

Overcoming the Habit of Complaining

What have we complained about just today? What do we grumble against God about our lives? Perhaps we are not happy with our jobs, relationships, or circumstances.

Philippians 2:14 (ERV)

Do everything without complaining or arguing

(AMP)

Do everything without murmuring or questioning [the providence of God],

Philippians 2:14-16 (MSG)

Do everything readily and cheerfully—no bickering, no second-guessing allowed! Go out into the world uncorrupted, a breath of fresh air in this squalid and polluted society. Provide people with a glimpse of good living and the living God. Carry the light-giving Message into the night so I'll have every good cause to be proud of you at the return of Christ. You'll be living proof that I didn't go to all this work for nothing.

This verse urges us to avoid complaining and arguing, challenging our attitudes amidst circumstances. **Complaining often infiltrates our thoughts and actions, hindering spiritual growth** and relationships. It calls for a higher conduct standard.

God encourages a transformation from discontentment to joy and gratitude, shaping our hearts daily. Even amidst negative thoughts, **consciously praising God infuses joy and genuine gratitude**, transcending challenges.

Choosing gratitude doesn't ignore hardships but offers a perspective beyond circumstances, trusting God's presence for strength and joy. **Deliberately filling our hearts with gratitude and praise allows God's transformative power to bring joy even in tough times.**

The habit of complaining, arguing, and murmuring carries profound implications in shaping our daily experiences. From fostering negativity and strained relationships to impacting mental health and hindering spiritual growth, these tendencies wield substantial influence over our lives. Understanding the multifaceted repercussions of these behaviors is crucial in navigating toward a more positive and fulfilling existence.

The negative impacts of constant Complaining, arguing, and murmuring on our lives:

1. **Negativity and Stress:** Continuous complaining fosters a negative mindset, leading to increased stress and anxiety. It perpetuates a cycle of dissatisfaction, making it harder to appreciate the positive aspects of life.
2. **Strained (Pilit) Relationships:** Habitual complaining and arguing can strain relationships. Constant negativity may push away friends, family, or colleagues who find it challenging to be around persistent negativity.
3. **Impact on Mental Health:** Chronic complaining can contribute to poor mental health, fostering feelings of helplessness, pessimism, and a lack of control over one's circumstances.
4. **Reduced Productivity:** Complaining and arguing often divert energy and focus from finding solutions or taking productive actions, leading to decreased efficiency and achievement.
5. **Diminished (Pinaliliit) Gratitude:** Habitual complaining can overshadow feelings of gratitude. It becomes harder to appreciate the positive aspects of life when the focus remains on what's wrong or lacking.
6. **Emotional Drain:** Engaging in constant arguments or murmuring about life's challenges can drain emotional energy, leaving individuals feeling overwhelmed and exhausted.
7. **Impact on Spiritual Growth:** Consistent complaining or murmuring can affect one's spiritual growth. It can lead to a lack of faith, questioning God's providence, and hinder the development of a grateful and trusting relationship with the Almighty.

Frequent **complaining, arguing, and murmuring can significantly impact various aspects of life**, from mental health and relationships to overall well-being and spiritual growth. Recognizing and intentionally **addressing these tendencies can lead to a more positive and fulfilling life.**

Continual indulgence in the practice of complaining not only affects our daily interactions but also taints our perspective on life's challenges and blessings. Reflecting on Philippians 2:14's directive to act without murmuring or questioning God's providence, prompts us to examine our discontentment and tendencies to argue against our circumstances or the will of God. This introspection into our daily grievances—be it about work, relationships, or life situations—opens the door to recognizing the need for a change in attitude towards gratitude and contentment in alignment with biblical teachings.

How to overcome the habit of complaining?

Galatians 5:22-23 (AMP)

22 But the fruit of the Spirit [the result of His presence within us] is love [unselfish concern for others], joy, [inner] peace, patience [not the ability to wait, but how we act while waiting], kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such things, there is no law.

In the book of Galatians, the Apostle Paul outlines the fruit of the Spirit, illuminating virtues that reflect the transformative power of God within us. Among these virtues, notably absent are complaining, murmuring, or arguing.

Constant complaints or persistent arguments oppose the work of the Holy Spirit, impeding harmony and love. These negative attitudes don't align with the fruit of the Spirit and can impede our spiritual growth. Nurturing the fruit of the Spirit means choosing love over quarrels, joy over murmurs, and peace over complaints, these virtues reflect God's transformative power in daily life, fostering an environment where His Holy Spirit flourishes.

Overcoming the habit of complaining requires a conscious alignment with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, cultivating qualities such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. By examining the principles from Galatians 5:22-23, we can explore faith-based strategies that enable us to overcome the inclination to complain and embrace a more positive and Holy Spirit-led way of living.

Faith-based strategies to overcome the habit of complaining:

- 1. Prayerful Surrender:** Commence with prayer, inviting God's transformative power to reshape your attitude and responses. Surrender the tendency to complain, seek divine strength to overcome it, and let the Holy Spirit guide your thoughts and words.

