



SENT, PART 5: RESPONDING TO CRITICS

"When you get excited about God, don't expect everybody to get excited about your excitement. You intensity confronts their passivity...Some people will be inspired by what God is doing in your life, but others will mask their conviction with criticism. After all it's much easier to criticize than it is to change ourselves...We criticize in others what we don't like about ourselves." — Mark Batterson

BIG IDEA: We can't please all people, but we can please God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When was the last time you were unfairly criticized? How did that make you feel? How did you respond?
2. *With your Bible or Bible App, read Acts 11:1-5*

Soon the news reached the apostles and other believers in Judea that the Gentiles had received the word of God. But when Peter arrived back in Jerusalem, the Jewish believers criticized him. "You entered the home of Gentiles and even ate with them!" they said. Then Peter told them exactly what had happened. 5 "I was in the town of Joppa," he said, "and while I was praying, I went into a trance and saw a vision. Something like a large sheet was let down by its four corners from the sky. And it came right down to me.

Acts 11:1-5 (NLT)

3. Peter went from serving his own interests to trusting God with his own reservations. Have you ever had a deeply held spiritual/religious belief challenged by God? How did you respond?
4. *With your Bible or Bible App, read Acts 11:6-18.*

When I looked inside the sheet, I saw all sorts of tame and wild animals, reptiles, and birds. And I heard a voice say, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat them.' "No, Lord," I replied. 'I have never eaten anything that our Jewish laws have declared impure or unclean.' "But the voice from heaven spoke again: 'Do not call something unclean if God has made it clean.' This happened three times before the sheet and all it contained was pulled back up to heaven. "Just then three men who had been sent from Caesarea arrived at the house where we were staying. The Holy Spirit told me to go with them and not to worry that they were Gentiles. These six brothers here accompanied me, and we soon entered the home of the man who had sent for us. He told us how an angel had appeared to him in his home and had told him, 'Send messengers to Joppa, and summon a man named Simon Peter. He will tell you how you and everyone in your household can be saved!' "As I began to speak," Peter continued, "the Holy Spirit fell on them, just as he fell on us at the beginning. Then I thought of the Lord's words when he said, 'John baptized with [water], but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' And since God gave these Gentiles the same gift he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to stand in God's way?" When the others heard this, they stopped objecting and began praising God. They said, "We can see that God has also given the Gentiles the privilege of repenting of their sins and receiving eternal life."

Acts 11:6-18 (NLT)

5. What did those who were criticizing Peter do after they heard Peter's account? How easily do you move from criticizing someone to praising God?
6. During the message Carlo said, "Very few people get criticized or judged into life change." Do you agree with that statement? If so, in what way are you choosing love over criticism?
7. In verse 17 Peter said, "...who was I to stand in God's way?" *In what ways do we stand in God's way when it comes to reaching people? How can we change that?*

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Change of place + change of pace = change of perspective. This week, what will you do to get into a rhythm that allows you to respond appropriately to critics while also pleasing God?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

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Acts 11:17-18 (NLT)