

The Compliment of Criticism

Criticism is the pointing out the negative.

Overly critical people do not highlight the *PROGRESS* and the *POSSIBILITIES*, but the *PROBLEMS*.

When you listen to them long enough, you forget that you made any progress, it becomes more difficult to see the hopeful possibilities, and you start drowning in the consciousness of the problems.

An encouraging person is always putting the spotlight on the progress and harping on the possibilities. A overly-critical person ignores the progress and undermines the possibilities, but harps on the problems.

PASSION comes from celebrating the *PROGRESS* and envisioning the *POSSIBILITIES*, not from being bombarded with the *PROBLEMS*.

We need passion to fulfill our purpose, so overly-critical people are not conducive towards fulfilling our purpose. It's like locking a pot of flowers in a dark closet, it's not going to flourish.

To be fair, there are two sides to criticism: *hurtful* and yet *helpful*.

Criticism can be instrumental in getting us to the next level.

Serena Williams became the tennis player she became, because her coach was critical.

Michael Jordan became the basketball player he became, thanks to the criticism of his coaches and trainers.

Every year, Apple products get better because they criticize the last model. (If they were not critical of the previous model, there would be no upgrade.)

As car manufacturers critically evaluate the previous model, they can create a better automobile.

The lack of criticism may keep us underdeveloped and underachieving.

Jethro, Moses father in law, criticized how Moses was leading the Israelites, saying it's too personality-driven, you need it to be more systems-driven and you need to start being a coach, not the superstar player. He acutely *observed* that Moses would burn himself out faster as a superstar player than he would as a coach.

Jethro couldn't teach Moses how to have a compassionate heart...you can't always teach heart, but you can upgrade your methodologies, strategies, and systems.

Moses wasn't the leader because he was the sharpest tool in the shed, but he had an enormous heart. Just because someone doesn't have the greatest methods, strategies, and systems- and may not be the most organized or administratively inclined- doesn't mean they don't have a heart that caught heaven's attention.

When you criticize someone for how they operate, remember not to be jumping to quick conclusions about their hearts.

I'm glad Jethro didn't attack Moses' heart and make rash judgments about his character, rather he just gave him ideas to improve his methods. Moses did not need a different heart, just better ideas.

Moses takes full advantage of the criticism, and prolongs his own longevity.

What a beautiful picture of family. **The people whose criticism that we ought to give extra weight to are those that come from family.** Family love you in rain or shine. Family stands by you when you succeed and when you fail. They may not *agree* with you, but they will always *adore* you.

Jethro cared about Moses' well-being, when most of the Israelites only wanted his services. Jethro didn't want his grandkids to lose their father to an early grave because of sheer exhaustion.

Yet, the average Israelite was thinking, *"I just have to see Moses right now...I need his counsel...he needs to fix my husband...he needs to set my wife straight...he needs to pray for my healing...he needs to lead us into victory after victory so we can occupy the promise land."*

Jethro cares about how Moses is *doing*, the condition of his soul, his emotional health, and his longevity. We tend to care more about a person's gifts, reputation, and opportunities they can provide us. We treat people like they are mere resources, not human beings.

Remember, people are not machines. A machine is only worth *what* it can produce, how much it can produce, how *fast* it can produce it, how well it can produce it. The Israelites wanted Moses to be a counseling machine! Jethro didn't care about *what* Moses was doing, as much as he cared about *how* he is doing. That's family.

There is a big contrast between family and the fair-weather fans.

I'm sure Moses had a lot of people telling him how wonderful, brilliant, courageous, and sexy he was. Yet, they were also probably the first ones who joined Korah's rebellion against Moses, once Moses did something they didn't agree with.

Family is not that fickle. Family will love you even when you don't take their advice.

It's tragic when we tune out our family and just tune into the fair-weather fans.

It's also very sad when we are critical of people, but don't know how to be family, but we merely fair-weather fans- who cheer loud one day and boo hard the next day.

