

The Sin of Murmuring

1 Cor. 10:6-11 – “... Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. ...”

While this lesson will cover the examples and seriousness of murmuring, the real purpose is for our own self-examination, to rid ourselves of this tendency.

What were the causes of the Israelites’ murmuring in the wilderness?

1. Fear of the Egyptian pursuers, before going through the Red Sea. Ex. 14:10-13
2. Doubt and unbelief, exposed through lack of ready provisions
 - Water – Ex. 15:23-24, 17:3, Num. 20:3
 - Food – Ex. 16:2-3, Num. 21:5
3. Ill will towards Moses (jealousy, envy)
 - Num. 12:1-2 – Even Miriam and Aaron fell into this sin. They spoke against Moses because he married an Ethiopian woman, but v.2 shows that it was not merely a racist issue – “they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it.”
 - Num. 16 – the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram, who said to Moses and Aaron (v. 3), “Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?” But even after a tremendous fiery judgment on the offenders, the people turned against Moses and Aaron, as if they had personally killed the camp of Dathan and Abiram (v. 41). The result was a plague that killed 14,700 more of them.
4. “Things used to be better than they are now.”
 - Ex. 16:3 – “... Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”
 - Num. 11:4-6 – they remembered the fish, garlicks, leeks, onions, cucumbers, and melons of Egypt, and they were sick of the manna.
5. Forgetting God’s faithfulness in the past
 - Num. 14:1-3 – The people wept for fear because of the spies’ report of the giants in the land. They murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying it would be better to return to Egypt than to fall by the sword there in the land of Canaan. v. 11 – “And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?” v. 22 – “Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice”

Here are some other causes that we recognize:

6. Not getting what we “deserve”. One guy I knew always said he could work elsewhere and get much better pay, until the plant manager said “Well, why don’t you?”.
7. Something is “not fair”. No, there is nothing “fair” about cystic fibrosis, Down Syndrome, cancer, fetal alcohol syndrome, or mental retardation. There is nothing fair about being raped or murdered, or children being abused by those adults who should have been their protectors. Life is not fair – but what will you do with it? Will you ruin yourself because of what was done to you?
8. Self-centeredness – as if no one else has to go through what you do. See 1 Cor. 10:13. No matter how bad you think you have it, someone else has it worse.

What is wrong with murmuring? (besides the fact that you will alienate all those around you who don't want to hear your whining, complaining, self-pitying, belly-aching, and just wish you would grow up or go get another job)

- 1. It is really murmuring against God, showing a dissatisfaction with God's dealings with us, and a disbelief that he is really in control, or a feeling that he is unjust.**

Ex. 16:8 – "... and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord."

Num. 14:27 – "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me." (God)

Prov. 19:3 – (of the fool) "his heart fretteth against the Lord"

Rom. 9:20 – "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"

You think God is not treating you fairly? You should be happy that he is not giving you what you deserve!

- 2. It is tempting God.**

Ex. 17:2 – "... Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the Lord?"

Ex. 17:7 – "... because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not?"

We should thank God for his patience and longsuffering towards us, because some sins are almost daring God to "come and do something about it". How long will he allow us to push him to the limit?

- 3. It displeases God enough to bring deadly judgment.**

Num. 11:1 – "And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord: and the Lord heard it; and his anger was kindled: and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp."

- 4. It is to despise God, and his provisions**

Num. 11:20 – "... because that ye have despised the Lord which is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?"

- 5. It might show a lack of personal initiative. In this case murmuring is the result of thinking that you deserve something without effort.** This is the "new" American way. With this attitude, you will end up envious, greedy, and bitter because other people have more than you. It does not seem to register that they got it through work, education, and risk.

Prov. 21:25 – "The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labor."

- 6. It might be a transfer of our own faults to others.** Democrat politicians are masters of accusing others of what they themselves are most obviously guilty, but whoa! Aren't we all tempted to do that? The next time you find yourself murmuring against someone, ask yourself if you are not guilty of the same. (Rom. 2:1)

- 7. It can be a sign of ungratefulness.**

Like my friend who as a high schooler had a Triumph TR-7 and a nice shotgun, but was complaining that he needed a better shotgun and a Lamborghini (naturally from his dad).

➤ If your satisfaction and self-worth is in your possessions, you will never be satisfied.

- 8. It can show the need of repentance.**

Lam. 3:39 – "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?"

- 9. It does no good.** At best it may gain some temporary relief, but just getting what you want won't change your murmuring and ungrateful heart. You will still be an obnoxious jerk.

Sunday school teaching notes are available at: <https://hnslack.wixsite.com/mysite>

Look under the heading "Christian Teachings", and then "Recent".