

## DEALING WITH NEGATIVITY

**Request:** “How do you deal with people who seem to be pessimistic, negative and complaining? I work with some people who seem to be like this most of the time and it drives me nuts.”

- Pessimism complains that it always rains on a good parade.
- Negativism complains that the glass is always half empty.

These are viewpoints of life based on a certain old man belief patterns. Very often it characterizes the personality of the person.

**However, the request was “how do you deal with people like this?”**

**Therefore this lesson will study five aspects of Dealing with Negativity in people that you have relationships with in life.**

**1. Immediately one person came to mind that struggled with this same problem. It was Moses dealing with the Exodus generation and specifically in the two Meribah experiences.**

In the first Meribah experience, Moses handled it spiritually correct (Ex.17:1-7).

In the second Meribah experience, Moses handled it spiritually incorrectly (Num.20:1-13).

The Exodus generation didn't change in either of the 2 Meribah experiences. They were the same pessimistic, negative, and complaining group. Both times they operated from the flesh (OSN) and OMCD reversionistic thinking.

**2. It was Moses who changed in the second Meribah experience (Num.20:1-13).**

He became more like them rather than more like the Lord in dealing with them. **LORD** - “And while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.” (1 Pet.2:23)

We **cannot change them** any more than we can save them. “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” (Eph.2:9)

But what we must be careful about is that we **do not change ourselves**. We must not response to their bad behavior with bad behavior – “When we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now.” (1 Cor.4:12-13)

**In the second Meribah, Moses chose to fight a spiritual war in the flesh** – “For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Cor.10:4-5)

**3. In the first Meribah experience, Moses dealt with their negativity spiritually correct (Ex.17:1-7).**

He was careful to not take their negativity as personal but rather as an attack against his leadership given to him by the Lord. He understood that it was quarrel with the Lord and not with him – “Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, ‘give us water that we may drink.’ And Moses said to them, ‘why do you quarrel with me? **Why do you test the Lord?**’” (Ex.17:2)

He chose not to take it as a personal attack. **Like Moses we all have a choice.**

The Exodus generation was quarreling about inconsequential matters of life (drinking water / grace provisions) rather than with consequential matter of the word of God (getting out of Egypt and traveling to the Promised Land) and the directive will of God (occupation of the Promised Land).

“But the people thirsted there for water and they grumbled against Moses and said, ‘Why, now have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?’” (Ex.17:4)

**4. As the spiritual leader, it was important for Moses to not lose focus of his mission and directive will of God.**

In the first Meribah, Moses understood that it was a spiritual conflict rather than a personal one – “And he named the place, Massah and Meribah because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the Lord, saying, ‘Is the Lord among us, or not?’” (Ex.17:7)

He understood that their discontent was an attack against the essence of God and His grace provisions and His grace promises – “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?” (Ex.17:2)

“Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.” (1 Thess.5:24)

“So they said to one another, ‘Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt.’” (Num.14:4)

It never dawned to them that the change needed was in their thinking from OMCD to NMDV. That a lapse of time or provisions doesn’t mean a lapse of the Promise (Rom.4:17-21).

It never dawned to them that it wasn’t Moses job to make them happy nor make life easy but to carry out the instructions of the lord and to get them to the Promised Land.

“And he gave some as apostles, and some as **pastor-teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to** the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, **to** a mature man, **to** the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.” (Eph.4:11-13)

**5. It is not our responsibility to change people or their negativity towards God or His word.**

However, it is important that we don’t allow it to change us and neglect the consequential matters of the will of God dealing with our lives.

Their negativity was not Moses’ battle. It was the Lord’s (Num.20:13). Their negativity was part of reversionism - “Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah.” (Ps.95:8; Heb.3:12)

It was more important for Moses to listen to the word of the Lord than the complaining Israelites.

“But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ‘**Because** you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, **therefore** you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have granted them.’” (Num.20:12)