

Thinking Aloud . . .

Once in a while everything needs to be cleaned out.

A while back I decided to attack the top drawer of my bureau. Patricia had suggested it was something of a mini-dumpster!

Two notes had telephone numbers I had long since returned. I threw out an empty payroll envelope and a receipt from Wal*Mart. I found a church bulletin from February, a chocolate kiss wrapper (or two), and an envelope with an old \$2 bill.

Among other items, I found an assortment of keys, a battery, thirty-eight cents, two breath mints, five pens (two of which had dried up), an incomplete golf score card, and a wrist band from a children's chat more than six years ago (still in the cellophane wrapper).

These purple wrist bands had made the Today Show. A pastor had come up with the idea and had some made for his congregants. Other people asked about them, so they made some more. The wrist bands made the local news; finally the church volunteers were spending nearly full time filling orders.

I bought five hundred wrist bands for my closest associates and friends!!

What made these wrist bands so popular? Was it the color? Did they promote some needed theological correction? Could they empower the owner to leap tall buildings in a single bound or cure cancer?

Nope! The bands simply made a "complaint free" commitment by the wearer.

This is David Thomas thinking aloud that scripture asks "*Why do you complain?*" (Job 33.13) and "*Why should any living man complain?*" (Lam. 3.39). Instead we are exhorted to "*Rejoice in the Lord always.*" (Phil. 4.4) and "*thank God continually*" (1 Thess. 2.13). Moses was distraught over the complaining of Israel and warned them that their whining and groaning were besetting sins.

When our days are filled with good we complain about an interruption. When our children are healthy, employed, and busy, we complain they do not call. When we have more than we need, we complain we have no place to put it. When pews are filled, we complain of being crowded (or that there is no place to park). When we are busy, we complain that we have not time. When new folks show up, we doubt they can do it right.

None of us is exempt. The real issue is our attitude. So, I sighed deeply, unwrapped the cellophane, and slipped the band around my wrist.