

THE BIBLE VIEW

In This Issue:

[Sweet or Miserable?](#)

[It's Temporary](#)

[Complaining?](#)

[Contentment](#)

[Discontentment](#)

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Theme: Complaining

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Sweet or Miserable?

Bill Brinkworth

Every living person has or has had difficulties. This certainly is not Heaven because of Eve's and Adam's sin. This planet is cursed because of the original iniquity. All will experience hardships.

"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life." Genesis 3:17

Some may have a period of grace where life seems to be treating them well. Others are not having that experience now. Sooner or later, all will face trials and tribulations.

Many in the valley of challenges and hardships, even if it is a slight rumble or complaint, blame others and God. When blessings pour out on them, they are not always satisfied, grateful, and still find something not to be happy about. Often, they are just miserable.

Others, however, have a sweet spirit, even though they seem to have much to complain about and be angry over. They may be facing humbling health situations, financial fiascos, or social separations, but they usually seem to be smiling and have something positive to say through it all. Why is there such a vast difference in attitudes between the two reactions?

Those with a closer walk with the Lord, trusting His leadership and having a more positive outlook has much to do with why some have a healthier attitude toward what they are experiencing. Grumbling, ungrateful Christians usually do not have a closer, surrendered, trusting relationship with the Lord.

Why would an unsaved person want to have a life like the proclaiming Christian who cannot find anything good in their life? What a poor testimony the grumbling believers are for the cause of Christ. They are often a black-eye to Christianity.

Their complaints may:

- Convince others that God is not real or cannot help.
- Convince some God cannot take care of His own.
- Convince others that there is no difference between the lost and saved. One's discontentment may encourage unsaved people to shy away from Christianity.
- Convince others that they are fine as they are because they have a better attitude than the complaining "Christian."

However, a joyful, grateful, trusting believer will have a different attitude and affect on those they are in contact with. People may see that a believer:

- Truly believes there is a God, relies on Him, trusts what the Bible says, and has peace that most do not have amidst trials and tribulations.
"For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."
Hebrews 10:34
"I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."
Philippians 4:12
- Reacts differently when confronted with bad news, hard times, and a scary future.
"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." *Matthew 5:12*
- Has hope, peace, and joy even when experiencing difficulties. Those are rare reactions that unbelievers seldom see. The better attitude becomes a positive advertisement for Christianity to those desiring the same comforting trust while facing problems.
"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" *James 1:2*
- Does not throw up one's hands in frustration, wanting to quit, but is calm and knows that there will be a positive outcome eventually.

Most people want joy, peace, and hope. They gravitate to those that seem to hold the treasure they seek.

Count your current blessings, not your past difficulties. If you do count your trials, you certainly will be depressed and unappreciative. Besides, enduring difficulties can strengthen one's faith. No strong Christian got that way without facing hardships and coming out on the other side of their situation with more faith and trust.

Rehearsing the "good times" will remind you that there is hope. God fixed the situations in the past, and He WILL do it again. If you are saved, you are on the winning side. Have a good attitude and be happy.

"A complaining Christian may unwittingly be giving free advertisement for the devil." — *Bill Brinkworth*

It's Temporary

Burroughs, 1599-1646

Though we experience trials, it should not be grievous to us. This is not our permanent, eternal home. No matter what the trouble is, it will not exist forever.

The scripture tells us that we must behave as pilgrims and travelers. Our life here is only temporary. We are just passing through.

Abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul. Consider your temporary condition here. Do not think to satisfy yourselves forever.

A person coming into an inn, if there is not a full stock of food there to last a while, is not troubled because it is not his own. He is going away soon and will not be there long.

So let us not be upset when we see other people with great estates when we have not or at those who seem to have everything we wish for. Why? Because we are going away into another "country."

You are not "lodging" on Earth here, but only for a relatively short time. If you should live a hundred years, in comparison with eternity, it is not much more than a temporary "night." Again, you are only a pilgrim just passing through this life.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

I Corinthians 10:13

Complaining?

Watson, 1696

Are you complaining about your troubles? The trial may not be the biggest problem, but your discontent attitude may be the underlying issue.

It is not the water outside the ship that is the trouble but the water that gets through a hole in the hull, which can sink the vessel. Likewise, it is not usually outward affliction that can make the life of a Christian intolerable but one's spiritual flaw.

A contented mind would sail above troubled waters. Still, when there is a leak of discontentment available, trouble may get into one's heart. Then, one will be disquieted and "sink."

Apply the principles mariners follow. Pump the water of discontentment out and stop the spiritual leak of your soul, and no trouble will harm you.

Contentment

Trough, 1599-1646

One who has been in the school of afflictions for a long time is not very bright in Christ's school of life if nothing has been learned about contentment. Those that God exercises much with afflictions should have learned how to be content.

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Philippians 4:11

One newly coming into the care of Christ, perhaps, has complained about their situation and seemingly cannot bear the affliction. Lord willing, their faith and trust will improve as they allow God to work in their lives. Yet older, supposedly more mature Christians still wilt murmur and whine when facing challenges. Oh, it is a shame for any that have been a long time in the school of Jesus Christ to murmur and allow discontented spirits to ruin their walk with Christ.

"Count your blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done." — *A reminder from Johnson Oatman's hymn, "Count Your Blessings"*

Discontentment

Charnock, 1628-1680

Discontentment is a secret boasting of some excellency in ourselves as if God does not govern well and we could manage better.

Shall an inexperienced ship passenger, who does not understand the use of the compass, be angry that the skillful pilot will not steer the vessel according to the way the traveler thinks best? Must we give our orders to God, as if His infinite wisdom is not as trustworthy as what we believe and want?