

How to Whine Effectively - Part Two

"I can't carry all these people by myself. They are too much for me. If You are going to treat me like this, please kill me right now. If You are pleased with me, don't let me see my misery [any more]."— Numbers 11:14 -15 HCSB

We saw how the Israelites were condemned by God for their arrogant whining. But just nine verses later, Moses whined and got help! How can that be? Why should the Israelites get scorched and Moses get saved? As always, context is everything.

Moses had to feed, water and shelter at least three and a half million people in the middle of a desert. It would have taken five hundred tons of food EACH DAY to feed them all. It would take two freight trains, each a mile long, to provide all that food. And water! It took 11,000,000 gallons...that's a train 1,800 miles long just for water to satiate their thirst. And it probably took another 4,000 tons of wood just to cook the food.

When Moses was given orders to march the people across the Red Sea in one night, we must realize that if they walked double file, the line would have been 800 miles long. At that rate, it would have taken them 35 days to get across. The only way they could possibly get across in one night would be to have a space three miles wide and walk 5,000 abreast.

Understandably, Moses was having a tough go of it. But when he whined, he whined correctly.

First of all, instead of whining to other people, he took his complaint to God Himself. Many people have complained about me, but as often as not they go spreading their negativity to other people rather than coming to me and letting me deal with it! God doesn't appreciate that any more than we do.

Second, Moses identified the problem as being his own inadequacy. He didn't say that God didn't know what He was doing. He just admitted that he felt he wasn't up to the task laid out for him.

Third, Moses was willing to be set aside so that someone else could do the job. Too often we hang on to our ministries far beyond our usefulness. "Ministry" is about serving others. If we start thinking that the ministry is about us and our needs it becomes about recognition, power and control. Moses took the problem to the One who could help, was willing to admit that he may not be up to the job, and was willing to step aside if need be.

And what was the result? Help. Where the people of Israel got axed, Moses got assistance. Now, if the Lord can take care of three and one-half million people, in the desert, it seems to me that he could take care of our problems too. And you know, if we will only put Him first, He will do just that.¹

¹ Romans 8:28; Matthew 6:33