

The Sin of Murmuring

The word “murmur” is defined as “low, muttered complaints; grumbling.” (Webster). It is condemned by God as being sinful. We are commended to “*do all things without murmuring and disputings.*” (Philippians 2:16). The apostle Paul warned Christians against this sin in his letter to the Corinthians: “*Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer*” (1 Corinthians 10:10). The sinfulness of murmuring is vividly illustrated by God's severity of punishment toward the guilty Jews, as shown in the following account.

Korah, Dathan, Ahiram, fifty princes of the congregation and others rebelled and murmured against God's servants Moses and Aaron (Numbers 16:1-11). “*The earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up they, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the congregation*” (verses 32-33). “*And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense*” (verse 35). When the Jews murmured that Moses and Aaron were responsible for the deaths. God killed fourteen thousand, seven hundred of them by a plague (verses 41-49). This is written for our admonition and should cause all murmurers in the church to repent and reform, lest they suffer a “*sorer punishment*” (Hebrews 10:28-29).

A murmurer can do great harm and irreparable damage in a congregation by creating discontent discouragement and apathy among members, by sowing discord among the brethren (which God hates - Proverbs 6:19), by undermining the work of preacher, teachers, deacons, and the rule of elders. This many times creates a general attitude of dissatisfaction and loss of interest, enthusiasm and zeal, resulting in decreased attendance, contribution and impairment of all work in general. The murmurer may then be the first to criticize the lack of growth, and may use the preacher or someone else as the scapegoat to bear the blame, not realizing or ignoring the fact that his own sin is responsible.

The murmurer does not truly love God and is not really interested in the welfare and growth of the church, but in his own selfish desires and opinions. He is either woefully ignorant of or willfully disregards God's word regarding his sin, and is a dangerous threat to the cause of Christ. He can and does destroy or greatly lessen the influence and work of those who happen to be the object of his disgruntled attack. It is difficult to deal with such a situation because often times the murmurer does not have the courage or character to honorably discuss his complaints with the proper ones, but whispers them in secret to others. Christians should not lend receptive ears nor endorsement to murmuring, but exhort the guilty one to cease his sin. Remember, if one will murmur to you, he may murmur about you, because many times he is a pharisaical faultfinder, a chronic complainer with a hypercritical attitude who is usually never satisfied very long with any arrangement.

We earnestly exhort all murmurers everywhere in the name of Christ to repent of this sin, to cease and desist in tearing down the work of God, and to get busy in the kingdom to build it up. Those who truly love God and his church have no desire to be hypercritical faultfinders, wandering about murmuring to all who will listen. If anyone should persist in this sin after proper warnings and efforts to restore, then scriptural discipline should be brought about to protect the flock of God and its work. The work of our Lord is too important to allow murmurer to run and ruin the church.

- by Earl Fly

What My Giving ‘Says’

It is clear that our giving to the Lord reflects our basic attitudes in several important ways. Consider ...

IF I GIVE NOTHING:

I'm really saying, "Let's close the doors and disband the church".

I take a "free ride" based on what others have given.

WHEN I GIVE LESS THAN 10% OF MY INCOME:

I am doing less than was required of the poorest Jew under the Law of Moses.

I may be showing that I do not appreciate the "better" blessings I enjoy in Christ Jesus (Hebrew 8:6).

IF I'M NOT GIVING MORE THAN I DID LAST YEAR:

I'm saying that I am not any better off financially than I was 12 months ago - no raise, no bonus, etc.
Is this true?

Or is it a problem of priorities?

IF I GIVE, BUT DO SO GRUDGINGLY:

I miss out on the joy of giving.

I disappoint God, for He "loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).

WHEN I DON'T "PURPOSE" WHAT I GIVE IN ADVANCE:

I'm not following God's plan (2 Cor. 9:7).

I'm likely to take on other financial obligations which will prevent me from giving as I should.

I make it difficult for the church to have any long range program of work.

IF I DON'T GIVE PROPORTIONATELY AS I'VE PROSPERED:

I commit sin (1 Cor. 16:2).

I hinder the important work of the church.

I deprive myself of some of the satisfaction and fulfillment of being a faithful servant.

- by Greg Gwin