

August 2, 2026

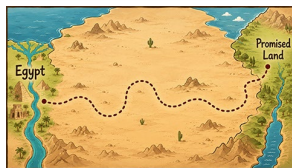


A man with a distressed expression is looking up from the bottom of a deep, circular stone well. The well's walls are made of rough, layered stone, and the bottom is dark and filled with what appears to be water or mud. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the man's face and the texture of the stone.

[illegible]

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So *what's the difference?* Well, while grumbling *and* groaning *seem* to *sound* the same cuz they *both* say, **“This hurts, I don’t want it, and I wish it was over!”** – the *subtle* differences come down to *direction, expectation, and surrender*. Grumbling **campaigns to cancel** – but groaning **concedes to continue**. Grumbling is **resentful resistance** – but groaning is **persistence under protest**. Grumbling demands, **“My will should be done.”** Groaning admits, **“Thy will should be done.”** Which ultimately means grumbling is the sound of **rejecting change** but Groaning is the sound of **growing pains**. And *Israel* sure drives this point home as our *illustration* – after God led His chosen people *out* of *slavery* and *into* the *wilderness*. Cuz even *while* walking the path to *freedom*:



The whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron ... “If only we had died ... in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat.” – Exodus 16:2–3 NIV

I mean, sure, Egypt *enslaved* them, *beat* them, and *murdered* their *kids* – but have you ever had their *pots of meat*?! *Really*?! I guess Snickers is right, **“You’re not you when you’re hungry.”** And it’s *true* – we get weird! They even have a *name* for the trope in *cartoons* where a starving character *hallucinates* and sees their companion as a roast chicken, hot dog, or giant steak! It’s called *Meat-O-Vision*. And it’s a gag we all *get* – cuz *Looney Tunes*, *Garfield*, and *Tom and Jerry* all know, **discomfort distorts perspective!** And since grumbling *amplifies* the voice of our *present pain* – the *more* we do it, the *harder* it is to stay *focused* on *anything* in the *future*. So,

All the Israelites grumbled ... “Why is the Lord bringing us to this land? ... Wouldn’t it be *better* for us to go back to Egypt?” – Numbers 14:2–4 NIV

Oh, *c’mon guys!* Your meat-o-vision has gotten out of control! They’ve lost *sight* of God’s plan that *gave* them the *future* hindsight they’d need to *endure* the *present*: He’s leading them to the good life in the promised land they wanted – *but to do that* – simple geography reveals they’d have to endure a *desert* – without their precious pots of meat! And centuries later, Paul reminds us being God’s chosen people wasn’t necessarily positive:

Do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed ... These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us ... So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! – 1 Corinthians 10:10–12 NIV

And if you think something as *silly* as a pot of *meat* can’t keep *you* from focusing on God’s future you know you *want*, just scroll through last week’s *text messages*, *social media posts*, and *YouTube history*... you *sure* there’s *no* grumbling going on? No *present* problem that’s making *you* pause *your* progress on the path that leads *past this place*? Really check yourself – cuz even a *little* grumbling can lead *you* to death cuz every day *you’re* distracted by *earth’s* discomfort you forget *more* of the future you *were* fighting for. But get this – **the same pain that makes us pause can push us forward.** And before *Israel* *grumbled* on their walk toward freedom, they *groaned* in Egyptian slavery:

The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out ... **[And]** God heard their groaning and remembered His covenant. – Exodus 2:23–24 NIV

Same people; same pain; same God. But, in Egypt, pain drove them *toward* God – unlike the wilderness discomfort which led them *away from* God. Cuz **Groaning cries out for God – Grumbling cries out against God**. And Paul pipes up again to explain why groaning is a good thing:

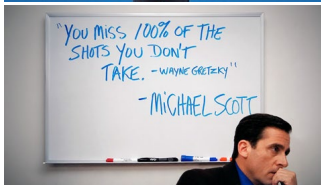


Our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us ... The whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth ... We ourselves ... groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for the redemption of our bodies ... [and] the Spirit Himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. – Romans 8:18, 22–23, 26 NIV

Creation groans; Christians groan; the Holy Spirit groans – all because **God's doing the work to make a broken world born again!** So, *groan* all you want – it's *part* of the *process*, like the *breathing* you learn in Lamaze class that helps you *endure* the pain of *childbirth*! Cuz the present *may feel* like something's *killing* us, but the truth is, something's being *born* through us. And although contractions hurt, you *don't* grumble against the *doctor* and try to *quit* the *closer* you get – you *groan* cuz the *present* pain means you're *closer* to the life you've been *faithfully expecting* for nine *miserable* months. So, **groaning isn't faith failing; it's faith breathing under pressure.**

And it's not just *Lamaze* for *ladies* – do you know why weightlifters *grunt* and *yell* while lifting? Well, studies *show* that the little *burst* of *noise* can *increase* their *power* by *10% or more!* Which means the *sound* *isn't* a sign that the *weight* is winning – it's a *tool* to help us handle heavy weight! Cuz it *braces* the body, *engages* more muscle, and *pushes* us *past* the *pain* to get to *growth*. And similarly, **faithful groaning isn't endurance weakening; it's a tool to handle life's heaviness.** Cuz it *braces* our *heart*, *engages* more *faith*, and *pushes* us *past* the *present* to see *purpose* in the *future*.

