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SESSION THREE

*The Stages
in Test Failure*

The Stages in Test Failure

Introduction

The “Ways of God” Include His “Tests of Faith”

⁴*The LORD is in His holy temple, the LORD’s throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.* ⁵*The LORD tests the righteous.* Psalm 11:4-5a

²³*Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; ²⁴but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me.”* Jeremiah 9:23-24a

⁸*“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways (derek “course of life, mode of action, habitual practice, path which one frequently goes”),” says the LORD.* ⁹*“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”* Isaiah 55:8-9

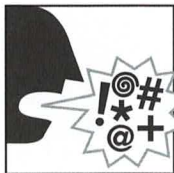
¹³*“Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way (derek “course of life, mode of action, habitual practice, path which one frequently goes”), that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight.”* Exodus 33:13a

⁹*“When your fathers tested Me; they tried Me, though they saw My work. ¹⁰For forty years I was grieved with that generation, and said, ‘It is a people who go astray in their hearts, and they do not know My ways (derek).’”* Psalm 95:9-10

¹³*“Oh, that My people would listen to Me, that Israel would walk in My ways (derek)!”* Psalm 81:13

PART ONE

The Warning Signs of Test Failure



Warning Sign #1: _____

“To express displeasure or dissatisfaction, grumble, protest”

¹Now when the people **complained**, it displeased the Lord. Numbers 11:1a

²³Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. ²⁴And the people **complained** against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?” Exodus 15:23-24

²⁶And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ²⁷“How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who **complain** against Me? I have heard the **complaints** which the children of Israel make against Me.” Numbers 14:26-27



Warning Sign #2: _____

“To struggle in opposition, strive against, argue intensely”

²Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron. ³And the people **contended** with Moses and spoke, saying: “If only we had died when our brethren died before the Lord! ⁴Why have you brought up the assembly of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here?” Numbers 20:2-4

¹³This was the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel **contended** with the Lord, and He was hallowed among them. Numbers 20:13



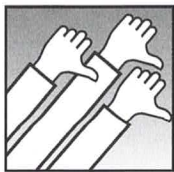
Warning Sign #3: _____

“To refuse to accept, to cast out as unwanted, to seek to overthrow”

⁴So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!” Exodus 17:4

²And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, “If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness!” ⁴So they said to one another, “Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.” Numbers 14:2, 4

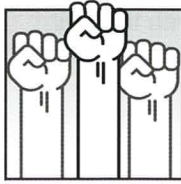
¹⁷Then the Lord said to Moses: “How long will these people **reject** Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them?” Numbers 14:11



Warning Sign #4: _____

“To regard with contempt, disgust, to revile, to loathe”

¹⁹“You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, ²⁰but for a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have **despised** the Lord who is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, ‘Why did we ever come up out of Egypt?’” Numbers 11:19-20



Warning Sign #5: _____

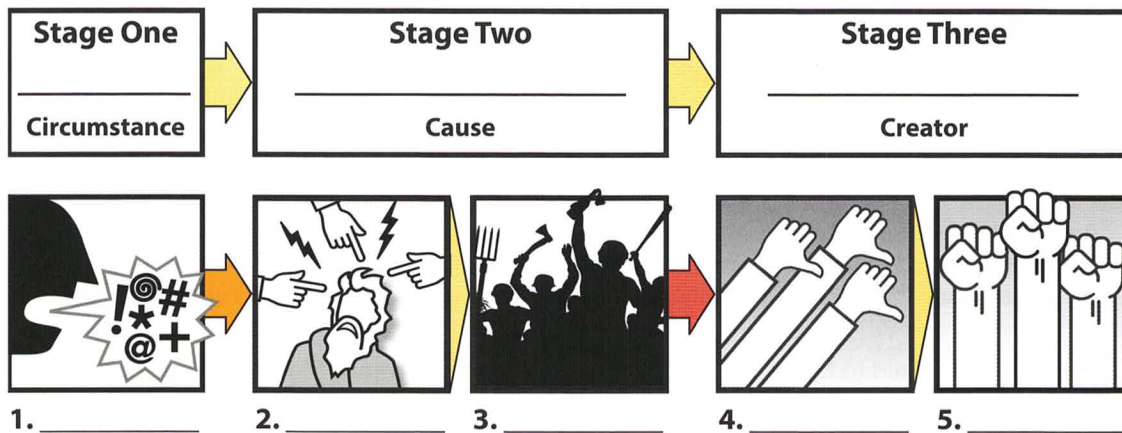
“To refuse to submit, to rise up against authority, to be defiant”

