

Read: Exodus 17:1-7

The Lord Hears Your Grumbles

Exodus 17:1-3,5,6

The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink."

But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?"

The LORD answered Moses, "Walk on ahead of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

There were an estimated two million people who lived in the desert with Moses. Two million! That is more than twice the amount of those who live in the state of Montana. There are about 2.6 million living in Chicago, 2.3 million in Houston, and 1.7 million in Phoenix. All these places have running water and grocery stores. The desert in which God's people lived didn't have Walmart and not even a single McDonalds! Two million people were thirsty. So, what did they do? They complained. They grumbled. They got angry, so angry that Moses thought the crowd was going to kill him.

How many live in your house? It isn't two million! But you don't need two million thirsty people to hear complaining and grumbling. You just need one boy who doesn't like supper. You just need one girl who doesn't want to make her bed. You just need one person who doesn't like to lose at a game.

Moses had to listen to the unhappy people complain. Does Mom or Dad ever have to listen to grumbling? Does your teacher or friend ever listen to you complain? The people grumbled to Moses, but God was listening.

Grumbling doesn't just tell others that you are unhappy. Not only does grumbling tell God that you are unhappy because you don't have what you want, but complaining often shows that you are unhappy with God. The Israelites were upset because they didn't trust that God was with them anymore.

Instead of grumbling about what you don't have, what could you do? You can pray to your God who loves to provide for his people what they need. Instead of complaining about what you don't

like, what could you do? First, you can show love to others by using your manners and politely say, "No thank you." You can also be thankful for what you do have.

The Lord didn't angrily shout back at the Israelites. He didn't even ignore them. In love he flexed his almighty muscles and caused water to flow from a rock! In love he gives you all that you need to live life here on earth. In love he gave you Jesus to forgive all your grumbling, which is what is needed so that you can have life now on earth and forever in heaven.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Name three things you do every day to take care of your body.
- Who gives you what you need to take of your body?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Give two ways that the Lord provides for you and your family.
- *Evaluate:* Are you a complainer or a thankful child? How can you grow in thanks to God?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- "I wish God would provide water for us from a rock!" Discuss why or why not that is still true today.
- *Agree or disagree.* Christians should be the most thankful people in the world.

Closing Prayer:

Dearest Jesus, thank you for all that we have. Forgive us for grumbling and complaining instead of praying to you for what we need. Above all, thank you for your forgiveness that sets us free to thank and praise you, not for a time, but for an eternity. Amen.