

Pt. 13 “Murmuring Mouths to the Marching Army”

Or Shut Your Mouth and Get to Work

Acts 6...1 Corinthians 10:10....Jude 16

Murmurer Characteristics

1. They promote their own selfish agenda.
2. They complain for two basic reasons...
 - a. to make themselves look good
 - b. to tear down those they dislike.
3. Complainers are easy to identify
 - a. they promote ungodly priorities
 - b. they have no concern for honoring God.

Here are some examples of carnal complaints:

“I don’t think you should wear that tie when you preach. Those stripes are very distracting.”

“The pews in this church are ridiculously hard. Can’t we get some cushions?”

“Every sermon should have some graphics with it. People need to be able to read along with the verses and pictures really help punch home a message.”

“If we use clips from popular movies, that will really grab people’s attention.”

“I don’t care if Betty wants to use wafers for the Communion. I say bread is better.”

“Someone please tell Bob to stop hugging everyone he greets at the door. He’s overdoing it.”

“Why do we always get day old donuts for coffee time? Why can’t we ever have fresh?”

“The lights are too bright in this room and the carpet is such an ugly color.”

“I think all the worship songs should lead up to the message of the sermon. We should have the same theme for the whole service—not a bunch of deviating. The next time someone feels inspired to venture off theme, tell them to stick to the script.”

“Can we make a rule that tall people have to sit in the back so they stop blocking the view?”

“We should insist that the choir wear matching robes. It would look much more professional.”

“You can’t preach on that topic this week. It’s not what we agreed on. No last minute changes.”

“Can we get rid of the new singer? Her voice is terrible.”

“I should get to do the announcements. I’d be better at it than George is.”

“I can’t read this bulletin—the font is too small.”

“I don’t like the messages here. They never apply to me.”

“There aren’t any small groups available on Thursdays and that’s the only time I can come.”

“I think it’s obnoxious for the pastor to wear jeans.”

“I want to dance on stage during the worship time but no one is letting me. That’s not fair. I’m a good dancer.”

- c. Complainers want to be in control.
 - They want everything to be about them
 - they get quite huffy when their demands aren’t immediately accommodated.
- d. Complainers will try to stir up division... as a way of pressuring the leadership to conform to their wishes.

Guidelines for dealing with Complainers...

Step 1: Pray for Discernment

- a. We must always check with the Spirit to make sure that we aren't missing a message from God just because we dislike the messenger.
- b. Once God confirms to us that the person hassling us is acting from carnal motives and is not speaking for Him, then we go on to Step 2.

Step 2: Confront the Complainer

- a. When someone starts complaining about someone else, you should say something like, "If you have a problem with that person, you should speak with them directly."
- b. If the person still tries to get you on their team, then confront them on what they're doing: "I have told you that you need to talk to that person directly. Until you do, don't use me for your gossiping soundboard. I'm not interested."
- c. Because carnal complainers delight in stirring up trouble, extra caution should be taken in dealing with them.
 - One or two mature Christians should be present to witness and assist with the confrontation process.
 - During the confrontation, the specific complaint or series of complaints should be identified.
 - The complainer should have the chance to say why they feel their complaints are valid (likely a repeat of what they've been saying for weeks).
 - It should then be clearly explained by the confronter why those complaints are not going to be satisfied.
 - The decision making process should be explained.
 - If the complainer says no, or if they've already proven that they are unable to accept the decision, then boundaries need to be drawn.

"Spreading gossip, slandering, and intentionally stirring up strife are unacceptable behaviors at this church. We understand that you are having trouble accepting the decisions being made, but if you continue in this divisive behavior, then you will be asked to leave our community until you're able to show more self-control."

Step 3: Address Division in the Community

If an aggressive complainer has already succeeded in causing division in the community before we deal with them, then the whole community needs to be confronted as well. God's view of gossip and backbiting needs to be reviewed from the pulpit, and the flock needs to be reminded of what our spiritual priorities should be so that the community as a whole can get their focus back on track.

Carnal complaining needs to be confronted, not pussyfooted around. When souls show no willingness to restrain their divisive behavior, they need to be ousted until they improve. Firm boundaries are an essential part of maintaining a healthy spiritual environment in the church.

Every problem that's a legitimate problem has a Biblical Answer

Apostles Asked...

What is Our Job? Vs. 4

1. Don't listen to the devil....expect opposition
2. When a problem arises.....don't over-react
3. The Church needs Servants
4. Stand back and allow God to work