

NUMBERS 11:1-35

CURES FOR COMPLAINING

"In addition to teaching the counselee how to avoid future failure (and what to do to get out of it if he fails to avoid it), the counselor wants to teach him biblical principles and methodology for handling yet unknown difficulties that he will encounter. This stance is basic to all good counseling. The stance, to which I have referred, grows out of and corresponds to the way that God handles us in His Word. The Bible is not a catalog or encyclopedia of all possible problems with solutions attached to each. Rather, it is a collection of books containing principles that cover all of life, together with a great number of life situations that demonstrate how those principles apply and may be put into practice. Sometimes, as a result of this fact, the very situation that one faces in counseling is dealt with in detail... Counselees must be made aware of these facts and taught something of a biblical methodology in using the Bible to meet life situations."¹ – Jay Adams

A. PRINCIPLES

1. Complaining offends God, v. 1-6
2. God hears complaining, v. 1
3. God hates complaining, v. 1-3
4. Those guilty of complaining need a mediator to extinguish God's wrath, v. 2
5. Greed compliments complaining, v. 4
6. Grief follows complaining, v. 4
7. Complaining indulges presumption, v. 4
8. Complaining arises from the misuse of the memory, v. 5-6
9. Complaining ignores the good, v. 7-9
 - a. An aptness of comparison
 - b. An admiration of appearance
 - c. An accounting of usefulness
 - d. An adoration of generosity
10. Complaining tempts those around us, v. 10-15
11. Complaining demands new manifestations of God's power, v. 9, 23, 31-33
12. Complaining may bring God's discipline, v. 18-20

¹ Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979), 122-213.

B. PRACTICES

1. Describe what complaints of yours God has heard recently.
2. Confess these complaints to God (and other appropriate parties) as sin.
3. List those to whom your complaining has become a burden.
4. Inquire how your complaining has produced difficulty for others.
5. Write out five demands that your complaints have placed on God.
6. Recall a past occasion for complaint that, in due time, has proven to be God's merciful providence to you.
7. Calculate how much meat was gathered by the complainers.
8. Consider why your own complaints have been unreasonable and unwarranted.
9. Seek God's forgiveness and the forgiveness of the recipients of your complaints.
10. List thirty reasons for thanksgiving concerning those (people or circumstances) about which you have found yourself complaining.
11. In what ways might greed, presumption, or other sins be contributing to your complaints?
12. Consider whether complaining has introduced other sins and trouble into your life.
13. When tempted to complain (especially about someone dear to you), recall how God brought that person into your life at first.
14. Choose someone against whom you have noticed a complaining disposition. List 20 ways that person is (or could be) useful to the Lord. List 20 ways they are useful to others.
15. Prayerfully thank God when tempted to complain.
16. Remember God's gracious salvation and acknowledge to God in prayer that your current circumstances were brought about by the same God who has saved, is saving, and will save you.