

“Lord, Change My Attitude (Before It’s Too Late)” – Week 2

Sunday 6/27/04

Saved as mdutton\adult bible fellowship\Lord, Change My Attitude\02 Lesson Chp 1

Introduction:

1. We started a new series last week: **Lord, Change My Attitude** – by James MacDonald – the book is available in the MRC – last week dealt with the Introduction –or setting the stage for context of the study
2. Remember, all the things God did for Israel:
 - in Egypt (10 plagues)
 - Passover (10th plague of death avoided by the blood sacrifice & put on sides/top of the doors)
 - crossing of the Red Sea,
 - destroying Pharaoh’s army right before their very eyes (the Red Sea came back on top of them, and the dead bodies washed up on shore),
 - giving the 10 commandments, and bringing them right up to the EDGE of the land flowing with milk & honey (the PROMISED LAND to Abraham!)

- but their attitude – their way of thinking – impacted their behavior, and they sinned!
3. One thing kept them from going in and possession the land (which Joshua & Caleb gave the positive report, the other 10 the negative report)
 - * Lack of faith in the promises of God – bad theology (wrong view of God) kept them out!

- and their wrong theology cost them dearly: NO PROMISED LAND for them and DEATH during the 40 years of wondering in the wilderness!

Input: Anything we need to learn from that? [various answers!]

4. With those thoughts in mind, please turn to Numbers 11
 - Numbers gives us a picture of Israel’s wandering in the wilderness – written by Moses
 - It records the murmuring and rebellion of God’s people and their subsequent judgment!

[READ: Num. 11:1-6, skip to v. 10-15 (explains what Moses was facing – esp. v. 13 – the request for ‘meat’) – God makes arrangement to delegate to the 70 elders – but then, look at v. 18-20 AND v. 31-33!!!! – THAT is the context of our study this morning!

I. Definition of Complaining

complaining = expressing resentment over circumstances that are beyond our control and about which are doing nothing

Quote:

“When we express resentment over circumstances that are beyond our control and about which we are doing nothing, we are complaining. God hears it, hates it, and pushes everyone who

persists in it toward the wilderness. Remember that those who choose complaining as their lifestyle will spend their lifetime in the wilderness.”

Q: Does complaining CHANGE anything? [ALL would say NO!]

Input: Why is complaining such a battle when we all agree that complaining changes nothing?

> complaining satisfies our sinful natures for a brief few seconds – and then we gripe about something else – that’s the nature of LUST (we want more of what we want!)

* Point: **Those who choose murmuring as their lifestyle will spend their lifetimes in the wilderness!**

– These, and other, OT examples were written for our LEARNING!!

- **1 Corinthians 10:11** Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.
- **Romans 15:4** For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

- Neither Israel, nor us, HAVE to live this way -- **We Choose Our Attitudes!**

- Because we are made in the image and likeness of God, we have the ability to make a CHOICE

> we do not HAVE to sin – we CHOOSE to sin – and our choices are based on our theology and what we allow into our hearts

- **Matthew 15:19** "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.”

- And isn’t it interesting that two people can face the same trial and respond in a totally different manner!

- We get to make a choice (that’s grace), but we don’t get to choose the consequences:

“God’s final judgment on their attitudes clearly held them accountable for their choosing. Later, twelve spies went into the land; twelve spies came back. Two spies chose God and faith and a good attitude – and they got the Promised Land. Ten spies chose self and doubt and a bad attitude – they got the wilderness. The people listened to the majority report and the minority report, and then they chose. They voted with their attitude – and they got the wilderness. We choose our attitudes.” – p. 29

II. What Exactly Do We Mean by Attitude?

A. Attitudes are Patterns of Thinking

- these patterns are shaped by a lot of different influences.

Input: What are some of the influences upon our attitude?

- Parents / Church / Friends

- that’s why the following verses are important to consider:

- **Proverbs 13:20** He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.
- **1 Corinthians 15:33** Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."

Illustration: Tad Guyre's song last week on Father's Day – "I want to be like You (i.e. Jesus) because he (referring to this son) want to be like me!"

B. Attitudes are Patterns of Thinking Formed Over a Long Period of Time.

- Look at the track record of Israel – the history is there – riddled with wrong attitudes . . . and GOD'S MERCY and FORGIVENESS!
- Nobody 'suddenly' becomes _____ (a complainer, adulterer, adulterous, thief, etc.)
 - > **It happens because of a series of soft little choices that make it easy to sin the next time!**
- Granted, their lives were hard in Egypt – but some of them chose *complaining* and *resentment toward God* while others in the exact same circumstances chose *thankfulness* instead!

Point: Wrong attitudes are hard to change because they are habitual, harmful ways of thinking about life and circumstances.

- Remember the *Law of the Harvest* we talked about last week – this one really hits the parenting dynamic – i.e. what you do as a parent has a HUGE impact on your children!
 - > the whole generation of doubters/complainers died just a few miles from the land flowing with milk and honey?

