



---

January 1986

Volume 26 Number 1

---

---

## GRUMBLING, GRIPPING, COMPLAINING, NAGGING AND FUSING

---

Every once in a while we need to sit down and examine ourselves (II Cor. 13:5) to see how we are doing in human relations. It is very easy to point our fingers at others and say that they are hard to get along with. But, what about me? What kind of effort am I putting forth to get along with them? Do I behave in such a way that others enjoy neither my presence nor my conversation? Every child of God needs to take a long, hard look at his/herself in light of these questions.

In very simple terms the Bible tells us how we ought to live. Jesus said, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7:12). Paul wrote, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32). "Do all things without murmurings and disputings" (Phil. 2:14).

In spite of these passages, some of us are guilty of grumbling, gripping, complaining, nagging and fussing. Though it may not be our intent to do so, we are guilty nonetheless. Let it be understood that I am not suggesting that there is never a place for some justified criticism. There is. How-

ever, we are guilty of unjust criticism too many times.

### Characteristics Of A Gripper

A few general observations can be made about a complainer. There will be some exceptions to these rules. Just because one doesn't have one or more of these characteristics doesn't mean that he is not a grumbler.

1. Can't be pleased. At least he leaves this impression. No matter what happens, is done or said, it's just not the way he/she wanted it to be. Though others make an effort to try to please and satisfy, all such labor is in vain. It is either too hot or too cold, too sweet or too sour, too rare or too done, too tight or too loose, too early or too late, too tall or too short, too much or too little, too dark or too light or too big or too small.

A complainer will dislike the way something is said or done, so they suggest a different way. When that is done they are still not pleased.

We need to learn to be content and satisfied. There are some things we just have to live with. Paul said, "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatever state I am,

Continued on Next Page

From Birmingham: A letter from a preacher commenting on our remarks about it bothering us to see young preachers reading so much more after sectarian writers than after good brethren. The writer of the letter pointed out the difficulty of finding good books and other reading materials written by brethren. He requested that I list some eight or ten good books that I have found helpful in my studies through the years.

Reply: The point about there being so little good material written by sound brethren is well taken. Except for the papers and bulletins that brethren regularly publish, there is very little available. There is even a shortage of good Bible class materials. Most of what is being published is good. There is just not enough of it. It would be great if more capable brethren could publish more materials.

Why is it not being done? I suspect that the two main reasons are a lack of time and money. It takes time to write good material. It takes money to publish it. Most of the men who are really qualified to write simply do not have the resources to do it. Too, if they had the time and money necessary to write and publish books - who would buy them? Let's face it. Brethren in general just do not buy and read many books. The sectarians certainly would not buy many copies of a book written by a member of the church.

In general, brethren are willing to support one to spend his time in oral teaching, but would generally be reluctant to support one to write. What a shame! I know that there are qualified men who would write more to benefit this and future generations - if they did not have to spend so much time doing leg work to keep the brethren who support them happy.

Brethren, if you know some brother who could write good material, why not encourage and support him? When good brethren do write and publish material, why don't we buy it and use it? It might encourage more to do more writing and publishing.

As to the books that have helped me. I have profited by many books over the years. Some were written by brethren, some were not. It would be too difficult to narrow it down to such a short list. One book that I make required reading for every young preacher who works with me during our summer program is "The Gospel Plan Of Salvation" by T. W. Brents. It is a dandy on basic denominational error, especially Calvinistic error.

In all our reading, we might do well to remember the comment of the unpolished preacher who said, "The Bible sho' do throw a lot of light on them commentaries".

### Grumbling from page 1

therewith to be content" (Phil. 4:11). Everything is not going to be just the way we want it.

We are sometimes like the old farm lady who was known as a constant grumbler. Nothing pleased her. One day a visitor came and noticed her excellent apple crop and said, "You sure have a

fine crop of apples." The old lady replied, "Oh, I guess they'll do, but where's the rotten 'uns for the pigs?"

"The grumbler's life is ever  
so sad,  
It is filled with sorrow and  
woes,

Continued next page

## Grumbling from page 2

He hasn't thought how content  
he could be,  
By counting the blessings God  
bestows."

2. Feels the need to criticize. The one who fusses just must make some comment on everything. Every dislike must be voiced. Invited or not, his complaint is heard. The grumbler doesn't stop to ask if his comment would be better left unsaid. Rather it flows freely.

3. Is self centered. The type of person under study expects others to listen and take heed to their complaints, but is greatly offended when someone complains about them. None are as perfect and righteous as they are.

4. Doesn't see own faults. The "mote" hunter is so preoccupied with the faults of others that their own faults are overlooked. Much of what they complain about in others they will find in their own lives if they will just look. They expect of others what they don't expect in themselves. That reminds me of the Pharisees who would bind

but not do (Matt. 23:4). The Jews pointed their fingers at the Gentiles while they were guilty of the same things (Rom. 2).