But, while our biggest gains come through *groaning*, they're all *lost* if *grumbling* gets its way and keeps the weights away altogether. Like Michael Scott said, **"You miss 100% of the shots you don't take. – Wayne Gretzky"** So, lift and *shout*; to *endure* to the *end*, even Jesus had to let it all out!



[He said:] "You unbelieving and perverse generation ... how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you?" – Matthew 17:17 NIV

Yikes! I guess *perfect patience* still has to blow off a little *steam* to endure those exasperating *Pharisees*! And that should be encouraging! Cuz He's our example – but He doesn't *pretend* people *aren't* exhausting – He just *calls out* the cost of *continuing* to *love* them – and then *does*. So, *how do we do the same?* How do we keep our complaint submitted as a *groan* instead of letting it *campaign* as a *grumble*? Well, *we do* what *He did*: **We give present pain a future perspective.** The way Hebrews describes Jesus's mindset as a model for us:

For the joy set before Him [future focus] [Jesus] [looked back to His present and] endured the cross ... Consider Him who endured such opposition ... so that you will not grow weary. – Hebrews 12:2–3 NIV

You hear that? **The joy ahead didn't make the cross enjoyable – it made the cross endurable.** And knowing *that* is the first step on the path *past* present pain; but *practicing* is what *keeps* us on it! Cuz the only way to *put up* with *this* place is to *frame* our frustration with the *promise* of its *purpose*!

We gotta have the foresight to see what today will look like in hindsight! And here's the good news – we *already do!* Cuz we often say things like, **"You'll be sorry,"** or, **"You'll be glad you did."** Think about that: *You will be glad* – future tense; *You did* – looking backward at *today's* decision. **"You'll be glad you did!"** is hindsight *foresight* in five words – it puts *tomorrow's* eyes in *today's* head.

Listen, a *lot* of people explore *Christianity* cuz they're looking for *present-day* pain-relief, problem-solving, or *prosperity* – but, **Jesus just offers present-day purpose by telling us the future's truth.** And the truth is, if you follow Jesus's example to *learn to endure* all your frustrating hardships, **"You'll be glad you did!"** Not *now* – *in the end!* Now, you gotta just go *through it*, cuz *remember:*



Jesus wept [when His friend Lazarus died] – John 11:35 NIV

He came *here* and experienced *all* the *present* pain to *pave the way* for future *followers* to *trust His path* back home. And to *prove* it was *possible* for *every person*, He had to *live* like every person. So He *wept* when *His friend* died – even though He *knew Lazarus would* live again! In fact, resurrection was mere *minutes* away – and He *still* cried. *Why?* Cuz **understanding can't override experience.** Even *perfect* foresight won't provide emotional *anesthesia*; cuz faith *doesn't* mean *killing* pain; **faith means trusting the future's purpose for the pain.** We can't *avoid* reality – we can only *endure* it. But when we *trust* where reality is *headed*, we can endure it *without* letting it decide who we become. And that's where love comes in – cuz hindsight foresight shows us enduring *will be* worthwhile – but *love* decides *who* is worth enduring *for*.

Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. –
1 Corinthians 13:7–8 NIV

Cuz love may groan under the weight of broken people – but it refuses to let pain turn them into enemies or turn us into bitterness. In *The Great Divorce*, C. S. Lewis is walking through the outskirts of heaven and sees a woman who's constant complaining has kept her out – and he asks why, since it seems kinda severe. And his teacher explains there's hope, depending on whether she is still **"a grumbler, or only a grumble."** In other words: is there still a person *behind* the complaint – or has the person *become* a complaint? *That's* the danger of *unchecked tone!* Cuz **when complaints consume our present, we won't make it to the future!** And this is a *huge* danger today – cuz we're *defining* our identities by what we're *against* instead of the *future* we're *for*. And **when we dwell on what we hate, hate is where we'll dwell!**

So, **check your tone everywhere you speak this week:** Are you *groaning* cuz *loving* people is *costly* – or *grumbling* cuz people *won't* conform to *your will*? Are you *honestly* bringing pain to *God* – or recruiting *others* into *your resentment*? Are you becoming known by the love you refuse to lose – or are you defined by the things you can't stop *criticizing*? *Think about it...* Cuz every *groan* keeps you pointed toward *God* – but every *grumble* pulls your perspective back down to *earth*. And *remember*, you don't have to *silence* your complaints, just *humble* the *grumbles* by *trusting, loving, and following* God while you *groan* and *grow* and endure earth. Cuz one day – in the *not-too-distant future*, you're *gonna* stand before God – and **you'll be glad you did!**