

Grumblers and Complainers

by Michael L. Brown

Michael L. Brown's sermon emphasizes the spiritual dangers of grumbling and complaining, urging believers to cultivate a positive attitude rooted in gratitude.

Duration: 1:16:38

Scripture: Philippians 2:14

Topics: "Grumbling", "Gratitude", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Michael L. Brown addresses the dangers of grumbling and complaining in his sermon, emphasizing that such attitudes can lead to unbelief and rebellion against God. He highlights how the Israelites' constant complaints in the wilderness resulted in their failure to enter the Promised Land, illustrating that a negative attitude can hinder spiritual growth and effectiveness. Brown encourages believers to cultivate gratitude and praise instead, as these attitudes foster faith and joy. He calls for self-examination and repentance for any grumbling spirit, urging the congregation to embrace a mindset of thankfulness and appreciation for God's blessings.

Transcript

Bless you Lord. For those of you wondering if this level of intensity and passion and fire can be sustained over a number of years, the answer is yes. Let's just agree in prayer before you sit down.

Father, make your word clear to us. Give us ears to hear. Give us a heart to respond.

Change us. And Lord, we also hold up to you our brother Elmer. Lord, as he served faithfully, Lord, for decades in our midst, I pray that you would touch him, Lord, with this major heart surgery tomorrow.

That you would be with him, Lord, that you would deliver him from the snare of death, Lord, and give him many more healthy and strong years to serve and to labor for your glory. Touch him, Father. In Jesus' name.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

I want you to turn with me to Colossians, the second chapter. Colossians, chapter 2. As soon as you find Colossians, chapter 2, go back one book to Philippians, chapter 2. You say, why did you have us do that? Because I made a mistake. Philippians, chapter 2. For those in the video department who have been awaiting a title, for those duplicating tapes who have been awaiting a title, it is insights from Colossians 2.

No, I'm just kidding.

I'm speaking tonight on a theme that God has laid on my heart in recent months, but has burned it more deeply in my heart in recent days. And the theme is grumbling and complaining. I can't believe he's speaking on grumbling and complaining.

We came all the way from Indonesia. Sorry, I'm sorry. Philippians, chapter 2. I'm reading from the NIV.

I brought the King James. Sorry. Philippians, chapter 2. This is after Paul has exalted us to have the same attitude that Jesus had.

Laying down his life, humbling himself, and then being highly exalted by his Father. He says in verse 12, According to his good purpose. Do everything without complaining or arguing.

I want you to repeat that verse out loud with me. I hate when people make me repeat the verse. Sorry.

I want you to repeat this out loud with me. Do everything without complaining or arguing. I want you to turn to the person next to you.

I'm always the one on the end and there is no one next to me. I'm sorry. Look at the person next to you and say to them what this verse says.

Do everything without complaining or arguing. So that, I'm just reading now. We're done repeating.

I'm just reading. So that you may become blameless and pure. Children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation.

In which you shine like stars in the universe. As you hold out the word of life in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing. But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith.

I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad and rejoice with me. I want you to understand that one of the key areas where believers blow it.

One of the key areas where we fall short of the purposes of God. One of the key areas where we get handicapped and do not run our race with perseverance. And fulfill the things that God has given us.

One of the key areas is the area of attitude. Those of you who are brand new believers. Maybe just a month ago God set you free from drugs.

And every day you wake up glad that you're free from drugs. And you had a few battles along the way. But you've made it and you're strong.

Or maybe three months ago you were set free from alcoholism. Or from pornography addictions. And you're doing great.

And about two weeks ago you got hit with a heavy temptation. But you've endured and you've gone on. Well the fact is twenty years from now.

Your main objective should not be I want to keep free from drugs and alcohol and pornography. That becomes stuff that gets left way behind. That becomes stuff where we grow and mature.

And these are no longer areas of battle. The devil may tempt somebody in some wild unexpected way one time. But for the most part once you've dealt with these sins of the flesh.

Maybe it was a horrific temper. Maybe it was violence. Maybe you were a thief.

Maybe you were sexually immoral. You've dealt with these things. You were addicted to crack.

You were doing all these kinds of vile stuff. You dabbled in witchcraft and occult. Once you broke with it through the blood of Jesus.

And turned your life over to God. The next thing is now you put the junk behind. You start to deal with the attitudes.

You start to deal with attitudes. We must never see these attitude problems as sin. The same way we saw drugs as sin.

Or alcohol as sin. Or violence as sin. And we shed the outward junk.

But we never grow up into the image of Jesus. And a complaining and grumbling attitude. Is no less of an ugly sin in the sight of God.

Than homosexuality or murder or adultery. These are sins that God hates. These are sins that infect people in ministry.

These are sins that infect people who've been in the Lord for decades. These are sins that will try to infect you in the school. In the church here.

In the revival. Visiting whoever you are. This is something the enemy loves to work.

Into the hearts and minds of God's people. And if we develop a grumbling and complaining attitude. It makes us spiritually ineffective.

I want you to understand. That the primary sin. That led to Israel.

One whole generation. Dropping in the wilderness. As it's written in Numbers 14.

God's promise to the sinning generation. In this desert. Your bodies shall fall.

Every one of you. 20 years old or more. Who is numbered in the census.

And who has grumbled against me. The sin that ultimately kept them. Out of the promised land.

The sin that led to their unbelief. The sin that led to their rebellion. The sin that opened the door to idol worship.

The sin that opened the door to sexual immorality. Was the sin of grumbling. And complaining.

They always had an attitude. There was always something wrong. And I want you to go back with me.

And I want to look through a number of verses. Beginning in Exodus 15. I hate when they make us go through the verses with them.

Sorry. No sooner are the children of Israel. Miraculously delivered by God.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Moses. Yeah.

Yeah. Not happy. This is not right.

It's not good. Before you decide who you're going to buy this tape for. To give it to.

Apply it to your own life. Okay. Children of Israel.

Delivered by God. The sea split open. They passed through on dry land.

