

CRITICISM: IT'S NOT FOR THE WEAK

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A. INTRODUCTION:

1. I was prepared for spiritual warfare when i entered ministry. But the unexpected punches came from the criticism that became an almost daily normal for me from other Christian people.
2. Criticism reminds me of the phrase "Death By A _____."
 - a. SLOW SLICING: A form of torture and capital punishment practiced in Imperial China. By the time of the final Imperial Dynasty, the punishment could be given for an offense as simple of striking a teacher.

B. LESSONS LEARNED WHILE NAVIGATING THE WORLD OF CRITICISM

1. Recognize that all leaders deal with an _____ of criticism.
 - a. So, don't believe the lie of the Enemy. He will try to magnify the criticisms and make you feel like you're a miserable failure.
 - b. The Enemy has always been called, "The _____ of the _____."
 - c. Jesus Himself dealt with repeated and painful criticism. Why would we ever think ourselves to be exempt?
2. Take responsibility for your _____.
 - a. Realize that critical comments can only "beat you up" to the degree that you keep replaying them over and over in your own mind. (Philippians 4:8)
 - b. Whatever you toy with in your mind, will eventually make you its toy.
 - c. Learn the lessons but forget the details.
3. Refuse to deeply _____ all the criticism you receive.

- a. Realize that there's only one difference between your closest friends and your most challenging enemies...it's the _____ they see every word you say and everything you do through.
 - b. All of us are most sensitive when it comes to our own children (and/or family) people we love.
 - So if you're in youth ministry or children's ministry, you will probably receive a heightened measure of criticism because you are working with the age group who often most matters in other's lives.
 - c. One of the Enemy's major tactics in spiritual warfare is to make you deeply personalize criticism so much that it feels "_____ - _____" for you. In fact, the Enemy does know each of our vulnerabilities and does target criticisms in the arenas he knows will most deeply wound us.
 - d. Sometimes the greatest revenge you can pay to hell is _____.
 - e. The greatest answer you can give to your critics is to quietly and in a Christian manner outlast them.
4. Your most painful criticism will often come from the people you have tried to help the most or from the people who _____ in your life.
 5. Learn the power of the _____ % _____ when dealing with criticism.
 - a. Find the 1% of the criticism you can honestly agree with and at the beginning of the discussion, give 100% of your energy towards that 1%.
 - b. The worst way to begin a discussion with a critic is with an impassioned defense of yourself.
 6. Don't overreact to the criticism. Refuse to use a _____ to defend yourself when a _____ would work equally well.
 - a. Don't _____; instead, _____.
 - b. The goal is not to win. The goal is to create _____.

7. As tough as it is, remember that _____ will always be one of your best teachers.
 - a. Your biggest critics can become some of your best coaches because they will show you perspectives that you were unaware of.
 - b. Realize that one of the biggest critiques of leaders in ministry is that they “only surround themselves with people who tell them what they want to hear.” So don’t just criticize that type of leader; refuse yourself to be one of them.
8. When you feel too much criticism coming in your direction, remember the Law of _____ And _____.
 - a. When you are flooded by criticisms...go find some people you can encourage.
9. Go re-read Gene Edwards’ epic book entitled *A TALE OF* _____.
10. Always choose the _____.
 - a. The measure of your true spirituality and one of the measures of your real leadership is how often you hear yourself say to other people...
 - “I’m _____.”
 - “I understand what you’re feeling and I sincerely _____.”
 - “Please _____ me.”

Answers:

THOUSAND CUTS; ONGOING DIET; ACCUSER; BRETHREN; THOUGHT-LIFE;
PERSONALIZE; FILTER; TAILOR-MADE; PERSEVERANCE; MOST MATTER; 101%
PRINCIPLE; BOMB; SLINGSHOT; REACT; RESPOND; MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING;
CRITICISM; SOWING; REAPING; THREE KINGS; HIGH ROAD; SORRY; APOLOGIZE;
FORGIVE