

Discussion Questions:

1. Read, reflect, and discuss each of these passages individually.
 1. Don't Just Settle (Philippians 2:12-13)
 2. Change Your Perspective (Philippians 2:14-16)
 3. Learn to Celebrate (Philippians 2:17-18)
 4. Serve Others (Philippians 2:19-24)
 5. Go All In (Philippians 2:25-30)
2. As you reflect on these passages as a whole, what stands out the most to you? Why?
3. As you reflect on the message, what one principle or insight stands out as being particularly
 - o helpful?
 - o insightful?
 - o difficult to grasp?
 - o challenging?
4. What do the passages and the message teach you about God? What do they teach you about yourself?
5. How could the next week be different if you incorporated these truths into your life?



Question: "What does the Bible say about complaining?"

Answer: The Greek word translated "complainer" means literally "one who is discontented with his lot in life." It is akin to the word *grumbler*. Complaining is certainly not a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and, in fact, is detrimental to the peace, joy, and patience that come from the Spirit. For the Christian, complaining is destructive and debilitating personally and only serves to make our witness to the world more difficult. Who, for instance, would be attracted to a religion whose adherents are dissatisfied with life and who continually grumble and complain?

The first complainer was Adam who, after he and Eve disobeyed, complained to God that "the woman you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it" (Genesis 3:12). The son of Adam, called Cain, also complained, although undoubtedly within himself (Genesis 4:6). We also know of the complaints made by Moses, when he met God at the burning bush (Exodus 3–4). Also, Moses cried to the Lord repeatedly for deliverance from the Israelites' grumbling and idolatry (Exodus 17:4; 32:31-32). We also know of the complaints that David offered up to the Lord in the Psalms (Psalm 2:1; 12:1-2; 22:1) and the complaints made by the prophets concerning the idolatry of the Jewish nation. However, the book of Job offers the most in the way of complaints toward God, and yet Job did not sin (Job 1:22, 2:10). That is not to say that the aforementioned people never sinned in voicing their complaints to God, but Job was a man who was able to sanctify his complaints, and that took humility.

Clearly, as believers we are challenged not to grumble or complain (Philippians 2:14-15; 1 Peter 4:9); rather, we are to love one another deeply so that we may become "blameless and pure" in God's eyes. If we grumble and complain, it shows how worldly we still are (James 4:1-3). A complaining spirit leads to fighting and quarrelling because complaints come from unfulfilled desires, which lead to envy and strife. Was that not at the root of the problem with the sons of Israel, when they chose to dispose of their brother Joseph, because of his dream (Genesis 37:3)?

Finally, while it is not wrong to complain to God, it is wrong to complain about God. Those that did so met the anger of the Lord, as was the case of Moses' sister Miriam (Numbers 12) and Korah and Dathan (Numbers 16). But note that they spoke against God's servant and, in doing so, spoke against God Himself. If we must complain, let it be to Him about our own sinfulness so that He will forgive and cleanse us (1 John 1:9) and put within us a new heart, one that rejoices rather than complains.