

“Criticism is any judgment made about you by another, which declares that you fall short of a particular standard. The standard may be God’s or man’s. The judgement may be true or false. It may be gentle or harsh. It might be constructive or destructive. It may be given by a friend, enemy, or someone you hardly know.”

- **Albert Poirier, *The Cross and Criticism - Journal of Biblical Counseling***

Matthew 12:36-37

And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak. The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you.

Proverbs, in particular, strongly commends the ability to heed and hear criticism.

(Proverbs 12:15, 13:10, 13:13, 9:9, 15:31-32, 19:20, and 12:1)

Criticism can be a valuable tool in strengthening our relationship with God and others.

(1 Thess. 5:11, Gal. 6:1, and Ps. 141:5)

Four types of criticism

- Criticism that is deserved and given in kindness and goodwill.
- Criticism that is deserved and given in harsh and demeaning ways.
- Criticism that is not deserved and given in kindness and goodwill. It’s an honest mistake.
- Criticism that is not deserved and is given in harsh and demeaning ways and maybe even have ill-will behind it.

The best, most trusted advisors typically fall into two categories:

- 1. wise, godly people**
- 2. friends and family**

Proverbs 27:17

As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.

Matthew 12:34b-35

For whatever is in your heart determines what you say. A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart.

Ephesians 4:29

Don’t use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

Matthew 7:3-5

And why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to your friend, ‘Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can’t see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Proverbs 12:18

Some people make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise bring healing.

Proverbs 15:1 - A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare.

James 1:19

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry.

Ephesians 4:2

Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.

1 Peter 2:23

He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left the case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly.

In the cross I see myself as God sees me – a sinner. I agree with all that God says about me and I'm well aware of my sinfulness. (Romans 3:9-20)

In the cross I agree with God's justification of me as a sinner. I'm justified only through Jesus. (Romans 3:21-26)

"In light of God's judgment and justification of the sinner in the cross of Christ, we can begin to discover how to deal with any and all criticism. By agreeing with *God's* criticism of me in Christ's cross, I can face any criticism man may lay against me. In other words, *no one can criticize me more than the cross has*. And the most devastating criticism turns out to be the finest mercy. If you thus know yourself as having been crucified with Christ, then you can respond to any criticism, even mistaken or hostile criticism, without bitterness, defensiveness, or blameshifting. Such responses typically exacerbate and intensify conflict, and lead to the rupture of relationships. You can learn to hear criticism as constructive and not condemnatory because God has justified you. If I know myself as crucified with Christ, I can now receive another's criticism with this attitude: "You have not discovered a fraction of my guilt. Christ has said more about my sin, my failings, my rebellion and my foolishness than any man can lay against me. I thank you for your corrections. They are a blessing and a kindness to me. For even when they are wrong or misplaced, they remind me of my true faults and sins for which my Lord and Savior paid dearly when He went to the cross for me."

- Albert Poirier, *The Cross and Criticism - Journal of Biblical Counseling*