Devotion #275

**Complaining: Not a Good Plan**

**Numbers 11:1 (NASB)** *“Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the hearing of the LORD; and when the LORD heard it, His anger was kindled, and the fire of the LORD burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp.”*

Have you ever working really hard to find just the right gift for someone only to have their facial expression tell you when they open it that it wasn’t what they wanted? Or have you ever worked hard just to make ends meet and provide for yourself and your family only to have them say they aren’t satisfied? Or have you ever worked hard at preparing a meal only to have one of your family members complain because it didn’t taste good, or, instead, they fixed something else because they didn’t want what you fixed? I’m thankful that has never happened in our house. Not!

The truth is that kids complain and complain about many, many things. But guess what, kids grow up to be adults who also complain. The only difference is adults hide their complaining a little better. Instead of throwing a fit or screaming and crying because junior got more ice cream than they did, adults complain by making off-handed comments or giving the silent treatment, etc., still their hearts are complaining. When those things happen to us, if we are the ones who gave the gift or fixed the meal or whatever, we just say, “Fine. You can do it yourself or fix it yourself.”.

But have you ever wondered how God feels about our complaining? In Numbers 11, we have a good idea. The people had been freed from 430 years of extremely oppressive bondage in Egypt. They lived each day with only what Pharoah would let them have. In time, God freed them through Moses and miraculous circumstances that only God could do, but it didn’t take long for the people to start complaining. Not only did God miraculously set them free, but He also provided all their needs. Manna, a bread of sorts, was on the ground every morning for them to eat. But soon, they wanted what they had back in Egypt. Listen to what they said, **Numbers 11:5-6 (NASB)** *"We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic, but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna."*

I don’t know about you, but that doesn’t sound like the best way to thank the Almighty, Eternal God for His provision, especially when they had no way to get what they needed. There were no Harris Teeters or Food Lions and, believe it or not, this was before Wal-Mart and Amazon. So, God got ticked at them. Wouldn’t you? He had done everything for them and this was how they would repay Him? Ridiculous!

But, and this is where we need to take a deep breath because you and I do pretty much the same thing and on a regular basis. The Word of God tells us that all things come from Him. (1 Chronicles 29:14) Meaning, you and I have no ability to make food grow. For example, I understand that scientists can create plant life in all sorts of environments, but they can’t make anything grow. Only God can do that. You and I can’t make our bodies keep living. God does that. You and I have no ability to keep our minds working like they should. God does that. So can you hear God saying, “What are you complaining about? Literally, I gave you everything.”. If it weren’t for Him, we would have no ability to survive.

I’m pretty sure the Lord gets tired of our complaining. Maybe He gets as mad at us as He did the Hebrews. Thankfully, His Son, intercedes for us regularly. (Hebrews 2:17) If He did not, you and I would be potentially “stomped into a little greasy spot” as a friend of mind used to say.

We should be very careful not to disrespect our heavenly Father by complaining, no matter the subject. I’m sure that’s why Paul said, **1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NASB)** *“In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus*.” We have so much to be thankful for. Let’s put away complaining, enjoy the life God has given us, and watch our stress levels decrease while our joy increases.