "How long shall this wicked congregation grumble against me? I have heard the grumbings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against me. Say to them, 'As I live, declares the Lord, what you have said in my hearing I will do to you: your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness, and of all your number, listed in the census from twenty years old and*

*upward, who have grumbled against me, not one shall come into the land where I swore that I would make you dwell, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.* Numbers 14:26-30 ESV

It's a wonder God hasn't sent me to a life of wilderness living like these Israelites.

### **Complaining is not good for us and it doesn't honor God.**

I know God can change me. He can change my grumbling into gratefulness. That's my desire. I'm assuming that's yours too.

*Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.* 1 Thessalonians 5:18 NLT

Friend, this verse has the answer. To be thankful in all circumstances. But let's back up two verses and add those on.

Verses 16 and 17 give us the full picture with verse 18: Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Rejoicing, praying, giving thanks. There's the answer. That's how we can stop our grumbling.

### **God doesn't deserve our grumbling.**

He deserves our gratefulness. He doesn't deserve our complaining, He deserves our praising.

No matter if it's the weather, or the price of groceries, or how we're treated, or not getting enough sleep at night let's stop the complaining. Let's look for the good instead. And let's help each other learn this new way of living. No, this isn't going to be easy to change our ways, but the next time we're tempted to complain, let's remember what we are really doing when we do it. Rejoice. Pray. Give thanks instead. *Lord, please help us.*

If you found encouragement in this episode, would you please consider leaving a rating or review from where you're listening today? This helps others find this encouragement too. If you haven't already, subscribe to the podcast so you never miss an episode.

In last week's episode I shared the news I've written a book, and it's currently in the hands of the designers. Right Now Matters: Empowering Right-Now Women in a Culture of Distraction releases October 17. This book equips and empowers women like you and me to overcome distractions to live more peaceful and abundant lives. More details are coming very soon, and if you'd like to learn more and join the Launch Team, you'll find the Launch Team Form link in the show notes.

In closing, friend, gratefulness is our calling. Not grumbling. Praising is our joy, not complaining. For what can you and I praise and thank God for today? Let's do that, instead. I'm with you in this. God bless you!

Links in this episode:

[Definition of complain](#)

[Antonyms/Synonyms of complain](#)

[Exodus 16:6-8](#) ESV

[Numbers 14:26-30](#) ESV

[1 Thessalonians 5:16-18](#) NLT

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*Julie Lefebvre*