



# TALK IT OVER

## KEY SCRIPTURES

*The whole Israelite community set out from Elim and came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt. 2 In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. 3 The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death." ... 6 So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of Egypt, 7 and in the morning you will see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?" 8 Moses also said, "You will know that it was the Lord when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the Lord."*  
**Exodus 16:1-3, 6-8 NIV**

*...You are not grumbling against us, but against the Lord."*  
**Exodus 16:8b NIV**

*In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron.*  
**Exodus 16:2 (NIV)**

*Do everything without complaining and arguing, 15 so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people.*  
**Philippians 2:14-15 NLT**

*So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. They greeted each other and then went into the tent. 8 Moses told his father-in-law about everything the Lord had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel's sake and about all the hardships they had met along the way and how the Lord had saved them. 9 Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the Lord had done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians.*  
**Exodus 18:7-9 NIV**

Words are powerful. They can beat us down and lift us up. They wound and they heal. The right words at the right time can be exactly what we need to hear—or what we need to say. Let's allow God to change our hearts through this new series so that, in turn, our mouths will change.

**Start talking.** Choose a good conversation starter for your group.

- What do you complain about most?
- When life throws you a curveball, or when you simply mess up, how do you typically respond: Get up, brush yourself off, and move on? -OR- Engage in a full-scale complain-a-thon, dragging friends and the local barista along for the ride?

**Start thinking.** Questions to get your group thinking.

- Can you briefly describe a time when you found yourself complaining about something for which you were previously thankful (Ex. a job God miraculously provided is now frustrating)?
- Read Exodus 16:8b aloud. How would it change your view of complaining if you knew God was the end recipient?

**Start sharing.** Choose questions to create openness.

- Pastor Brandon said that complaining clouds our perspective (like complaining about the clutter from having so much stuff). In what area(s) has complaining clouded your perspective?
- Discuss the statement: "When our focus is on ourselves, our perspective gets skewed." Agree or disagree? Why?
- How might complaining be contagious? (See Exodus 16:2) When/where have you experienced this phenomenon?
- Pastor Brandon said: "Complaining might afford a quick connection with others but it will weaken your influence with them." Why is this so? What other damage might complaining do to our relationships?

**Start growing.** These questions will challenge us to stretch our thinking.

- Read Philippians 2:14-15 (NLT) aloud, keeping in mind that Paul was chained to a Roman guard when he wrote this letter. What are you "chained to" that is tempting you to complain? Are there steps you can take to change the circumstance itself? If not, how could *you* change so as to add life in this circumstance instead of complaining about it?
- Do you believe it's possible to be honest without being a complainer? How so? What's the difference? Perhaps recall how Moses chose to focus on the good that God had done instead of all that was difficult (See Exodus 18:7-9).



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**\* Group Leader:** Invite people to pray and even repent during this time for their own complaining nature. Model for your group a brief prayer of encouragement for someone after they share, such as:

*“Lord, thank You for what You’ve revealed to (name) tonight. Help her now to find the strength and the will to change her perspective and become thankful instead, adding life to her challenging circumstances.”*

**After everyone who desires to pray has done so, conclude the prayer time as God directs.**

**Here’s a suggested prayer:**

*“God, You are so good to us. We have so much to be thankful for. You made us. You saved us. You love us. Help us to see all the blessing in our lives. Teach us to turn our struggle into rejoicing. We can pray this way because of You and what You’ve done through Jesus. Amen!”*

**Start responding & praying\*.** Be bold and pray with power.

- Do you believe that you more often need to change your circumstances or your perspective?
- What is the Holy Spirit speaking to you right now about your own level and frequency of complaining?
- Even though some of us are suffering, how can we rejoice together as a group in a way that gives God honor?
- What are some blessings you haven’t been grateful for lately? How can you regularly turn these blessings into gratitude toward God?

**Start doing.** Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Declare a complaining-free week. Report back to each other throughout the week about how it’s going.
- Hold yourself accountable for every complaint by putting a penny (or a quarter!) in a jar each time you catch yourself complaining. Bring the jar to next week’s group meeting to celebrate (or repent).
- Commit to read Philippians 1:12-13 each morning this week before you start your day. During the day, consider how you could flip your perspective about the struggle you’re facing, like the Apostle Paul did.