The Egyptians trying to do it are drowned. They're just praising God. The horse and rider thrown into the sea.

Hallelujah. This is amazing. Verse 22.

Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea. And they went into the desert of Shur. For three days they traveled in the desert without finding water.

When they came to Marah they could not drink its water. Because it was bitter. That's why the place is called Marah.

So the people grumbled against Moses. There's nothing to drink. There's nothing to drink.

16th chapter. Verse 1. The whole Israelite community set out from Elim. And came to the desert of Sin.

Which is between Elim and Sinai. On the 15th day of the second month. After they've come out of Egypt.

God had made the undrinkable waters drinkable. Made the bitter waters sweet. And brought them to a wonderful place.

Just kind of like a luxuriant place. And now God moves them on. In the desert the whole community of Moses and Aaron.

The Israelites said to them. If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt. There we sat around pots of meat.

And had all the food we wanted. But you brought us into this desert. And starved this entire assembly to death.

Verse 7. In the morning you will see the glory of the Lord. Because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we that you should grumble against us? Moses also said.

You will know that it was the Lord when he gives you meat to eat in the evening. And all the bread you want in the morning. Because he has heard your grumbling against him.

Who are we? You're not grumbling against us. But against the Lord. Remember that verse.

Then Moses told Aaron. Say to the entire Israelite community. Come before the Lord.

For he has heard your grumbling. I think this is something that got God's attention. Picture.

God looks down from heaven. He's just delivered them. They're just worshiping.

They're praying. They're free for the first time in generations. This is awesome.

Now they come to a place. The waters are looking. What are we going to do? You should have killed us in Egypt.

You know someone gets saved. And they're wonderfully delivered. And they're free from the bondage of sin.

And they're transformed people. And then they come to church. And the air conditioning is a little too cold.

I wish you would kill me when I was a sinner. Where? Where? Sermon goes a little long on Sunday. I should have died.

I could have been at the bar. Gone home and slept in my own vomit. What is this? God looks down.

What in the world? I want you to see this plague. And I'm going to tell you. What grumbling and complaining leads to.

What happens out of it. Chapter 16 verse 12. The Lord said to Moses.

Verse 12. I've heard the grumbling of the Israelites. He's heard it.

He noticed it. But he's merciful. He's compassionate.

So he sends the manna. Like the manna. Same thing every day.

Chapter 17. The whole Israelite community set out from the desert of Sin. Traveling from place to place as the Lord commanded.

They camped at Rephidim. But there was no water for the people to drink. So they quarreled with Moses.

The Lord did a test. But the people were thirsty for water. And they grumbled against Moses.

They said, why did you bring us up out of Egypt. To make us and our children and livestock die of thirst. Moses cried out to the Lord.

What am I to do with these people? They're almost ready to stone me. Go over to the book of Numbers. Numbers.

Chapter 11. Always a problem. Always something bothering.

Never good enough. Chapter 11. Verse 1. Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the Lord.

They complained about their hardships in the hearing of the Lord. Verse 4. The rabble with them began to crave other food. And again the Israelites started wailing.

There's a verse in Proverbs that says that the short-tempered person literally exalts folly. The simple way to translate the Hebrew. He exalts folly.

I used to teach them that it struck me that the person who is quick to lose their temper is holding up a sign saying, I am a fool. When you have one of your little temper tantrums, sir, in the home. It's not the, I wanted dinner on time when I came home.

I don't want to have to wait. It's not hot enough. Or our dear sister, you're not paying enough attention to me.

I don't like the, I don't like the dress code. I can't wear my favorite green shirt. Just like holding up that sign.

I am a fool. Look, I've had it enough. You're going to lose your temper.

I'm not going to put up with this anymore. I'm not letting anybody cut me off on their own anymore. You're just holding up a sign.

I am a fool. When you start to, when you get to wailing and grumbling, basically you're holding up a sign. I am a big baby.

It's hard. It's hard on this mission strip. I don't think I can make it.

You're going to be home in two weeks. Grow up. You're not going to die.

You can eat the food. You'll live. You'll survive.

Numbers 11, 13. Moses is praying. Look at verse 10.

Moses heard the people of every family wailing, each at the entrance to his tent. Everything was fine. They just got an attitude.

Nothing was different that day from all the previous days. But there was some rabble in their midst. Some people that were really not part of the Israelites.

And they caught an attitude. Look, God was getting them ready to take the promised land. And they died in the wilderness because they were so full of unbelief.

And they were so full of unbelief because of their constant grumbling and complaining and wailing. Complaining is a combined word that is very rare in English usage. But it is a bi-form of complaining and wailing put together in one.

We can't determine our third-year intern class today. Ethicate. Ministerial ethicate.

You might have thought, someone who didn't know me better might have thought it was a slip of the tongue. What it was was creativity because every word has to be created at some point. I want you to hear this complaint.

I want you to hear what the people are saying. Verse 5. Because they want meat. They want meat.

They're not happy with the manna anymore. They want meat. We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost.

You're slaves. You're working your body to the grave. You've got no hope.

Your kids are growing up to be slaves. Everything you get is going to somebody else. You sweat.

Sick or not. You work. We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost.

Also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic. God, we only have this manna now. We used to have all the leeks and onions and garlic we wanted to eat.

Now we've lost our appetite. We never see anything but this manna. It hasn't been 40 years.

It has not been 40 years. God's just taking care of them in the wilderness until they get into the promised land. And then everything's going to be great if they just quit griping and complaining.

Look at verse 18. Tell the people, consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow when you will eat meat. The Lord heard you when you wailed.

If only we had meat. Better off in Egypt. I like my roommate.

I wish I was home with my unsaved family in a house full of demons. I didn't have to make my bed in the morning. I like my roommate.

Now the Lord will give you meat and you'll eat it. You will not eat it just for one day or two days or five, ten, or twenty days but for a whole month until it comes out of your nostrils and you loathe it because you have rejected the Lord who is among you and have wailed before him saying, why did we ever leave Egypt? Why did we ever leave Egypt? No, I went out and picked up somebody I never met before and went to bed with him and I could come in whenever I wanted to. Now, a curfew.

