**Our Addiction**

Most of us, even us “faithful Christians,” are addicted. Our “drug of choice” isn’t Meth, Fentanyl, or even Alcohol- it’s ***complaining****.* Think about it: Can you go even one day without complaining about something?

The NT is clear about the need to detoxify ourselves from this very addictive, consuming, and destructive “habit”…

* Jas.5:9, *“Do not* ***complain****, brethren, against one another, that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.”* The word translated as *“complain”* is the Greek term ***stenazo****,* and refers to a *“sigh”* or *“to groan.”*
* Jude 16, *“These* (*“ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ”* from vv.4ff) *are* ***grumblers****, finding fault, following after their own lusts, they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.”* Here, *“grumblers”* comes from the word *goggustes,* which is a *murmurer-* one who discontentedly *complains* (especially against God).
* Phil.2:14-15, *“Do all things without* ***grumbling*** *or disputing, that you may prove yourselves to be 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.”* The word translated as *grumbling* is simply the verb form of the noun used in Jude 16, and means essentially the same.

Since they’re all interrelated and interconnected, let’s just lump ***complaining, grumbling, murmuring****,* and ***groaning*** altogether and deal with them as the same general “addiction.”

**What causes this “addiction”?** There are a few clues in the passages above, especially Jude 16. Note: 1) *fault-finding* in others usually stems from perceived inadequacies in self, so we “feel better” about ourselves by belittling others; 2) *lust* is inordinate or excessive desire(s) that are typically wrong in the first place, so to get our “fix” for these cravings we 3) speak *arrogantly* as if “we” aren’t guilty of the same faults we’re *complaining* about in others; and, 4) *flatter* the person to whom we’re *complaining* about a third party in order to *gain an advantage.* What’s the “root cause” of all these “signs” and “symptoms”? Primarily two things: a skewed and hypocritically entitled view of self, and a general disregard for and disdain of others. Simplified, **we care more for and about “self” than anyone and everyone else.** So we *complain* and *grumble* about everyone and everything that does suit “me.”

**How do we “detox” from it?** A few things come to mind that will help us (at least I’m going to give them a try!)…

* **Remember that *“the Judge is standing right at the door”* (Jas.5:9) and hears and will *“render account”* for *“every careless word”* we speak, Matt.12:36.** We may not think our constant *grumbling* and *complaining* is a “big deal” (addicts invariable downplay the seriousness and effects of their addiction!), but it’s obvious from 1Cor.10:10-11 that God sees things differently!
* **Check “Self” and the arrogant and entitled perspectives that distort a clear view of “me.”** Truly seek to emulate Christ by doing *“nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself”* and to *“not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others,”* Phil.2:3-4.
* **Truly strive *“to be content in whatever circumstances I am,”*** Phil.4:11. “Yes,” I realize Paul was speaking specifically of his *financial circumstances,* but if he learned to be *content “with humble means”* (next to nothing but the barest necessities of life, cf. 1Tim.6:7-8), surely I/we can do so when the simplest matters don’t go to suit me/us rather than resorting to our “drugs of choice”- complaining, grumbling, murmuring.

I don’t intend to minimize or downplay “drug addiction” or its devastating effects by this comparison. But I do see myself (and others) being badly “addicted” to constant *grumbling* and *complaining…* about virtually everything. *“With it* (the tongue) we *bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men* (or at least ***complain*** about them! PCS)*, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing* (or ***complaining,*** PCS)*. My brethren,* ***these things ought not to be this way****.*” Let’s kick the *grumbling* and *complaining* “habit”! (Philip C. Strong; Viking Drive Church of Christ; 3791 Viking Drive, Bossier City, LA; online at vikingdrivechurchofchrist.com; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)