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## The Company of Complainers

By Teresa Hampton

Ashley is a young woman who has little tolerance for complainers. If she hears someone grumbling, she's apt to say, "Whine, whine, whine. Do you want some cheese with your whine?" If the person is determined to continue complaining, they have to leave and find others who are willing to listen or participate in the talk. Whiners tend to gravitate toward one another, and then they become the company of complainers.

The Israelites were in that company. When they were enslaved in Egypt, they cried out to God for deliverance. He powerfully brought them out of bondage. Yet, quickly after their departure, they said, "*Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness?*" Despite their grumbling, God parted the sea and they crossed safely. They complained, grumbled, murmured, and griped about lack of bread (Ex. 16), lack of water (Ex. 17), lack of meat (Num. 11), Moses being their leader (Num. 12), the giants in the Promised Land (Num. 14), God's harsh discipline of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram because of their rebellion (Num. 16:41). Their complaints only served to anger the God of Heaven.

Grumbling may stem from fear, frustration, or arrogance. Sadly, the emotions or attitudes that spawn complaints are just as prevalent today as they were thousands of years ago. So it begs the question. Are we ever like the Israelites? Do we grumble about how things should be, or how they shouldn't have been? Despite an abundance of good in our lives, do we emphasize our sufferings, burdens or injustices? Are we apt to point out others' failings or flaws? Do we focus on what we missed, or what could have been "only if...?" Do we let the details of life rub us the wrong way? If so, we're smack-dab in the middle of the company of complainers.

The only spiritual solution is to leave that company and become part of the gathering of the grateful, in which are those who readily express gratitude. They are thankful whether in the midst of good or bad, *giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ* (Eph. 5:20). The grateful ones are not concerned with the past, but look forward to entering God's presence with thanksgiving in their hearts (Ps. 100:4). They are quick to see the good in others and compliment them (Matthew 19:1-10, Phil. 1:3-6).

In which company do we find ourselves – the company of complainers that disappoints and angers God, or the gathering of the grateful in whom God delights? It is our choice.

**Today's Verse:** *And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him* (Col. 3: 17).

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