Now see, all this is leading up to the numbers 11 have started to get real heavy. Numbers 12, now Miriam and Aaron start grumbling. What, what does he get to preach? I didn't get to preach yet.

What does he get to preach? He's Jewish, that's why. I play keyboards better than he plays. Why does he get to play every week? See, because he's Italian and Mike Brown likes Italians.

I didn't even come here. Why did I come all the way from Norway to Revival? I wanted to hear Steve Hill. Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Kushite wife.

Apparently Moses could be a second wife, could be sephora, could be a second wife, but he married a black woman, for he had married a Kushite. Has the Lord spoken only through Moses? Has he also spoken through us? I can start a Bible school if I want to. I can have my own Revival.

I don't have to come here. They start 11th chapter still grumbling, complaining. 12th chapter, grumbling, complaining.

Well, eh, eh, I'm Moses. Now 13th chapter, they go out and spy out the land. God's about to give them the promised land.

So they get out of the promised land and they come back and they look. What? What is this? It's terrible. It's really, really bad.

Listen to the report. Chapter 13, verse 26, They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land.

They gave Moses this account. We went into the land to which you sent us and it does flow with milk and honey. Here is its fruit.

But the people who live there are powerful and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw the son of Shavuot back there and the Amalekites live there. And the Nacabites and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites live in the hill country.

And the Canaanites live there in the sea and along the Jordan. And Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, We should go up and take possession of the land for we can certainly do it. But the men who had gone up with him said, We can't attack those people.

They are stronger than we are. And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, The land we explored, it devours those living.

All the people we saw, they were big. They were really big. We saw the Nephilim there and the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim.

We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes. They were big. We were just real little.

That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. Can you picture the sight? God is ready to go with his people into the promised land and give them the whole thing. He is about to do it.

He is going to work miracles. Walls are going to fall down from cities. The Jordan River is going to part.

Hail is going to come down and fight against. God is going to do the most awesome things anybody has ever seen. I mean, it's right across, right across the line here.

It's not going to happen. We are all going to die. See, that attitude finally caught up with them.

This is wrong and that's wrong. I don't like Moses' leadership. I don't like Aaron.

Aaron doesn't like Moses. Mary and Aaron are upset with Moses. Moses stole Moses.

Go back to Egypt. What are we going to do? Do you know what they finally decide? Look at this. They grumbled against Moses and Aaron.

The whole assembly said, If only we had died in Egypt or in this desert. Now notice, that's the next wish. If we could just die in this desert.

Rather go in there and get slaughtered. Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt? That's the plan.

We're going to go back to Egypt. And they said to each other, We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt. All started with a rotten attitude.

Nothing is good enough. Everything is wrong. It's always somebody else's fault.

And it ends up leading to outright unbelief. And the outright unbelief leads to rebellion. The Israelites did not die in the wilderness because of the incident with the golden calf.

God dealt with it, judged, and forgave. And they were ready to move on. They didn't die in the wilderness because of the sins of sexual immorality that they committed with the Midianites.

That's later on, after this. They died in the wilderness because of their unbelief and their rebellion. And their unbelief and their rebellion was caused by a grumbling and complaining attitude.

Right through the rest of the 14th chapter. We don't have to go through all the references. It goes on and on and on.

Just look with me though at verse 29. We'll back up to verse 26. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, How long will this wicked community grumble against me? I have heard the complaints of these grumbling Israelites.

So tell them, as surely as I live, declares the Lord, I will do to you the very things I heard you say. In this desert, your bodies will fall. Every one of you, 20 years old or more, who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me.

Not one of you will enter the land, I swore with uplifted hand, to make your home except Caleb, son of Jethuneh, and Joshua, son of Nun. I want to talk to you about some of the characteristics of grumblers and complainers. I want to help you to not allow this attitude to attach itself to you.

Do I feel there's an epidemic of it? Do I feel there's a plague of it? Do I feel there's a major area I need to address in particular? No, I believe this is something the enemy would always love to put in. And to speak to our student body here, all of us in the leadership of the school have a deep sense of God doing something special and unusual and wonderful this semester. We believe from each semester to the next for more working of God and more intensity and more fire and more joy and more grace and more fruit and more lives changed.

And we all sense something happening. And we see the refining fire of God purging. And I also get concerned because I know the enemy wants to come in and hit people with rotten attitudes.

I'm not worried about you going out and falling back into sexual sin or falling back into drinking or falling back into drugs or breaking into some home and robbing someone if that was your background. Somebody may backslide. Somebody may mess up.

But that's not the concern. The concern is that while you're right in our midst and while you're here visiting the revival that you'll pick up or walk away with or in years to come allow a grumbling, complaining attitude to seize you. It is so easy.

We were at Awake America a little over a week ago in the Cincinnati area getting ready to go to the night meeting on Monday night waiting for the elevator to come. I'm on the 11th or 12th floor waiting for the elevator to come. Just a little bit late.

Slight hurry. One guy's waiting for the elevator to go up. I'm waiting for an elevator to come down.

Door opens. There's a woman, slight accent, foreigner, on the elevator. I said, is this going up or down? She said, it's going up.

I get on. The other guy doesn't get on. Excuse me, she says it's going down.

So I get on the elevator. The elevator's going down. I'm in a hurry.

I have a major meeting to go to with the team. Ready to go. Minister for Jesus.

Hallelujah. Is the elevator going up or down? It's going down. I get on the elevator.

It starts going up. That quickly, this grumbling attitude just came all over me. I know it didn't rise from within me because there's no possible attitude.

Something came from the outside, I think. Perhaps. Next thing, I mean, this thing just rose up, yes, from the inside.

And I was about to say, but when the thing went up, this lady just said, it will come back down. Do you know I'm about to go to a large meeting? I'm a minister of the gospel. I am very busy.

