

## Complaining

We all do it. We complain about potholes and bad roads, and then complain about roadwork and repair crews slowing us down. We complain about backed up traffic, and then complain about the noise, detours, and delays that are necessary to widen roadways or build new ones. We complain about the drive-through bank teller taking too long while we sit in six-way (or more) leather air-conditioned/heated seats. We complain about a teenager who's on their first job or a waitress who's serving half or more of the restaurant getting our order wrong or being too slow. And of course, the songs at worship service were either pitched high too or too low or led too fast or too slow or we never really liked that particular hymn anyway. So, we complain. We don't mean to be selfish, ungrateful, and opinionated, but we are anyway.

*“Do all things without **grumbling** (‘complaining,’ NIV) or **disputing** (‘arguing,’ NIV); that you may prove yourselves blameless and innocent children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain,” Phil.2:14.* For our purposes here, there are two primary words under consideration: *goggusmus* (*gong-goos-mos*), translated as “*grumbling*,” means to murmur, or a secret displeasure not openly avowed; and *dialogimos* (*dee-al-og-is-mos*) translated as “*disputing*,” in this case basically means to argue. What they have in common is inward displeasure- whether muttered privately to one's self or a sympathetic few, or openly proclaimed for everyone to hear. Either way, the *grumbler/complainer* and the *disputer/arguer* is not pleased with whatever/whoever is presumed responsible. We, included me, need to just **STOP**:

- **Stop Grumbling/Complaining and Disputing/Arguing**- obviously. Otherwise, we are neither “*blameless*” nor “*innocent, children of God above reproach*,” and we certainly aren't being the kind of “*lights in the world*” that we should be, Phil.2:15.
- **Stop being Selfish**, as it is usually a root-cause of complaining and disputing. We just want our way, and when we don't get it or can't have it, we grumble, mumble, and complain or argue. It shouldn't escape our notice that this chapter began with the admonitions to “*Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but let each one of you regard one another as more important than himself*” and to “*not merely look out for your own interests, but also for the interests of others*,” Phil.2:3-4. If we'll stop be so concerned with and intent on our own interests and having our own way, we'll find far less about which to *grumble* and *complain*.
- **Stop being Ungrateful**. It has been said many times in many ways that if we will just stop and “count our blessings,” most of the things we *grumble* and *argue* about will seem far less important. In fact, we'll probably be ashamed of them, and of ourselves for complaining about them. Simple appreciation/gratitude goes a long way towards eliminating complaining specifically, and improving our overall selves... and gratitude with contentment, well that's just the “coup de gras” of selfish grumbling and arguing, cf. 1Tim.6:3-8!
- **Stop being So Opinionated**. I've said for a long time, “Opinions are like noses- pretty much everyone has one; it's just where you stick 'em that counts.” While my/your opinions matter, we have to understand that they matter mostly to me/you.

You and I may not be able to help having opinions (though surely we can limit the number of them) but we can help sharing them so freely. Did the other person ask for your/my opinion? If so, share it reservedly and with gracious consideration, cf. Col.4:5-6; if not, keep it to yourself, cf. Prov.10:19 and Eccl.6:11.

While there is a time and a place for well-meant and graciously-delivered constructive criticism, *grumbling/complaining* and *arguing/disputing* is just wrong-headedly *selfish*, and usually only proves just how *ungrateful* and *opinionated* we are... at least to everyone else if not to ourselves. We can and must be and do better in these regards.  
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