

Murmurers, Beware!

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Paul warned, "Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and perished by the destroyer" (1 Cor. 10:10). Again, he ordered, "Do, all things without murmurings and questionings" (Phi. 2:14). It is plain enough from these inspired statements that murmuring is a sin.

What is "murmuring"? Harper's *Analytical Greek Lexicon* defines the Greek word from which "murmur" is translated as "a muttering, a low and suppressed discourse, the expression of secret and sullen discontent, complaint." That bunch of miserable malcontents that fussed about everything God did for them as he led them toward Canaan was intolerable to God. He destroyed the whole generation. They could not see the many, wonderful blessings that were theirs only the few temporary inconveniences, which they played up to major proportions. And, of course, they didn't like the way God was doing things giving Moses all of that authority and expecting them to enter an alien land and do battle with giants. We look at them as foolish ingrates.

Unfortunately, like Jesus said of the poor, the murmurers "we have always with us." God cares no more for them now than He did long ago. Why? Because: they discourage and demoralize others by planting doubts. They raise unfounded questions about good works, good people and Bible truths. Like termites, they quietly go about their destructive work. The result of their work can be measured, in good works and good people seriously damaged and sometimes destroyed. Lacking the power or self-discipline to exert any positive influence, their only hope of gaining attention is in debunking, defeating and discouraging the good that others would do.

Murmuring is never appropriate. If something or someone justly deserves criticism and correction let there be open discussion with the party involved. If something unscriptural is being done in a church, let it be opposed without fail. Paul didn't go around murmuring and backbiting against Peter to other brethren, but he "resisted him to the face" (Gal. 2:11). If folks don't like something about the personal evangelism program, the preaching, the educational program or a hundred other things that are going on in an active church, why can't they be mature enough to express themselves in a helpful way, rather than just "bellyaching?" Could it be that the chief enjoyment some get out of life is trying to tear down rather than to build up?

The next time you get the urge to murmur about things that really don't matter go off to yourself and fuss to your heart's content. Dedicated disciples do not fan fires of discontent in secret conversation.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, November 25, 1982, of which I was editor.]

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