- Psalms 145:18 (ERV) The LORD is near to everyone who sincerely calls to him for help.
- 2. Scriptural Reflection:** Delve into the Bible. Reflect on verses that address gratitude, contentment, and trust in God's plan, such as Philippians 4:6-7, Colossians 3:15, and 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Meditating on these verses can reshape your perspective.
- Philippians 4:6-7 (ERV) 6 Don't worry about anything but pray and ask God for everything you need, always giving thanks for what you have. 7 And because you belong to Christ Jesus, God's peace will stand guard over all your thoughts and feelings. His peace can do this far better than our human minds
 - Colossians 3:15 (ERV) Let the peace that Christ gives, control your thinking. It is for peace that you were chosen to be together in one body. [a] And always be thankful.
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (ERV) Whatever happens, always be thankful. This is how God wants you to live in Christ Jesus.
- 3. Develop a Grateful Heart:** Cultivate gratitude by acknowledging God's blessings. Start a gratitude journal where you write down the things, you're thankful for each day. Focusing on God's goodness helps shift your focus away from complaints.
- Psalm 105:5 (ERV) Remember the amazing things he has done. Remember his miracles and his fair decisions.
- 4. Emulating (Model) Christ's Example:** Study and mirror Jesus Christ's attitude, learning from His patience, humility, and unwavering trust in God amidst trials, using His example as a guiding light.
- Philippians 2:5 (AMP) Have this same attitude in yourselves which was in Christ Jesus [look to Him as your example in selfless humility],
- 5. Service and kindness:** Shift your focus from self-concern to serving others. Engaging in acts of kindness lessens personal grievances and redirects attention toward helping others.
- Philippians 2:3-6 (AMP) 3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit [through factional motives, or strife], but with [an attitude of] humility [being neither arrogant nor self-righteous], regard others as more important than yourselves. **4 Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.**
 - Philippians 2:3-6 (EASY) 3 In the way that you live, do not just try to help yourself. Do not be proud. Instead, respect other people. Think about other people as more important than yourself. **4 Do not think only about the things that you want to do for yourself. Each of you should think also about how you can help other people.**

6. True Christian Community: Surround yourself with fellow believers who can encourage and support you in overcoming complaining. Share experiences and learn from each other while holding each other accountable.

➤ Proverbs 13:20 (TLB) Be with wise men and become wise. Be with evil men and become evil.

7. Fasting to Eliminate Complaining: Consider undertaking a "fasting to eliminate complaining". Use this time to consciously redirect negative thoughts and words into praise and worship of God.

8. Transformative Thoughts: Substitute negative thoughts with affirmations rooted in Scripture, redirecting the mind towards positivity and affirming verses like Philippians 2:14 and Galatians 5:22-23.

9. Mindful Speech: Practice self-control over your words. Before speaking, evaluate whether your words reflect a complaining attitude. Seek to speak words of encouragement and positivity.

10. Develop Contentment: Strive for contentment regardless of circumstances, trusting in God's strength and provision as expressed in Philippians 4:11-13, reducing the inclination to complain.

➤ Philippians 4:11-13 (EASY) 11 When I say that, it is not because I need anything. I have learned to be happy, whatever things may happen to me. 12 I know what it is like to need things. I also know what it is like to have more than enough. I have learned this secret. I know how to be happy whatever happens. I can be happy when I have enough food to eat, and also when I am hungry. I can be happy when I have plenty of things, and also when I have nothing. 13 I can do all these things because Christ makes me strong.

➤ Philippians 4:11-13 (AMP) 11 Not that I speak from [any personal] need, for I have learned to be content [and self-sufficient through Christ, satisfied to the point where I am not disturbed or uneasy] regardless of my circumstances. 12 I know how to get along and live humbly [in difficult times], and I also know how to enjoy abundance and live in prosperity. In any and every circumstance I have learned the secret [of facing life], whether well-fed or going hungry, whether having an abundance or being in need. 13 I can do all things [which He has called me to do] through Him who strengthens and empowers me [to fulfill His purpose—I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency; I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him who infuses me with inner strength and confident peace.]

By integrating prayer, biblical guidance, gratitude, service, and positive community interactions, these approach helps reshape attitudes and behaviors, fostering a spirit of gratitude, contentment, and trust in God's sovereignty.

CONCLUSION:

The verses in Philippians 2:14 and the teachings from Galatians highlight the importance of cultivating a spirit of gratitude, joy, and positivity while abstaining from complaints and arguments. Complaining, often ingrained in our thoughts and conversations, hinders our spiritual growth and relationships, urging us to strive for a higher standard of conduct.

God invites us to transform our discontent into joy and gratitude, allowing His transformative power to shape our daily attitudes. Even amid challenges, intentionally praising God infuses genuine joy, transcending circumstances and reinforcing trust in His strength.

These rooted in faith strategies, offer a comprehensive approach to overcoming the habit of complaining. From prayerful surrender to fostering a grateful heart, from emulating Christ's example to engaging in acts of service, these practices aim to reshape behaviors and attitudes. By integrating prayer, biblical wisdom, gratitude, service, and positive community interactions, these strategies empower individuals to embrace contentment, gratitude, and trust in God's sovereignty.