Do you understand what it means when you told me to get on an elevator that you said was going down, and now it can go up, up, up, up, up, and it can wait on several floors, and it can be in several minutes and you said it's going down, and it actually went up. We all know it's going to come back down. Just as this attitude is upon me, no, I did not say a word, nor did I roll my eyes.

I stood there as a man of God. As these thoughts were racing through my mind, it went up one floor and turned around and came back down. Maybe a 20-second difference.

And I just thought, what a stupid jerk you can be sometimes. How do you let those... It's just so easy. Everything's wrong.

Nothing's going right today. Nothing ever goes right, and it's always somebody else's fault. I'm going to give you about seven points.

Seven points. He's already been preaching for like a half an hour. Sorry.

Sorry. Some of them are a little long, so you may not be able to get them all down. So what you can do, if you like, is buy the tape or the video.

Oh, it's just this boy, this old tape. He probably gets a cut. No, I get the whole thing.

I don't give anybody else money. I keep the whole thing. Why should I give him a cut? I'm the one preaching.

It's my message. Someone's going to leave here and say, was the guy kidding about that or not? I don't know. You'll never know.

Students that know me, those that are here regularly, how do you think it is I get so many new suits and new outfits to dazzle you with from week to week? Do you wear the same suit the last six one days? Well,

maybe four out of the last six. I'm not sure. It's a newer one.

Number one. Still haven't gotten to number one. This, in a sense, repeats what we have said so far.

Grumblers and complainers open the door to unbelief, which leads to rebellion. Grumblers and complainers open the door to unbelief, which leads to rebellion. This does not produce faith.

This does not get you in an attitude of believing God. You know, you get a doctor's report. The doctor says, well, it doesn't look too good.

I'm going to die. He's not telling me the whole thing. I'm going to die.

That does not produce an attitude of faith and confidence. And once you fall into unbelief, rebellion is an easy next step. Grumblers and complainers open the door to unbelief, which leads to rebellion.

I don't need to say more about that. Number two. Grumblers and complainers never make a quality faith decision to address and overcome present problems and obstacles by the power of the Spirit and Word.

I can't believe the points are so long. What's this guy? Doesn't know how to preach? Let me repeat it. For those of you that think I'm dragging out these points, let me repeat it.

Grumblers and complainers never make a quality faith decision to address and overcome present problems and obstacles by the power of the Spirit and the Word. Is that better? Grumblers and complainers never make a quality faith decision to address and overcome present problems and obstacles by the power of the Spirit and Word. Everybody has problems.

By the way, for those taking notes, you may want to come up with a brainstorm and abbreviate grumblers and complainers like GNC, something like that. Everybody has bad days. Everybody has bad weeks and sometimes bad months and sometimes bad years and sometimes just bad lives.

There's always somebody with a situation like yours and there's always somebody with a worse situation than yours. Everybody has problems. Everybody has difficulties.

I remember coming down to Revival the very first time. Steve had invited me. We had talked in January of 96.

It was not until May, end of May of 96, before I could come. Just gotten back late on a Monday. Gotten back from ministry in England.

I had gotten run down. The weather there and the conditions. I got run down and came down with a cold and I didn't sleep on the plane coming home.

So I missed a night's sleep and I was tired. And came home that night. Our older daughter Jennifer was going to be coming down on the trip along with me to visit.

Somewhere around 11 o'clock I went to sleep and I took a cold pill just to help me sleep through the night, not to wake up being off schedule and fighting this cold off. About 1 in the morning we get a phone call that our daughter Janice, she was driving home. Just been over to a friend's house, a normal night.

Was driving home in the rain. There was a car stop. We didn't get all the details.

The story was that as she was driving there was a car, disabled car that had just stopped on the road. Was unable to get off on a shoulder. It was around a blind curve.

And she just came up on this thing. It didn't have any special lights on, warning lights, hazard lights, anything like that. She was coming right up to this thing.

And she had two choices. One is to just run into it. There was no way to stop, especially on a slick road.

It was right there on the road, right around the curve. Either run into it or swing around it with the hope nobody's coming the other way. There's no possible way to avoid the accident.

So she tried to swing around it. Just then someone else came the other way, going 40 miles an hour and without wearing a seatbelt. She got in a head-on collision.

Jeep Wrangler. Her vehicle was totaled. The other girl's vehicle was totaled that she hit.

We get a call to go to the hospital. I was so out of it. We get to the hospital.

It was a shocking thing. I mean, she took 100 stitches in her head. She's fine.

She's perfectly fine. If you met her, you wouldn't even know she'd ever been in an accident. God kept her.

She was home with us that next morning. We spent the night with her. Nancy just by her side the whole night.

I was so out of it and just all the blood gushing out. I realized I was starting to pass out. I spent a few hours in the van sleeping.

We brought her home that morning. By the end of the day, she was home pain-free, if you can imagine it. No medication or anything.

God's hand just touching her and helping her. And then she was seriously injured. It was right before coming down here.

Three days before coming down. And I got down here and I was talking to John Kilpatrick, whom I had just met, and talking to Steve, and they were talking about some of the stuff that had broke out against them since they'd been here. This happening and this happening and this one getting shot and this one's house burning down.

They said, all hell breaks out against you, brother. The joy that we have in revival, the blessing that we have in revival, the moving of God, the extraordinary privilege we have of ministering to the student body and to our visitors and just what we see God do. The highs have never been higher for me in my life, spiritually speaking.

But the lows have never been lower. The attack, the intense battle, it's there, friends. You can talk to our faculty.

You can talk to our staff. You can talk to leaders in the revival in the church. There is a hellish battle.

Everybody has problems. Everybody has difficulties. Everybody has obstacles.

But grumblers and complainers never make a quality faith decision to address and overcome present problems and obstacles by the power of the Spirit and the Word. Instead of looking at it and saying, all right, there are giants in the land. There are obstacles.

But God has promised us the land. That's never going to change. It's only going to get worse.

