

UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE WHO MURMUR

RC BLAKES

Murmuring is often dismissed as trivial complaining, but the Bible reveals it as a spiritual tool used by the enemy to sow discord, undermine authority, and distract believers from God's divine purpose.

Understanding the biblical nature of murmuring equips us to recognize its deception and take proactive steps to maintain unity and spiritual health.

1. The Agenda of Murmuring

Murmuring Is Demonic at Its Root

The Bible explicitly associates murmuring with a rebellious spirit rooted in Satan's nature.

Revelation 12:10 describes Satan as "the accuser of the brethren" indicating that murmuring is a form of spiritual accusation and division.

REVELATION 12:10 KJV

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

JUDE 1:16 KJV

These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

A. Murmuring Is Designed to Distract from a Vision

When God's people murmur, their focus shifts from God's promises and purpose to negativity and doubt. Numbers 21:4-5 recounts how the Israelites, discouraged by their circumstances, spoke against God and Moses, which led to divine judgment.

NUMBERS 21:4-5 KJV

And they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God, and against Moses, saying, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

Murmuring is the enemy's way of diverting our attention from divine promises to human problems. It magnifies the obstacles while minimizing God's power." — Derek Prince

B. Murmuring Is Designed to Usurp Authority

Murmuring often aims to undermine leadership, casting doubt on God's appointed vessels.

One biblical example is Absalom, King David's son, who murmured against his father's leadership and eventually plotted to overthrow him. His secret murmuring and rebellion led to chaos and tragedy in Israel.

2 SAMUEL 15:1-6 KJV

And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then

Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right: but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. And Absalom said, Moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would give him justice. And it was so, that when any man came near to him to do obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him.

And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so

Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

“Absalom’s murmuring was not loud rebellion but subtle whispers and secret schemes—showing how murmuring often operates behind the scenes, undermining authority from within.” — Matthew Henry

C. Murmuring as a Whisper

Murmuring often takes place quietly, almost imperceptibly—like a whisper. This subtlety makes it especially dangerous because it can spread unnoticed and take root deeply within the community.

“Gossip and murmuring are often carried in whispers, but their damage is loud and devastating” — Vance Havner

NUMBERS 12:1-2 KJV

And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it.

“Murmuring often begins as a whisper—soft, secret, and easily dismissed—yet it has the power to destroy relationships and displace divine authority.” — John MacArthur

2. THE DECEPTION OF MURMURING

A. Murmuring happens as a sneak attack

Murmuring is typically subtle—spoken quietly, behind closed doors, or in private conversations. This covert approach makes it harder to confront and root out.

John MacArthur:

"The whispering serpent of murmuring works in darkness, away from the light of accountability."

B. It Happens Behind Leaders' Backs

Leaders are often unaware of the full extent of murmuring, which allows bitterness and suspicion to grow unchecked. One biblical example is Absalom, King David's son, who murmured against his father's leadership and eventually plotted to usurp the throne. His secret murmuring and rebellion led to chaos and tragedy in Israel.

3. HOW TO NEUTRALIZE MURMURING IN A COMMUNITY

A. Cultivate Transparency and Open Communication

Encourage believers to address concerns directly with leadership, fostering a culture of honesty and trust.

EPHESIANS 4:25 KJV

Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

"Open and honest communication prevents misunderstandings and builds trust within the body of Christ" — Charles Spurgeon

B. Promote Gratitude and Trust

Remind the community of God's faithfulness and the importance of trusting His divine plan.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 KJV

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning

you.

"A heart filled with gratitude keeps our focus on God's goodness and diminishes the temptation to murmur" — Andrew Murray

C. Discourage Gossip and Secret Conversations

Establish clear boundaries against whispering and gossip, addressing murmuring when it surfaces.

PROVERBS 16:28 KJV

A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.

"Gossip and murmuring are seeds of discord; avoiding them preserves unity" — Matthew Henry

D. Strengthen Spiritual Discernment

Pray for wisdom to recognize murmuring early and respond with biblical truth.

JAMES 1:5 KJV

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

Spiritual discernment is essential to identify murmuring before it spreads and causes damage" — John MacArthur

E. Lead by Example

Leaders and mature believers should model positive speech, humility, and trust.

1 TIMOTHY 4:12 KJV

Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

“Leadership in speech and conduct sets the tone for the entire community” — Charles Spurgeon

F. Engage in Prayer and Spiritual Warfare

Recognize murmuring as a spiritual attack and combat it through prayer, declaring God’s truth over the community.

2 CORINTHIANS 10:4-5 KJV

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

“Spiritual warfare through prayer is essential to break the power of murmuring and division.” — Smith Wigglesworth

Murmuring is a strategic tool of the enemy, rooted in rebellion and deception. However, through biblical understanding, prayer, transparency, and a heart of gratitude, believers can neutralize its influence.

Unity and trust in God’s leadership are vital in building a community that honors Him and advances His kingdom.

