

Complain Freely

Psalm 10

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It is not always wrong to complain. The Bible is full of complaints; we see this in the Psalms. The Psalmist creatively brought their complaints to God, displaying their honesty and intimacy with Him. Through godly complaints, we neither allow anger or denial to shape our hearts. Instead, through biblical complaints, we pour out our pain and frustration to God and seek to anchor these laments in the gospel and find in God the comfort, hope and strength we need.

Psalms 10 teaches us how to complain the right way. It begins with two strong complaints (v1).

2 things to do in your heartache and pain

1) Ask your questions to God

The posture in asking our questions to God is never out of anger towards Him. The Psalmist, being in circumstances that seemed far away from the goodness of God, turned towards God and asked two questions:

#1 *Why, O LORD, do you stand far away?* (v1a) – The Psalmist, while referring to God as ‘LORD’ (the covenantal God that keeps His promises), felt that God was far away from him and His promises. These feelings should not be dismissed as invalid or sinful. These questions are part of the journey of faith.

#2 *Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?* (v1b) – The Psalmist felt that God was withdrawn and ignoring him. He was struggling with God and was being extremely honest with his feelings towards Him. In his struggle, he brings his complaints before God. This is a godly and righteous response. Like the Psalmist, we need be real and honest with our feelings towards God. Complaints give voice to hard questions. It is in times of our suffering, when God chooses not to intervene, that the Psalms gives us full permission to question and complain to God (Ps. 22:1, 44:23-24, 13:1-2, 35:17, 74:10). If we really want to be honest with God, the real us must meet the real God. It is in that vulnerable state that we find intimacy with Him.

2) Tell your frustrations to God

vv2-4 – The Psalmist expressed his frustration towards the lack of justice. He felt completely helpless. He turned his powerless position into a platform to cry out to God. Instead of letting his frustrations and circumstances rule his heart, his blunt complain redirected his heart to lay out his frustrations before God. We need to turn the helplessness we feel into deep dependence on God. By opening our hearts and lamenting towards Him, we come under His wings and make God our refuge. Complaints are not just a series of grievances; they are steps leading to bold asking and deep trusting.

3 things we do to complain rightly

1. Come with your pain and not your pride
2. Come with the Bible and complain with the Psalms
3. Never complain for the sake of complaining – complaining is not a means to an end, it is the means to get to God.

v12 & v14 – The complaints naturally led the Psalmist to question God and the acknowledgement of God as the One who sees all things. In our pain and suffering, we need to know where we are coming from and going to (Gen. 16:8). God heard all of Hagar’s misery and came down to her (Gen. 16:11). When Hagar saw God as the One who sees all things, she experienced His wonder and grace.

Jesus came down to meet us in our misery. On the cross, He became the Man of sorrow to end all evil and injustice. He knows pain and misery, and because He knows, He can meet us in our misery. Cry out to God with honest questions and complaints and let Jesus draw close to us!