I'm never going to have enough money. No one's going to ask me to preach. It's never going to work.

I'm never going to get out on a mission. Revival's never going to break out on my church. My family's never going to be saved.

Instead of addressing the problem by faith in the Spirit and the Word, grumbling and complaining kills the whole thing. Kills the whole thing. Number three, grumblers and complainers are unthankful and unappreciative.

Grumblers and complainers are unthankful and unappreciative. Never good enough. If someone does something for me, well, I deserve it.

Or it's the least they could do. It's the least God could do. Well, you've got two things.

I've got one thing. Why should I be thankful? There's such an attitude of fault finding and negativity that there's no thankfulness, there's no appreciation. Let me assure you, if you have people work for you, they will make mistakes.

And if you work for people, you will make mistakes. Let me assure you, if you were part of a church or a ministry, people at times will disappoint you, and you at times will disappoint people. And you can either have an attitude where everything is wrong and everything is negative or where you are thankful and appreciative to God and to people.

Some of us almost have a stench about us of negativity, a stench of ungratefulness. It stinks in the sight of God. Number four, grumblers and complainers are fault finders and tear down rather than build up.

Grumblers and complainers are fault finders and tear down rather than build up. I want to say something in the ears of our students here. And if you're in ministry, let me encourage you to hear what I'm saying as well.

I've got my faculty here, our faculty, most of them on the platform, some sitting out in the congregation. I want you to know I have heard it from them about sitting out in the congregation. Well, we don't have enough seats anymore.

What, they're quiet now? They've taken over? I can't sit up. The only reason I come to church on Wednesday night is to sit on the platform and now I have to sit out in the congregation. No, we don't hear any of that.

We don't hear any of that. But I want to say something in the ears of faculty that are here. And if I'm wrong, you have my permission to get up and correct me publicly.

Right. I want to say something seriously. Hear me.

If we ever have a discussion, we have never ever, Bob Gladstone's been there from the very first semester with me, most of the others here, for most of the time the school's been in existence, we have never ever, one time, God as my witness, and this faculty, and the staff that's ever been in meetings, we have never once in the history of the school, so that's about three years so far, never once had a single meeting where we talked about the student body and grumbled and complained. There has never been a single meeting where we were not overwhelmingly positive when talking about you and blown away by what God's doing. And if there are ever any issues, we always look at them as isolated issues and not symptomatic of the whole.

And we've never once looked at a problem issue. Never a single time. God is my witness.

Any staff who never once looked at the student body in a negative way, in a negative light ever, if you could hear what was being said, you would be amazed. Because we're not saying it for you to hear. We're saying it because that's how we feel.

We are tremendously thankful to God for allowing us to be part of what he's doing. We are tremendously thankful to God. We are appreciative.

If we have to address issues or problems, it's never in a tearing down way. It's never in a fault-finding way. It's like this.

Here's a wonderful, healthy body, and there's just a little thing we've got to pluck out. There's a little thorn in there that's causing a problem. There's a little thing that's getting in the way.

That's how we feel. That's what we believe. If we have to address the problems, then what are we going to do? Hey, student body, I don't know.

There are so many people. They think they own the place. Somebody wanted to talk to me.

Somebody actually tried to talk to me. I was on my way to teach a class, and they asked me if they could ask a question. They know I'm busy.

We've never sat around. And staff meetings and staff that's here can tell you, if we have to deal constructively with an issue, when we're having a problem with a particular person, we'll always go out of our way to say something positive, even though the people aren't there. Because we don't have some negative, everything's wrong kind of attitude.

Someone came to me recently and said, I don't know, I'm in leadership, and I feel funny talking about people's problems when they're not there. I feel funny talking about them when I feel like I'm gossiping. And I said, listen, the fact of the matter is, sometimes we do have to address problems and issues with the people not there.

It's part of leadership. But we should do it in such a way that we would not be embarrassed to tell the people what we said. You'll never hear from one of us, that jerk.

How do we ever hire him? How do we ever hire her? How do we ever let him in the school? How do we ever let her in the school? Just before I was talking to Pastor Bob on the phone about a particular issue we had to deal with, about some potential problems with a particular issue. But what did we talk about? I introduced it by saying, let me tell you about this person. Here are the positive constructive sides.

Here are the sides of concern. And he was talking to me about somebody that he had been dealing with and saying, I believe this person is redeemable. I believe we can help this person.

We're just great, aren't we? Praise us. That's not the point I'm trying to make, okay? Don't take the point wrong. Dr. Brown, when I get big, I want to grow up to be just like you.

That's not what I'm trying to say. Or maybe it is what I'm trying to say. Maybe it is.

Scott and I were visiting a church one particular time. And he, because he's my personal assistant and people share different things with him. He's been around certain people.

He says, I really don't like being around so-and-so. Every person we ever bring up, they have something negative to say about it. You ever been around someone? Maybe they're in ministry and you ask them, Hey, have you ever had so-and-so minister? Yeah, there's no anointing on their life.

Hey, didn't you recently have that person who said, See, I wouldn't go to those meetings. It's just about money. Before you know it, you've mentioned ten different people and they have slandered or spoken evil of every single one of them.

Every single one of them. Why? Because they're characterized by a fault-finding attitude. Do your words build up or do your words tear down? I'll speak the truth.

I'll rebuke you to your face if necessary. I'll rebuke you to the point that you fall to your knees weeping. But I'll make sure that you understand the love of God and the goodness of God and we're only rebuking to bring life.

Grumblers and complainers are fault-finders and tear down rather than build up. Nancy and I used to go out with family on her side. Every so often they take us out for meal.

It got to the point we said, We can't go out anymore. We cannot go out anymore. We could not take seeing the people in the restaurant treated the way these family members treat them.

I mean, just cruel. Some people here, the greatest compliment, the highest level of praise that you'll ever give to anybody or anything is, Not bad. How was that meal? Not bad.

How was the service last night? Not bad. Nothing ever lives up to the standard. Grumblers and complainers are fault-finders and tear down rather than build up.

