



Stumble, mumble and grumble

My husband is making me some lovely tea this morning, as usual. He often has a rough time to wake up, so I tease him that his morning routine is "stumble, mumble and grumble."

But really, I'm talking about myself (as is typical: what we criticize about others is almost always aimed at ourselves, as other people's quirks and faults most irritate us when they remind us of our own). I irritate myself when I stumble, mumble and grumble.

Stumble

*When you walk,
you won't be
held back; when
you run, you
won't stumble.*

Proverbs 4:12

which only makes me more clumsy. I am a hazard to the people around me as I hesitate.

Thank God that He promises me that I won't stumble, even if there's a big stone in my path!



Mumble

I mumble quite a bit, especially when I'm not sure of myself. For example, I've studied Czech off and on for 20 years, and know many words, but even when I say something that I know well, such as "Dobry den!" ("Good day"), I mumble to hide the fact that I can't say it exactly right or pro-

nounce the words correctly, like a native.

I also mumble when I don't know what I'm talking about, but feel socially obligated to say something.

Maybe I'm talking to someone and, without considering the consequences, nod "yes" when I haven't been listening closely. The follow-up comments bring to light that I don't know what's going on. It's embarrassing and humiliating, and I feel like a ghost, as in this verse from Isaiah:

4 Brought low, you will speak from the ground;

your speech will mumble out of the dust.

Your voice will come ghostlike from the earth;

out of the dust your speech will whisper.

Isaiah 24:9



“Every day is a terrible day for a miserable person, but a cheerful heart has a continual feast.”

Proverbs 15:15

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Grumble

I grumble more than a little, especially about the “sins” of the Church--the people who call themselves Christians.

I hope you, the reader, are bearing in mind that I am usually criticizing myself as well as those mythical "Christians" (except, of course, when I really am criticizing a particular person who disappointed me or angered me. They know who they are!).

Grumbling is a very bad habit. It's telling God that what He's given you is not good enough. Even when you grumble about things outside yourself, like the weather or the news on TV, you're criticizing God's handling of the world.

Grumbling is usually a low-key activity. It's not the same as yelling, or “blowing your stack” (getting very angry and showing it). Most Christians would be hesitant to yell in public about something that they thought was wrong or unfair, but think it's okay to grumble softly to themselves or their friends and family.

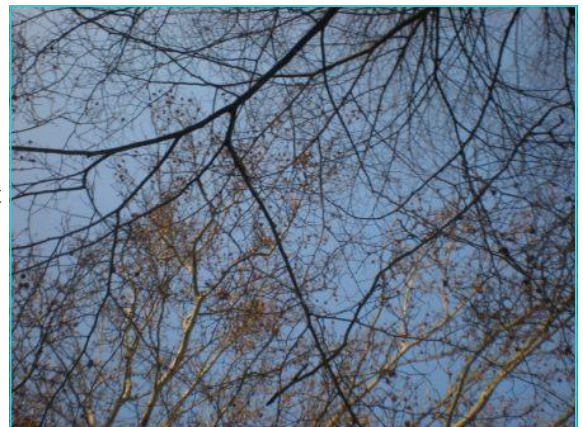
That fact is that this world is not perfect, and there will always be something to grumble about. There are two big problems with grumbling:

1. *You steal your own joy. It's hard to praise God and enjoy His abundance in your life when you're focused on what's wrong.*
2. *You steal other people's joy. Who wants to be with someone who's always grumbling about something! Relax and live a little!*

Stumble, mumble and grumble

Some days just seem to be one long challenge not to stumble, mumble or grumble.

I consciously try to avoid these bad behaviors, knowing that people who don't know God but know that I claim to know Him are watching me carefully to see how I live my life. I don't want to bring shame to Him by my weaknesses.



It's a wonderful day when I can rise above these unattractive habits and failings, and shine for Christ, by somehow getting out of His way so that His light to be seen through my human self.