**[Faith and Conversation](https://faithencounters.impart.org/2024/02/29/faith-and-conversation/)**

[February 29, 2024](https://faithencounters.impart.org/2024/02/29/faith-and-conversation/) [Martha Rodman](https://faithencounters.impart.org/author/martharodman/)[Leave a comment](https://faithencounters.impart.org/2024/02/29/faith-and-conversation/#respond)

*The tongue can bring forth death or life, those who love to talk will reap the consequences. Proverbs 18:21. NLT*

*Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it and indulge it will eat its fruit and bear the consequences of their words. Proverbs 18:21 AMP*

I want you to use your imagination. Pretend you are back in the Old Testament times. About one year ago, you are part of a scene where God miraculously helps you and at least 600,000 fighting men, their wives and children and foreigners who escaped with you from the bondage of Egypt. Together you walk across the Red Sea on dry land. Look up and see the cloud by day, leading you and the others and the pillar of fire leading you at night . More miracles are happening as you are called to pick up manna for food every morning. Can you taste its sweetness? Are you one of the women who try different recipes? Which tribe are you with? Did you willingly contribute to the items needed to help construct the tabernacle? Or are you one of the artisans that worked with gold or spun the fabric? These were real people embarking on an amazing journey.

How exciting, scary and a bit overwhelming it must have been. The joy of the escape, the blessing of God leading them must have been so awesome. I can hear them discussing the miracles over and over. But we know no matter how many amazing miracles they saw and participated in, the excitement began to fade…and grumbling began. *Soon the people began to complain about their hardship, and the Lord heard everything they said. Then the Lord’s anger blazed against them, and he sent a fire to rage among them, and he destroyed some of the people in the outskirts of the camp. Numbers 11:1. NLT.* This seems pretty extreme, doesn’t it? I think it reveals God’s thoughts about grumbling and un-thankfulness. I know He is gracious, merciful and kind, but reading this story is sobering. God does not like grumbling.

Unfortunately, it doesn’t stop there. After the fire, we find the foreigners who left Egypt willingly; began to grumble as well. *Then the foreign rabble who were traveling with the Israelites began to crave the good things of Egypt. And the people of Israel also began to complain. “Oh for some meat!” They exclaimed. “We remember the fish we used to eat for free in Egypt And we had all the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic we wanted. But now our appetite are gone. All we ever see is this manna!* Have you noticed that all it can take is one person to begin to grumble and complain or be critical and others begin to pick it up? It’s like a contagious virus! Like physical virus’s that get spread through a classroom with immature immune systems, the complaining “virus” can be spread through young believers–or even older saints can be infected if they haven’t been immunized with joy and thankfulness. After the foreigners began to grumble about the food and journey, the Israelites began to complain for meat.

Poor Moses. *Moses heard all the families standing in the doorways of their tents whining.* Don’t think your leaders don’t know when their sheep complain and are grumbling. It makes their work harder. *And the Lord became extremely angry. Moses was also very aggravated.* My friends, emotions happen. We can get frustrated and upset, but it is what we do with them that matters. Moses handled his aggravation by talking with the Lord. We can see he is quite clear on how he is feeling! *And Moses said to the Lord, “Why are you treating me, your servant so harshly? Have mercy on me!* *What did I do to deserve the burden of all these people? Did I give birth to them? Did I bring them into the world? Why did you tell me to carry them in my arms like a mother carries a nursing baby? How can I carry them to the land you swore to give their ancestors? Where am I supposed to get meat for all these people? They keep whining to me, saying, “Give us meat to eat!’. I can’t carry all these people by myself! The load is far to heavy! If this is how you intend to treat me, just go ahead and kill me. Do me a favor and spare me this misery!”* Wow, that is an honest conversation! And it brought some great solutions.

*Then the Lord said to Moses, “Gather before me seventy men who are recognized as elders and leaders of Israel. (verse 16) They will hear the burden of the people along with you, so you will not have to carry it alone. (verse 17b).* When we have a true complaint (or even a perceived one) the right thing to do is take it to the Lord, in faith, trusting Him to bring solutions.

We find the grumbling, criticism and complaints spread to Aaron and Miriam. God defended Moses, but Miriam came down with leprosy. My friends, God loves us to encourage others. He loves for us to speak words of life and *to do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. Colossians 3:17.* The book of James reminds us of the problem our tongues can cause. *It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right! James 3:8-10. NLT.*

We are no different than the Israelites, I am afraid. We can start fires or we can put them out by our words. My friends, the other day as I was praying for our church during a time of intercession, in my minds eye, I saw a bunch of fire buckets sitting around. I asked the Lord, what are they for? He said, I want my people to put out fires of division, disunity, gossip and grumbling.” God has been moving amazing in our church. I haven’t heard of any rumblings, but I felt it was a preventative move. Are you willing to be a fire bucket in your sphere of influence? To guard your heart and tongue from the wiles of the enemy? Can you graciously with loving mercy, correct someone who is stumbling in this area? Let’s determine to guard our conversations. *Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. James 1:19.*

Please don’t think this is a small thing that doesn’t matter. We can either speak life or death. We can speak faith or we can speak doubt. We can encourage others or tear them down. Maybe your very word of encouragement will help someone else make it another day.

*Father, I thank you for helping us in this area. It is so vital we grow in our ability to guard our hearts and what we meditate on concerning our brothers and sisters and our leaders. Help us to talk to you about our concerns, trusting you will give us wisdom and understanding. In Jesus’ Name, amen.*