They project their own misery on other people. Friends, the joy of the Lord is our strength. And it's a vicious cycle when there's not joy in your life.

Everything's negative. Everything's wrong. I'm on my way to revival last week.

I realized I just had to get here on time and I wanted to get here a few minutes early. And I'm leaving the school. And as I start leaving the school, Bing! I need gas.

I'm thinking, Last night I was driving home. I was thinking about getting gas. I thought, No, probably in the morning the thing will go off on the way to school.

I'll get gas. But it didn't go off. So I forgot about it.

So I'm driving. I started to get an attitude. Just a little bit of an attitude.

That thing just tried to get on me again from the outside. But I quickly thought, Whose fault is it? Who am I going to blame? That is one thing that helps you sometimes to overcome a grumbling and complaining attitude. To ask yourself, Whose fault is it? Because when it's your own fault, you can't grumble and complain.

It was nobody else's fault. It wasn't the Jeep's fault. It was not the gasoline vendor's fault.

It was nobody's fault. So I decided, Okay, I'm going to pull in somewhere. Get gas over here.

So I pull in. The particular gas station where I pull in is one that doesn't take credit cards outside. Costing me more precious time.

And I started to get a little bit annoyed again. Well, whose fault was that? Who made me pull into that particular gas station? Am I going to call Circle K and reprimand them for not having expressed charge on the answer? I quickly realized the thing, Bill, that this is stupid. Everything's fine.

And thankfully, I had gotten a wonderful attitude right before students pulled up next to my car. So when they smiled at me, it was a genuine smile. I remember coming back from Korea one time, and it was one of those things where luggage got mishandled and a flight connection got mishandled and the line I had to stand on to take care of the thing was this endless line, and it happened to be one of the most user-friendly airports in America, JFK International Airport, in my hometown of New York.

One of these things, like four 747s, all get off at the same time, and everybody has to go down one measly little escalator. And then someone behind me is in a wheelchair. How are they going to get down the escalator? Is there anyone to help? No, lady, there's no one to help here.

So by the time I'm getting out, it's been a 14-hour flight, now connections have been missed, now luggage has been mishandled, now everything's been done wrong, and I'm a little bit annoyed. Rightfully so, I point out. And I'm walking, plus I've just been traveling 14 hours, so I'm a little bit run down physically and don't exactly look sharp and suave like I normally do.

I think that last, that was you? Okay, I like you. Otherwise, I was going to say that was a little bit in the flesh, but that was all right. That was all right, man.

I like that. That's a man that knows hair. Look at that, man.

It's natural like that, see? It's natural. So I come walking off the plane, and I'm in New York, and as I come walking off, I hear, that's Mike Brown. That's the guy.

We saw him on that debate with her. It's Dr. Brown. Hey, Dr. Brown.

Praise the Lord. Hello, hello. Yes, hello.

When I'm walking out, it's almost like shaking my head. I'm so annoyed. Dr. Brown.

Yes, yes. Joy of the Lord, yes. Oh, Jesus is my... Oh, he's wonderful.

I was just praising him a moment ago. Yes. See, when you get joyless, now everything bothers you.

Everything bothers you. You ever just had a bad day? Spouse, if your spouse here has ever had a bad day, like maybe today, maybe right before service, go ahead and raise your hand. That's all right.

So there's no joy in you, so everything bothers you. Everything bothers you. Just bothers.

Everyone else, what's the matter? I don't know. I'm just bothered. I don't know if I'm hearing my wife's voice saying that to me or my voice saying that to her.

I can't quite remember. There's no joy. Everything bothers you and therefore you question the joy of others.

And then that joylessness leads to more grumbling and complaining and the more grumbling and complaining and you do, the less joy you have. Number six. My God, he's almost done.

No, I have four observations after the seven points. Number six. Grumblers and complainers are never content with the present.

Yesterday was always better. Today needs to change. They forget what their attitude was yesterday when yesterday was today.

Yesterday was a mess. It was a miserable day. Everything went wrong.

You were unhappy with everything. Now today you're wishing it to be like it was yesterday. Grumblers and complainers are never content with the present.

You know, Paul's famous verse, I can do all things through Christ. I can do all things through the Messiah who strengthens me. What was he talking about? Whatever state I'm in, I've learned to be content.

Remember when I was first saved, there was a little track I saw. Which is the best state to live in? You know, the state of New York, the best state of California is best, this state, that state. That's what I thought too as I was reading this little track.

Those who are more alert might have heard the word state in context of the state of contentment from several sentences back and would not have led to that outburst. He's picking on me. I can't believe Conor Reville is picking on me.

Sorry. And the whole thing was the best state to live in is the state of contentment. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

I can have little. I can have a lot. I can be in a small place.

I can be in a big place. Whatever it is, it's fine. It don't really blesses me when we'll have a guest speaker who's a prominent person and who's well-known and who's well-traveled and who has certain needs and we do our best to be sensitive to it.

I say, hey, do you want us to do this, this? Hey, it doesn't matter. Anything's fine. Well, can we do this? Whatever, it doesn't matter.

It's fine. Well, look, I'm a little concerned. It's fine.

It doesn't matter. They're perfectly happy. And then you go with them to some backward place in the world with terrible living conditions and they're just the same.

It's just fine. And then you're with them in almost like royalty and they're just the same. It's fine.

No, I'm not grumbling and complaining. They're never content with the present. Why is it when you get to that next situation you couldn't wait to get from square A to square B and when you get to square B, square B's not good enough? And why is it when you finally get that promotion or that ministry door finally open, why is it it's always not going right for you? Why is it the other person always seems to succeed? The other person always seems to be blessed.

The other person always seems to prosper. The other person always seems to get the answer. The other person always seems to have the open door.

The other person always seems to have the money. The other person always seems to have the... Why is it always the other person? Some of us actually believe like that. I've shared this at times as an illustration about money.

But one time Nancy and I were praying. We had a car, a little Toyota with about 120,000 miles on it and it was on its last legs. We had a real need for a vehicle.