²⁶“Nevertheless you would not go up, but **rebelled** against the command of the Lord your God; ²⁷and you complained in your tents, and said, ‘Because the Lord hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.’” Deuteronomy 1:26-27

⁷“Remember! Do not forget how you provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been **rebellious** against the Lord. ²⁴You have been **rebellious** against the Lord from the day that I knew you.” Deuteronomy 9:7, 24

PART TWO

The Stages in Test Failure



1 The Starting Point of every Faith Failure is to _____

Exodus 15:24: The people **complained** against Moses.

Exodus 16:2: The whole congregation of the children of Israel **complained** against Moses and Aaron.

Exodus 16:8: "The LORD hears your **complaints** which you make against Him. And what are we? Your **complaints** are not against us but against the LORD."

Exodus 16:9: "Come near before the LORD, for He has heard your **complaints**."

Exodus 16:12: "I have heard the **complaints** of the children of Israel."

Exodus 17:3: The people **complained** against Moses.

Numbers 11:1: The people **complained**, it displeased the LORD; for the LORD heard it, and His anger was aroused.

Numbers 14:2: All the children of Israel **complained** against Moses and Aaron.

Numbers 14:27: "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who **complain** against Me? I have heard the **complaints** which the children of Israel make against Me."

Numbers 14:29: The carcasses of you who have **complained** against Me shall fall in this wilderness.

Numbers 16:11: "Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the LORD. And what is Aaron that you **complain** against him?"

Numbers 16:41: On the next day all the congregation of the children of Israel **complained** against Moses and Aaron.

Numbers 17:5: "I will rid Myself of the **complaints** of the children of Israel, which they make against you."

Numbers 17:10: "That you may put their **complaints** away from Me, lest they die."

2 The definition of "complain" is "to express _____"

3 The response of complaining in a grievous or distressful Situation is the trigger point for complaining against the human Source and then for complaining against the _____

4 The Lord views complaining as a serious sin against Him _____

²⁹"The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. ³⁵I the Lord have spoken this. I will surely do so to all this evil congregation

who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.” Numbers 14:29, 35

¹⁰**Nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.** ¹¹**Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.** 1 Corinthians 10:10-11

Conclusion

The Commitment to Replace Complaining With Rejoicing

¹⁴**Do** (*poieo* present active imperative) **all things without complaining** (*gongusmos* “to mutter, murmur, grumble, say in low tone, discontentedly complain”), **and disputing** (*dialogismos* “an inward reasoning, an opinion, a questioning, doubts”), ¹⁵**that you may become** (*ginomai* aorist middle subjunctive “to be, come into existence”) **blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.** Philippians 2:14-15

⁴**Rejoice** (*chairō* present active imperative) **in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice** (*chairō* present active imperative)! Philippians 4:4

¹⁸**In everything give thanks** (*eucharisteo* present active imperative); **for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.** 1 Thessalonians 5:18

POST-SESSION 3 The Stages in Test Failure Interactive Questions

1. **Review:** Sketch out the main chart of this session with the three main stages, then with the five responses people typically have under each stage. Review together until you can repeat the stages with the five key responses, and review Sessions One and Two charts.

2. **Reflect:** What do you think causes people to move from complaining about the Situation to complaining about the human Source, and finally to complaining against our Sovereign God? What builds up and then overflows, pushing us into the next stage?

3. **Respond:** Can you figure out the missing link? Why does God state we are complaining against Him when we are only complaining about the distressing Situation? Discuss God's perspective and contrast His with ours.

4. **Resolve:** For many people, the most lifechanging insight of this session is the role and seriousness of our complaining. Describe how your life would change if you absolutely stopped all internal and external complaining.