



Choosing Thankfulness over Complaining

Luke 17:11-19

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If we take the time to note that God puts wrong attitudes into the same category as idolatry and sexual immorality. Then we must conclude that we need to do something to change our attitudes. And God warns us that we ought to study the wrong attitudes of the Israelites so that we don't fall into the same troubles they had.



So the first attitude we look at is: **a complaining attitude.** We exhibit a complaining attitude when we resent circumstances beyond our control and about which we can do nothing. For example, it is crazy for us to complain about the weather because we can do nothing about it yet we do complain. How many of you wives complain about your husband but can do nothing to change him?

We need to remind ourselves that God hates a complaining attitude and that He holds us responsible for our complaining. A key to remove that complaining is to remind ourselves that God hears every word we say so we need to catch ourselves when we begin complaining and replace it with something else.

So today I want to look at what that something else is that we need to replace our complaining with.
Turn in your Bibles to Luke 17:11-19.

1. Thankfulness is the perfect replacement for complaining.

1 Thessalonians 5:18- Give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

A. There is never a time that complaining about something we cannot change is an appropriate response. And there is never a time that thankfulness is not the appropriate response in whatever situation I am in.

B. I don't care how bad my situation is, I can always find something to be thankful about. I can remember this past year when I was in Romania, when I asked for testimonies of thanksgiving; there was a man that said I am so thankful I am alive even if I am in a wheelchair. If you can find something to be thankful about in a wheelchair, you can find something to be thankful about in any situation.

C. If we are to quit our complaining, then we need to work at being thankful. But we have two problems.

The first one is this.

1. Thanksgiving does not come automatically in my life. I can not turn on thanksgiving in my life without turning off my expectations that I deserve certain things in this life.

Luke 17:15- 18 One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at

Jesus' feet and thanked him...

A. There were ten men healed. **Only one man returned to give thanks to God.** The other nine did not return back only for one reason. They felt that they deserved to be healed and it was God's job was to heal them. So they were only getting what they deserved. There was no reason to be thankful.

B. Think about it if the story was reverse. If they were not healed as they were walking to see the priest, how many do you think would have gone back to Jesus complaining? I believe it would have been 9. Because they did not get what they deserved.

C. So this tells me the key to dealing with my complaining attitude. If I have high expectations of what I deserve, I will have low thanksgiving and a high complaining attitude. However, if I have low expectations as to what I deserve, I will have a high thanksgiving and a low complaining attitude.

D. Our problem is that more of us have higher expectations of what we deserve than lower expectations. If you don't think that is true just listen to your prayers. God give me this. God do this for me.

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My second problem is:

2. God is paying close notice to how well I practice giving thanks. Luke 17:12- As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance.

Luke 17:17- Jesus asked, Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?

A. Jesus had entered a village. There was probably a crowd around Him. And some men with leprosy yell out Jesus, have pity on us. Then after their healing only one returns to give thanks. And Jesus asked where are the other nine. What that tells me is: Jesus was paying pretty close attention to how they practiced thanksgiving.

B. If Jesus paid that close of attention to those men with leprosy, I believe that He pays close attention to how I practice thanksgiving. Don't be surprised if this is one area of your life where you find God working.

C. For example, there are some times in sickness that God shows me what I complain about is really not that important.

2. Jesus tells us that there is a real benefit to being thankful.

Luke 17:17-19 Jesus asked, Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine... Rise and go, your faith has made you well.

A. Jesus was very specific. Ten were cleansed. Only one was made well. This one that was made well had something on the inside of him changed. The other nine only the outside had been cleansed. **I believed what changed was his attitude.**

B. I believe if we could find the other nine, they would be complaining about something else now.

Let me share with you, in closing, how I turn off my expectations and turn on my thanksgiving.

1. I choose to be thankful therefore diminishing the power of my expectations.

Psalm 7:17: I will give thanks to the Lord because of his righteousness.

David made a conscious choice to be thankful. In doing that you diminish the importance of your expectations. Our expectations do not have as much power over us if we are thankful for whatever we have.

2. Always attach your thanksgiving to something that is real and specific.

In **Psalm 7:17**, he attaches it to God's righteousness. In **Psalm 105**, David is thankful for His deeds. In **Psalm 107**, he is thankful for His loving kindness.

That is so when your mind starts arguing with you, you can squelch that argument because you have a reason to be thankful. If you don't have something specific to be thankful for, your deserver will run wild.