We very rarely would pray for our own personal needs. We'd mainly be focused on other things. We're living on Long Island, married with two kids.

We really needed two vehicles. We just had one and this one needed to be replaced. Small little car.

And we were just saying, Father, you know our needs. You know we don't have enough funds. I had a very small salary where I was teaching at Bible college there.

We don't have the funds. Those funds didn't even pay our bills. We were short every month and God had to help us.

And somebody comes over that had a car that was perfectly adequate and they just want to tell, praise the Lord, I've got news to share with you. You've got to hear this. You won't believe it.

The Lord has just provided me with a brand new Cadillac. She had no need for a Cadillac. She had no need for a new car.

The car she had was perfectly adequate. You know what we did? We rejoiced with her and when she left, we had a good laugh. She didn't need a car.

It was probably the only car God had in the whole world and she got it. Now what are we going to do? She got the car we were paying for. Some people actually have that attitude.

Oh God, you know our needs. You know our needs. Send funds.

Oh God, you know our ministry needs \$20,000 to help missionaries. Help, Lord, send the money. And somebody calls you up hysterically laughing.

You won't believe it. You won't believe it. God just sent us \$20,000.

Some people get an attitude. Praise the Lord. He just sent us \$20,000.

Hello, are you there? That exhausted the treasure house of God. That was it. They got the last \$20,000.

Instead of rejoicing and being content and praising God and thanking God, praise the Lord. That's wonderful. I rejoice with you.

Never content with the present. It's always somebody else is getting blessed. Somebody else is in a better situation.

You know the amazing thing? You know the amazing thing? When you are put in the same situation, you're still not content. I can't believe she always, whenever we go out with the team, she always gets to testify. And I never get to testify.

The next night, hey, we want you to testify tonight. And you get up and testify. Oh, they have me testify tonight when nobody wants to listen to the testimonies.

Number seven. Grumblers and complainers qualify as fools according to the standards of Proverbs. Fools.

Everyone say fools. Turn to the person next to you. Smile at them.

And say, I'm no fool. See, in Proverbs, a fool is not someone lacking in intelligence. A fool is someone lacking in moral sensibility.

A fool is someone lacking in godly choice-making. A fool can be a genius. Married, happily married with children.

A fool would be someone that goes out and blows the marriage for the fair, even if they're a genius, brilliant. That's a fool. We qualify as fools when we are grumblers and complainers.

Let me put this together and say this. And I'm almost done. Grumblers and complainers are faith-killers, joy-stealers, spirit-quenchers, and blessing-diminishers.

I'm an English teacher, and I resent the fact that you're making up a word, diminisher. Sorry. I'm sorry.

Grumblers and complainers are faith-killers, joy-stealers, spirit-quenchers, and blessing-diminishers. What's the opposite of a grumbling and complaining attitude? Attitude of thanksgiving? Attitude of praise? Attitude of joy? Attitude of gratefulness? Praisers and worshipers are faith-builders, and joy-getters, and spirit-movers, and blessing-increasers. I wish you all had the same letter.

My uncle preaches. He always has the same letter. Sorry.

Praisers and worshipers are faith-builders, joy-getters, spirit-movers, and blessing-increasers. Praise brings God's presence. Grumbling chases it away.

Who said that's good? Hey, man, I've been waiting for some support from up here. I never get enough support. I do.

I'm at the office when you guys are home. I'm at the office. And use a few amens.

All you do is sit there and smile. I don't even have a seat to go back to when I'm done preaching. Now what am I going to do? And you just sit there and smile.

Where was I? Where was I? Oh, praise brings God's presence. Hallelujah. Grumbling chases it away.

This is a deep one. This is profound. You ready? Praise lifts us up.

Grumbling brings us down. I feel like he's talking to us like children. Praise lifts us up.

We begin to praise God and worship God, even in a mess. I'm almost done here. Think of Paul and Silas in Acts the 16th chapter.

I mean, they're about to go here. God says, don't go there. We're about to go here.

Don't go there. We're about to go here. Don't go there.

And God says, go here. They go there. And shortly after they end up severely flogged and in jail.

In the lowest dungeon. Oh, Paul, you had that big vision. Oh, you really heard from God that time, buddy.

I told you we were supposed to go over here. Oh, Silas, where were you before Acts 15, buddy? How many letters in the New Testament are you going to write? I'm sure it really hurt. I remember one time I was at a pro-life rally.

Our daughters were there with us. It was a gut-wrenching thing. The whole atmosphere was just agonizing, gut-wrenching thing.

We're in front of this abortion clinic. We all got carried away and handcuffed and so on. And there was one guy, and he had been a real faithful warrior in the pro-life movement.

He was there on the bus, and there were these handcuffs that just got tighter. If you moved, they got tighter. We were all sitting there with these handcuffs behind our backs.

And, you know, it hurt. I don't mean it was torture. I don't mean to suggest for a split second that there was any terrible pain in it.

There's nothing that was going to kill us. Those that have been tortured for their faith are those in agonizing illness. I do not mean to compare.

We went through what you or others have gone through. But we're on. It was starting to really hurt.

And this one guy said to the policeman, Is there any way you could please come? This guy was a great man, loved Jesus, and a real warrior. Somehow he just couldn't take the pain. He said, Is there any way you could just come and just loosen, just take these cuffs off? And I said to him, Come on, man.

We never get to suffer anything for Jesus. Let's take a little pain at least. Let the thing hurt just a little bit so we can say we had the privilege of a little pain for Jesus.

Come on, don't whimper. It hurts. I know it hurt.

We weren't going to die. Some of you here, when you were little, your parents came in to spank you, and you hit the ground screaming, and they hadn't even gotten near you yet. Some of you get a note, you need

to come to the front office.

What do I do now? Front office. What do they think? They think they know what's best for me. They're going to tell me.

They're going to tell me that I owe three cents on my bill, and until I pay it, I'm not going to grieve. They're going to hold me back from the misery. Oh, the front office.