Something I personally found difficult was when I would have people tell me how anointed I am and how timely and life-changing my presentations are, then after one or two or three presentations with parts they disagreed with, they start telling people that I'm leading the church into destruction.

I do want people to like me, so I would be discouraged by those reoccurrences. Yet, I had to realize that I'm not to be enslaved by the fair-weather fans, I'm here to do what God has made me to do, and I need to do it with people who understand *family*. Fair-weather fans will come and go, we shouldn't be obsessed with what they think or say.

We destroy our own purpose when we allow criticism to kill our passion.

No one had to teach Michael Jordan how to be competitive. He didn't need to improve his drive, only his techniques and decision making he needed to hone his craft.

I wonder what would have happened to Michael Jordan if all the criticism from his coaches, his teammates, and those who sit in the bleachers, killed his passion for basketball. He would have not been able to release his potential greatness.

Maybe there was someone who could jump higher, run faster, shoot better, more creative, with faster reflexes, better coordination, than Michael Jordan, but criticism killed his career before it started.

When it comes to fulfilling our God-given purpose, two things cannot be suppressed: our passion and our personality. Criticism is often instrumental in destroying our passion and diluting our personality.

God designed it that when our purpose would lead us to our passions and our passions would lead us to our purpose. When we lose our passion, we waste our purpose.

Also our God-given personalities are conducive to fulfilling our God-given purpose and if our personalities have been so distorted and diluted by hurtful criticism- we are like a bird with a clipped wing.

There are people who have very little personality because they allowed strong opinionated people to water them down...so they try so hard to fit in, when God created us to stand out. They fade into the dark, when God designed them to be a star. We are called to be ***“the light of the world, a city on a hill that cannot be hidden.” (Matthew 5:14)***

Don't allow criticism to snuff out your motivation.

Don't allow criticism to change your personality.

Of course we can do things better, there is always room for improvement, but two things we cannot sacrifice is our passion and personality. They come from God, they come from our divine purpose and must be intact if we are going to fulfill our divine purpose.

When David was a boy, he came out to see his brothers, who were soldiers in the army. David was intrigued by Goliath, the story goes. Yet, his older brother criticizes him and says to him,

"Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle." (1 Samuel 17:28)

His brother was not very kind. He was mean and demeaning. Accusatory and arrogant. (That's why he wasn't picked to be king). His brother was acting as if he perfectly understood David's motives.

"Man looks at outwards appearance, but God looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)

You can tell someone their heart, eye color, and hair color, but you can't fully understand someone else's heart.

I love how the criticism of his brother didn't change David. David was still passionate about fighting Goliath and his warrior/adventurous personality did not wane.

If criticism would have crushed David's passion and personality, he would have never taken the throne.

There is a throne (metaphor) that God has prepared for you...it's a place of leadership, not rulership....it's not for the purpose of becoming powerful but empowering, not for impressing people, but serving them. It has nothing to do with competing with others, but with completing your call. It's the manifesting what God invested in you.

Don't let criticism keep you from your throne.

It is possible that helpful information can come from unhelpful sources.

Jesus had Peter extract a coin out of a fish. Some slippery, slimy, and smelly people may have something come out of their mouth, that is exactly what you need to hear.

But generally speaking, there is a lot of criticism that we don't have time for.

We should not have time to listen to everyone's opinion.

The people who do the least, often talk the loudest.

I've gone to basketball games, and those in the stands who are eating their hotdogs, nachos, and drinking the beers are the ones doing most of the criticizing of the players.

The most meaningful criticism usually comes from those who are on the battlefield with you, not the ones who are in the bleachers.

True war veterans and people who are family to you- have the greater rights to speak into your life, not some blogger, some gossip, or some fair-weather fan.

It's important not to interpret criticism as rejection.

People can criticize what you do and say, but don't take that as the definition of your worth, value, and identity.

