

SHIFT

Week 2 - From Complaining to Thankful

THE MAIN POINT

Complaining about things won't get you anywhere you want to be in life. Yet it's easy to fall into the trap of discontent. This week will challenge students to move from an attitude of complaining to an attitude of thankfulness.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Note cards (7 per student)
- Pens
- Bible

GETTING STARTED

Start off by asking the students to do something for you. For the duration of small group (until they leave) they have to give you their cell phone. Give them 30 seconds to text whoever they need to before handing it over. Don't fight them on it, just strongly encourage. The goal here is to see if they complain about what you're asking of them.

After receiving the phones, go over the rules together and then share with them the first bad attitude: Complaining.

RULES FOR SMALL GROUP:

Commitment - Commit to being at every group meeting (make it a priority!)

Confidentiality - What is shared here stays here.

Be honest or be silent - don't make up an answer just to have one. Sometimes the most honest answer is no answer, so if you need to, just say pass.

Respect - for one another, their thoughts/ideas/opinions (no put downs).

Relay to the students that complaining involves situations in your life, not people. Its expressing dissatisfaction, yet doing nothing to correct it. That it's not just about speaking it out, it has to do with our thoughts.

Imagine this scenario: Your best friend's birthday is in 30 min and you're running a little late. You still have to shower and get ready. You walk over to the bathroom and someone, one of your siblings, is using the bathroom with the door locked. You knock and ask to be let in and they say no, taking longer than needed.

Or imagine you just got home from a super long day of school and practice. When you get home you have dinner waiting for you on the table. You eat it and then walk over to the couch/bed and fall down exhausted. As soon as you lay down on the couch and get comfortable your parent asks you to do the dishes right now.

Feel free to share other examples if you feel the need.

- What would be your personal response if you were put in these situations? Have you ever experienced this scenario?
- In what situations do you most often find yourself complaining?

Remember last week we challenged you by sharing that you can choose your own attitude. It's not always your choice or your fault when you face difficulty. It is your choice how you respond and what your attitude will be toward that difficulty.

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

This is a time where, as the leader, you get to share a part of your story. Be sure and share about how God has worked in your life. This is also a time for you to get vulnerable with the students.

(Leader) Share a time where you complained about a situation in your life. What did it get you? Did it help your situation?

- Can any of you relate? Does anyone have a similar situation?

Hand back the phones to the students and ask them this question:

- How did you feel when I took the phone from you?
- Did you complain with your thoughts or out loud?
- Is it bad to complain about things? Why or why not?

GOING DEEPER

Read Philippians 2:14-16. Read it in a couple versions, including the Message.

- What sticks out to you about these verses?
- Do you think that you complain a lot? Why or why not?

Let's be real...you can agree that we have all complained at least once in our life about a situation that happened we didn't like.

- What are some circumstances in your life that you can/do complain about?
- Why do you think it is so easy to complain?
- Does complaining help your situations?
- How can we change our complaining attitude?

Read Proverbs 17:22

Complaining doesn't change anything, it only makes it worse by dragging us down, but a merry heart (thankful heart) is good like a medicine. When we are positive and have an uplifting attitude it builds us and other around us up.

Let's do an activity to see what it looks like to be thankful.

ACTIVITY

Pass out a flashcard and pen to every student. Have them write 1. 2. 3. On the card. Then have them write 3 things they are thankful for. For instance, 1. Family 2. Home 3. Clothing. After they are done writing them down have them share what they put on the card.

- How did it feel to write these down?
- Was it hard for some to fill out all 3? If so, why?
- Do you think you could've written down more?

TAKE AWAY

Pass out the remainder 6 flashcards to each student. The challenge here is to encourage them for the next week, until you meet again, to write down 3 things that they're thankful for every morning or night. The reason for this challenge is to help create in them an attitude of thankfulness.

Encourage them to choose to be thankful instead of choosing to complain.