What are they going to tell me? Hey, we just want you to know someone just blessed you with \$1,000, and they sent it in. We just wanted to give it to you. Oh, you guys are really great.

I love you. We all have choices how we're going to respond to different things. We all do.

Paul and Silas, instead of, they very well could have said, God, what in the world? How did we end up here? Severely fought, or they could have started a grumble. I told you not to drive the spirit out of the guy. I told you it was dangerous.

What was I supposed to do, let her keep her eye? How did I know she was a, how did I know we'd get thrown in jail? How did I know they'd really whip us this time? No, they just start to praise God. And soon enough, earthquake. Sorry, I'm not Steve Hill.

Otherwise, there would have been sound effects of an earthquake. Sorry. Everyone will take the place of it, okay? Everyone together.

It was like, that sounds like bacon sizzling on a, that's it. Suddenly, there was a sound kind of like that. It was like, okay, enough.

I didn't want them to do that. I wanted to make noise with the mouth, not with the feet. They start praising God, and they say, earthquake.

An earthquake. And they're suddenly, if they didn't praise God, there never would have been an earthquake. They would have just stayed in that jail and wrought it for a few days, or for a few weeks, or for a few months.

The word calls us to be thankful. We have every reason to be thankful. Lack of thankfulness stands out in God's sight.

It stands out. It's noticeable. The ten lepers healed in Luke 17.

Only one comes back and gives God praise. Where are the nine others? Where are the others? This is one Samaritan. Where are the others? Where's the thankfulness? Where's the praise? John Hyde, one of the greatest men of prayer and soul winners that the church has ever seen.

When he would not win his four souls to the Lord a day that he covenanted with God to win in India, when he'd say, God, what's the matter? Invariably, God would say to him, lack of praise in your life. Lack of praise. After I preached this one time, somehow the tape got around our staff, and we just, everywhere we went.

Did that thing go out? That thing I had to mail out, that urgent manuscript to get to the publisher? Ooh, it sat there. Praise the Lord. I rejoice because God is in control.

Amen. Hallelujah. Who spilled this over the brand new carpet? Oh, the guy came in, a delivery guy.

We gave him some of the drink. Praise the Lord that we're showing compassion around here, and now we can bless the carpet company that's going to come in. Hallelujah.

It wasn't those exact examples, but we just catch ourselves continually just saying stuff, and we instantly turn it to praise the Lord. I'm so glad that God sent this person into my life, because without them, I probably wouldn't be as close to Jesus as I am right now. I don't think my character would be changed the way it's being changed right now.

Glory to God. Lack of thankfulness is noticeable in the sight of God over and over. Just jot these references down.

I'm not going to turn to them. Jot these down. I wish you'd turn to them.

Sorry. Jot these down. Ephesians 5, verses 3 and 4. Ephesians 5, verses 19 and 20.

Philippians 4, 6. That's a verse so important, telling us, even with prayer and petition, to give thanks, to always offer it with thanks. Colossians 1, 10 through 12. Colossians 2, 6 and 7. It's going too fast.

It's going fast. Sorry. Listen to Colossians 3, 15 to 17.

I'm going to read these. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Say it out loud. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. 1 Thessalonians 5, 16 through 18. 1 Timothy 2, 1 and 2. I want to encourage you to never allow the enemy, as a thief and as a robber, to get you off track, to cause you to fall short of your calling, to handicap you, to slow you down by getting you into a grumbling, complaining mindset.

For those that don't need the devil to get you into anything, let me urge you to renew your heart and to renew your mind and to ask God to bring to your attention sinful attitudes, complaining attitudes, or complaining attitudes. Let him show you when you begin to wail and grumble and fall fine and tear down. Let him show you attitudes of negativity.

Let us overcome evil by good. Here's what we're going to do. We're going to do things a little differently.

I want you to stand to your feet. I'm tired. Sorry.

I want you to stand to your feet. I know there are some people here with some very serious needs. You may have come here and your relationship with God is not right.

You may have come here battling with a serious sin issue. I'm going to give you an opportunity in a moment to receive prayer. Here's what I want to do, though, first.

We're not having an altar call the way we normally would. If God is speaking to you and convicting you, if there are things in your life that have been nailed by the Holy Spirit tonight, if you say, man, I'm guilty of

this, or I'm walking and I've been falling into this, or whatever the case is, if God has been convicting you and speaking to you through this, I want you right where you are, whether you're behind me in the choir, on the platform, out there in the congregation, in the usher, wherever you are, if God is convicting you, I didn't ask if you ever grumbled or complained or if one time six months ago you had a bad attitude. If God has been convicting you and speaking to you through this, I want you right where you are to raise your hand before God and keep it up.

Just to raise your hand before God right where you are and keep it up. I can't believe there's not more people raising their... Sorry. If God's convicting you, wherever you are, student, visitor, raise your hand, keep it up.

And I want to lead you in a prayer right where you are. I want you to pray this out loud with me. Heavenly Father, I ask you to forgive me for the sin of grumbling, for an unthankful spirit, for a fault-finding attitude.

I confess it as sin. I make no excuses. I recognize that my grumbling is against you, that I am accusing you, that I am finding fault with you.

Forgive me, Father. Wash me clean with the blood of Jesus. He died for this sin too.

And touch me, Lord. Open my eyes that I can see how ugly this sin is. Open my eyes that my attitude can be changed.

Help me, Lord, to be a praiser, to be a worshiper, to be a thankful person, to be a grateful person, to be an appreciative person, to be a content person. Help me to build up and not tear down, to speak words of life and not words of death. I pray, Father, that your presence would fall on me, that your spirit would fall out of me as I give thanks to you.

And even now, I thank you for your goodness. I thank you for your mercy. I thank you for forgiveness.

I thank you that you who have begun a good work will bring it to completion. I offer myself as an offering of thanksgiving to you. In Jesus' name.

Amen. I want you to just thank God with your own words. Just thank Him.

Praise Him for something specific.

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