5. Complain to and about family members. Husbands for some reason find it easy to fuss at their wives. Wives nag at their husbands. Sometimes when in the presence of other women or on the telephone they reveal all the faults of their husbands. Children at times complain to their friends and classmates about their parents. Parents can easily provoke their children to wrath (Eph. 6:4) by griping at them and about them. I have seen parents criticize their children before friends in the presence of children. Sometimes the parents continue to treat their children like little kids even after they are grown and married. Strained relations are created when parents complain about every action, decision, move or purchase made by their children.

Complainers Usually Don't

Realize They're Guilty

Continued on next page

## WHAT IS A REAL HOME?

A Real Home is a gymnasium. The ideal of a healthy body is the first one to give a child.

A Real Home is a lighthouse. A lighthouse reveals the breakers ahead and shows a clear way past them.

A Real Home is a playground. Beware of the house where you "dassn't frolic" -- there is mischief brewing for someone.

A Real Home is a workshop. Pity the boy without a kit of tools or the girl without a sewing basket. They haven't learned the fun of doing things -- and there is no fun like that.

A Real Home is a forum. Honest, open discussion of life's great problem belongs originally in the family circle.

A Real Home is a secret society. Loyalty to one's family should mean keeping silent on family matters -- just this and nothing more.

A Real Home is a health resort. Mothers are the natural physicians.

A Real Home is a cooperative league. Households flourish where the interests of each is made the interest of all.

A Real Home is a business concern. Order is a housewife's hobby. But order without system is a harness without the horse.

A Real Home is a haven of refuge. The world does this for us all: it makes us hunger for a loving sympathy and a calming, soothing touch.

A Real Home is a temple of worship.

--Edward Purinton, Covenantor Witness via The Speaker's Sourcebook.

## **Grumbling** continued

By now most of our readers have thought of somebody who really needs this material. Why think about someone else? What about YOU? One of the characteristics of a complainer is that they don't realize that they are guilty. The complainer doesn't call it complaining. It is "just a comment." To him it isn't gripping. It is merely "a suggestion". He/she may say, "I'm not fussing; I'm just offering a little advice."

How about you friend, are you guilty? Oh, yes, I'm talking to YOU!

### **Makes Life Unpleasant For Others**

The grumbler fails to realize that others do not care to listen to their fussing and complaining. Especially is this true if the complaints are about the listener. Solomon said, "There is one that speaketh like the piercing of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health" (Prov. 12:18).

How would you like it if someone were gripping about you? What if you were receiving instead of giving? Have we forgotten the "golden rule" of doing unto others as we would have them do unto us (Matt. 7:12)?

### **Love And Kindness**

There are two fundamental principles that every Christian must develop in order to please God. The first is love. We must learn to love our mates (Eph. 5:23ff.), children (Tit. 2:4), brethren (Heb. 3:1) and neighbors (Matt. 22:39). Paul tells us that love (at least agape) is kind (I Cor. 13:4). If we really love our families and friends we will be kind which will obviously eliminate all grumbling and complaining.

The second principle (which is included in the first) is kindness. With a little effort we all can be kind. But it does take some effort. Yet, it can be done (Eph. 4:32). In fact, there is

no excuse for not being kind! Whether he realizes it or not the grumbler, gripper, complainer, nagger and fuser is most unkind. Though such an one may be successful in other areas of life, he/she has failed in the very basis of human relations.

"The right to criticize must be earned, even if the advice is constructive in nature. Before you are entitled to tinker with another person's self-esteem, you are obliged first to demonstrate our respect for him as a person. When a relationship of confidence has been carefully constructed, you will have earned the right to discuss a potentially threatening topic. Your motives will have been thereby clarified" (James Dobson in What Wives Wish Their Husbands knew About Women as quoted in Reader's Digest, July 1985, p.161).

### **Controlling The Tongue**

One of the biggest problems that the complainer and gripper has is the lack of control over the tongue. James warned about this problem, "let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath . . . . If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth His own heart, this man's religion is vain" (James 1:19,26).

We must learn to control our tongue. We do not have to express every dislike we have. Many things can pass without comment. All of our thoughts do not have to be voiced. Let's learn to think twice or three times before speaking. Try it and you may find out that it's a lot easier to get along with others.  
--Donnie Rader

### **DEATH OF A MEMBER**

Since we last reported on deaths among our members, sister Brazora (Bo) Byrd has passed away. Our sympathy to her family.

The REFLECTOR is published monthly by the Fultondale Church of Christ, 2005 Elkwood Drive, Fultondale, AL. Edited by Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

Send all returns to:

THE REFLECTOR  
3004 Brakefield Drive  
Fultondale, AL 35068

Second Class Postage  
PAID at  
Fultondale, AL 35068