

BEFORE I SPEAK...

By Carl McMurray

In James 4:9, James writes, “Do not complain brethren, against one another...” It is pointed in a different direction, but the thought is still the same in 1 Corinthians 10:10 where the apostle instructs Christians not to grumble. Surely we understand God’s admonition not to complain or grumble, but when we are unhappy about something, how many of us stop to consider if we are about to sin with our tongue? An article by Cathy Miller in Discipleship Journal addresses this problem with seven good questions to help us break the complaining habit.

1. **Am I the problem?** If I were quiet would there be a problem at all, or am I just being self-centered and wanting things to suit me?
2. **What is my real motive in complaining?** Does my complaint glorify God or help me to serve others in some way? Wanting to make someone else look bad or desiring attention would be impure motives.
3. **Am I being humble, gentle, patient and forbearing with others?** Ephesians 4:1-3.
4. **Am I genuinely interested in submitting to the church’s elders?** Hebrews 13:17. Be careful lest our complaint be little more than a thinly disguised case of rebellion.
5. **Am I demanding that others be perfect?** If not, exactly what mistakes will I allow others to make without complaint? Matthew 7:12 indicates that I should first consider how I would feel if someone took this same complaint to the elders about me.
6. **Can I state my complaint in the form of an encouraging suggestion rather than a hurtful criticism?** Colossians 3:12-14
7. **Am I willing to be part of the solution?** Your willingness to help and be active in solving the problem gives validity to your recommendation. It says you are willing to do more than grumble. Back up your words with actions. James 1:23-25.

Consider the above before you speak against another and God will bless you for your self-control and thoughtfulness toward His family.