People criticize for a lot of reasons:

- 1. **They have been indoctrinated.** (Where there is no truth outside of their paradigms, no way outside of their way).
- 2. **They are envious of your position and success.** (They want to be where you are, so they want to build a case that they are even more qualified and deserving than you. Making you look bad, somehow makes them look better.)
- 3. **They are arrogant.** (They overestimate their own opinions and abilities and underestimate everyone else's. These people like to talk but not to listen....they like to lecture, but not dialogue.)
- 4. **They are opinionated.** (Opinionated people like to give you a piece of their mind, even when you haven't asked for it.)
- Our identity doesn't come from people's opinions, but God's truth. Sometimes, when it comes to our own identity, we elevate people's fickle opinions over God's unwavering truth. People will call you all kinds of things, but God says, ***"You bear my image...."***

- **5. They may care about you.** (Jethro wasn't indoctrinated, envious, arrogant, or merely opinionated- he really cared. Now, Moses was also criticized by his brother and sister, people who were his family but didn't know how to be family to him.
- **“Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite. ‘Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?’ they asked. Hasn't he also spoken through us?’ And the Lord heard this.” (Numbers 12:1-2)**
- They were indoctrinated that Israelites should only marry Israelites, they felt entitled to Moses position, they were arrogant and opinionated...and this may have been especially hurtful to Moses because, unlike Jethro, they didn't go to Moses, but went to all the people, and spoke critically of Moses. When you hear a second-handed criticism, from people who should be family, it can be especially hurtful. *If people really care about you, they will talk TO you, not ABOUT you.*

Every time you are criticized, it's a compliment.

It means that you are doing, creating, and leading something.

Doing something is always better than doing nothing.

The parable of the talents that Jesus told in Matthew 25, reminds us of that. 3 people were given talents (the New International Version translates talents as bags of gold), the two who multiplied their talents were praised by the one who invested those talents into them, the one who buried the talent was rebuked. The one who buried his talent, did so because of the fear of criticism.

When you are stepping out to do something with your talents or bags of God that God invested in you, someone is not going to like it!

The more we do with our talents, and greater our influence, the more criticism will come our way. It's inevitable. That should be expected. Sometimes we have unrealistic expectations of what leading and succeeding entails- it means you become a bigger target.

Critics don't know the full story, so they make big statements based on little information.

They often make quick judgments without understanding your journey, your process, your sacrifice, and your motives.

It's crazy how movie critics can in 3 hours write a critical article about a production that costed hundreds of people, two years of their lives.

In a humble way, be proud of your work. Enjoy your work, your creating, your purpose-manifesting. Not everyone will like it, but you should like it! When we allow peoples criticisms to control us, we will not enjoy and appreciate the work anymore- because it will no longer look like your baby- it will be surgically modified by all these critical, opinionated people, who want their HANDS on your baby.

Remember the biggest loser in the parable Jesus told, was the one who buried their talent and did nothing, for fear of criticism. So, it's a compliment to be criticized.

A courageous person takes criticism and still remaining passionate.

Those who are your biggest critics may have too much time on their hands. We ought to be busy enough doing what we are supposed to do, that we don't have all that much time to put someone else under a microscope.

We ought to be passionately pursuing our purpose and expressing our personalities. We don't have time to be replaying people's opinions like a broken record. When criticized, eat the meat, spit out the bones, and keep pressing on.

Be continually motivated by what God put in your heart to do, not be discouraged by what people think you should or shouldn't do.

People didn't give you your passion, it's divine. People shouldn't be able to take it away.

Your passion is not what people talked you into, it's what you discovered yourself. If people encouraged you into something, they can discourage you out of it. Don't let human beings snuff out what is divine: your passion for your purpose.

The best way to show someone that they are wrong, is not returning criticism with criticism, but being successful in your endeavors and doing what you believe is the better way and enjoying the benefits.

Nehemiah had some crazy critics, and he ignored them, kept rebuilding the wall, and achieving his goals. If you want to prove your critics wrong, don't criticize back- keep doing what God put in your heart to do and enjoy your life. People who criticize you from the wrong spirit, want to see you depressed, discouraged, disillusioned, and doubtful. Just prove them wrong by enjoying yourself.