[**READ Numbers 14:22-35** – note the graphic language and specific details]

- > You've heard this before: **Choices have consequences!**

C. You can't change an attitude until you chose it.

- > But if you are willing to say, "I choose my attitude," then a different choice becomes possible

II. God's View of Complaining: Complaining is sin!

- This wasn't just a problem that Israel had – the NT church struggles with this, as do WE!

- **Philippians 2:14** Do all things without grumbling or disputing;

Input: What does complaining say about the nature of God? [it is an attack on His character]

*** Complaining questions God's sovereignty**

- It comes down to why God let's things happen (circumstances – or the people he brings into your life)
- Remember the definition: Complaining is expressing dissatisfaction with a circumstance that is not wrong and about which I'm doing nothing to correct.
- It may be helpful to keep this distinction: **Criticism involves people; complaining involves circumstances**

A. Complaining is not just outward (verbal anger), but also what we think (inner man)

- That's why the Psalmist wrote:

- **Psalm 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; 24 And see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.**

- God is listening – look at some of the complaints recorded in Exodus

- **Exodus 14:12 "Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians '? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness."**
- **Exodus 15:24 So the people grumbled at Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?"**
- **Exodus 16:3 The sons of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the LORD'S hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."**
- **Exodus 17:3 But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses and said, "Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"**

B. The worst kind of complaining is about adversity (may be a trial or God's judgment – there is really no clear way to know, unless there is a clear sin in your life that you are not willing to handle – e.g. a church discipline issue, etc.).

- **Hebrews 12:5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; 6 FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."**

1. God has entrusted to every person a measure of adversity.

- **1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.**

- Explain how God never gives us more than we can handle!

2. God allows adversity for a purpose.

Input: Why does God allow adversity to come our way?

#1: His glory – so He can be glorified in the process

#2: For our good – Romans. 8:28-29

- **Galatians 4:19 My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you.**
- **2 Corinthians 12:9 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am**

well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

- **James 1:2** Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

Point: The bad thing isn't the adversity; it's or response to it!

- We need to remember this: God hates our complaining! – look at the following verses

- In addition to Numbers 11: 1, 10, 33 . . .

- **Numbers 12:9** So the anger of the LORD burned against them and He departed.
- **Numbers 25:4** The LORD said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of the people and execute them in broad daylight before the LORD, so that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel."
- **Numbers 32:14** "Now behold, you have risen up in your fathers' place, a brood of sinful men, to add still more to the burning anger of the LORD against Israel.
- **Psalm 7:11** God is a righteous judge, and a God who has indignation every day.

Input: What attribute of God do you think is the focus here? [HOLINESS of God!]

"In His infinite transcendence, God can both love us extravagantly and hate our sin passionately at the same time. God can embrace us and forgive us eternally but judge us in the moment because of our attitudes that are not pleasing to Him. This concept may be a bit confusing to us, but it is perfectly clear to the Lord. He loves us and hates sin. Both are true." – p.39

"Even in this day of grace, God's fire still consumes in judgment. He judges a complaining attitude as surely as He judged the people of Israel in the desert. But, for now, God's fire doesn't consume our existence; it scorches our happiness. God's fire consumes all that is fresh and healthy and life-giving in our lives. And life become a wilderness." – p. 40

IV. Let's Talk Solution

– Put off/put on principle of Ephesians 4:22-24 – especially note v. 23

Put off	Put on
Wrong View of God:	Right View of God
Wrong View of Circumstances	Right View of Circumstances

A. Am I a complainer? – let me ask you these clarifying questions:

- What two or three things about your life would you most like to change?
- Are you complaining about those things verbally or nonverbally?
- Are you accepting and thankful or resisting and complaining?

B. Am I reaping the consequences of complaining in my relationship with God?

- how is my level of joy, peace, -- am I growing in my love for God (fruit of the Spirit)

C. Am I willing to repent?

- We need only repent – agree with God that our complaints are sin – and choose to turn from complaining and ask His forgiveness.

PRAYER CARDS – cover this, encourage them to use it!

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Input: Why is complaining such a battle when we all agree that complaining changes nothing?

* **Those who choose murmuring as their lifestyle will spend their lifetimes in the _____!**

* **We Choose Our Attitudes!**

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II. What Exactly Do We Mean by Attitude?

A. Attitudes are _____ of _____

Input: What are some of the influences upon our attitude?

B. Attitudes are patterns of thinking formed _____.

* It happens because of a series of soft little choices that make it easy to sin the next time!

> _____ have _____!

C. You can’t change an attitude until you admit you _____ it.

III. God’s View of Complaining: Complaining is _____!

Input: What does complaining say about the nature of God?

* **Complaining questions God’s _____.**

* Criticism involves _____; complaining involves _____

A. Complaining is not just _____ (verbal anger), but also what we _____ (inner man)

B. The worst kind of complaining is about _____

1. God has entrusted to every person a _____ of adversity.

2. God allows adversity for a _____.

Input: Why does God allow adversity to come our way?

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. 1 Corinthians 10:11

. Romans 15:4

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- C. Am I willing to repent?**