

# **‘Stop Your Whining!’ —God**

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**By Tony Stith**

ZIMMERMAN, Minn.—As I write this, understand that I have one finger pointing out and three pointing back at me. We whine to God about so many things big and little.

It’s not as if we whine like spoiled little children.

“Wahhh, that’s not fair!”

“Wahhh, I want that toy! Give me that toy!”

We know that wouldn’t fly with God. So our whining is more refined, more—spiritual.

“Please, most powerful high benevolent God . . .” or “O merciful Father, who knows all of our needs and answers all of our prayers, please . . .”

And then we proceed to pour out our litany of requests and petitions.

It’s not that asking God to provide for us is a bad thing. If it were, we wouldn’t be instructed to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.” God wants His children to come to Him with their physical needs and concerns. But there is a thin line between asking and whining.

“God, why do You allow our family to keep struggling financially?”

“Why did You let my children abandon their faith?”

“Why can’t You give me the perfect church to attend?”

“Why can’t you change my husband or my wife?”

In short, “Wahhh . . . I follow You, so why aren’t You blessing me?”

When we question God, aren’t we really questioning whether He loves us? After all, if He really loved us He would take care of all of the problems in our lives, wouldn’t He?

Thus we measure whether God really loves us by how He provides for our well-being. God becomes a kind of magic genie in a bottle. If we rub that

magic bottle by doing all the right things and obeying in every way, God will fulfill all our heart's desires. We get so focused on the things we don't have that we forget the one huge thing we do.

The children of Israel spent a lot of time questioning God's love. From the day they were delivered from Egypt, their voices were a constant stream of whining and complaining. It started with their sojourn in the wilderness and didn't let up, even after they entered the Promised Land.

God addresses their whining in Malachi 1: 1-3: "The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. I have loved you, says the LORD. Yet you say, wherein have You loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? says the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness."

Notice how God cuts to the chase here. He doesn't waste time addressing their litany of complaints and unmet requests. He gets to the heart of it:

You don't think I love you? For crying out loud, I chose you! I set My name on you! You are blessed above all the nations. Isn't that enough?"

In God's words to Israel there is a powerful, perspective changer for you and me.

In John 3:16 we read, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Isn't that amazing? Doesn't that blow your mind? God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, loves you so much that He sent His Son to die on a cross for you. He made a way for those He would call to become part of His family. He chose you. He set His name on you. If you never receive one more thing from God in this life, isn't that enough?

Apparently Paul thought so.

In Philippians 4:11-12 Paul writes: "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."

It's not that Paul didn't petition God to provide for his physical and emotional needs. He did. But regardless of the outcome of those requests, he didn't question God's love for Him. He knew he had plenty for which to be thankful, and in that knowledge he was content.

Notice it says that Paul learned these things. I wouldn't go so far as to say Paul was a whiner. But it does seem that he didn't always have the right perspective. It's possible that at one time Paul had to learn to see beyond his physical condition, his physical needs and wants, to appreciate the one amazing gift he did possess.

In 2 Corinthians 12:7-9 Paul says: "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

God used this situation, only one of many in Paul's life, to teach him to be content in the grace that God had provided. God had redeemed him. God had chosen Paul according to His purpose. God said, "Paul, if you get nothing else from Me, my grace should be enough."

It's that lesson that allowed Paul to declare in Romans 8:18, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

I find it encouraging to think that if Paul, a man whom God mightily used, can learn to see beyond today to the awesomeness of tomorrow and let that hope be sufficient to sustain, strengthen and drive Him, then maybe there is hope for this whiner. Maybe I can stop treating God like a genie in a bottle and truly give thanks for the awesome grace that I have been given through the loving gift of His Son. And maybe I can truly come to the place where, from my heart, I can say, "Your grace is sufficient for me." It is enough.