

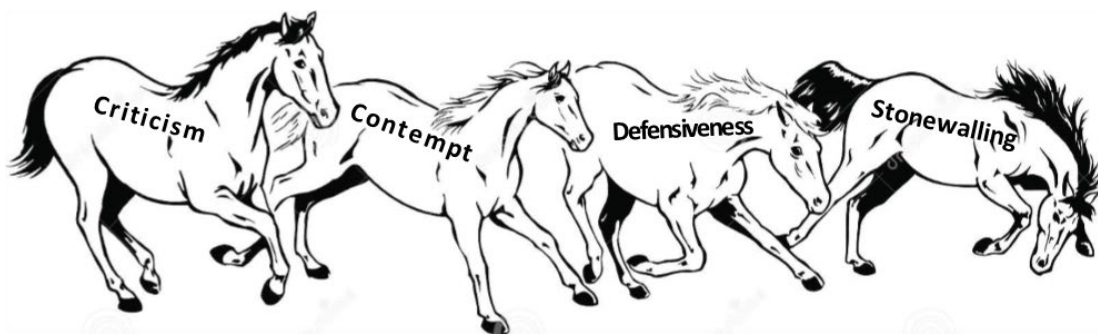
May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## FROM CRITICISM TO CELEBRATION

**Criticism:** The expression of disapproval of someone or something based on perceived faults or mistake<sup>1</sup>; to judge as a critic; to find fault; to blame or condemn<sup>2</sup>.

**Matthew 7:1-5** <sup>1</sup>Do not judge, or you too will be judged. <sup>2</sup>For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. <sup>3</sup>Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? <sup>4</sup>How can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? <sup>5</sup>You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

**Romans 14:10-12** <sup>10</sup>You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. <sup>11</sup>It is written: "As surely as I live," says the Lord, "every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God." <sup>12</sup>So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.



### THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE OF A RELATIONSHIP

**Revelation 6:1-8** <sup>1</sup>I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come!" <sup>2</sup>I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest. <sup>3</sup>When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" <sup>4</sup>Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword. <sup>5</sup>When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" <sup>8</sup>I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine, and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

**C** \_\_\_\_\_: (a critical spirit) is the act of finding fault or judging unfavorably. When you criticize your partner, you attack your partner's personality or character, usually with the intent of making yourself right and your partner wrong. Criticism includes generalizations such as "you always..." "you never..." and "you're the type of person who..."

**C** \_\_\_\_\_: (a root of bitterness) is a feeling of disdain or scorn. Contempt attacks your partner's sense of self with the intention to insult or psychologically abuse him/her. Typical contemptuous comments made by partners include: insults and name calling, hostile humor, sarcasm, or mockery, as well as contemptuous body language and tone of voice, sneering, rolling your eyes, mimicking and parroting.

**D** \_\_\_\_\_: (unrepentance) is seeing yourself as the victim and warding off a perceived attack. When partners are defensive, they are not open to learning and are also not able to assess the vulnerable feelings underneath. Some typical defensive responses are: making excuses, cross-complaining, disagreeing and then cross-complaining, yes-but (starting off agreeing but disagreeing), repeating yourself without paying any attention to what the other person is saying, and whining.

**S** \_\_\_\_\_: (rejection/hate) is withdrawing from the interaction, or the relationship, as a way to avoid conflict—it's shutting down, tuning out, turning away, avoiding, acting busy, engaging in obsessive or distracting behaviors, hiding out in your man-cave or your she-shed, giving the silent

treatment – left unchecked – this is the most damaging of the four horsemen.<sup>3</sup>

**REMEMBER: The heart of the matter is almost always a matter of the heart.**

**“A person with a harsh tongue has an angry heart. A person with a negative tongue has a fearful heart. A person with an overactive tongue has an unsettled heart. A person with a boasting tongue has an insecure heart. A person with a filthy tongue has an impure heart. A person with a critical tongue has a bitter heart.”<sup>4</sup>**

**Proverbs 4:23** Above all else, guard your heart, it is the wellspring of life.

**James 3:8-10** ...<sup>8</sup>but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup>With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God’s likeness. <sup>10</sup>Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.

**Proverbs 10:11** The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked.

**Proverbs 12:18-19** <sup>18</sup>Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. <sup>19</sup>Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment.

**Proverbs 13:3** He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin.

**Proverbs 15:4** The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.

**Proverbs 16:24** Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

**Proverbs 18:20-21** <sup>20</sup>From the fruit of his mouth a man’s stomach is filled; with the harvest from his lips he is satisfied. <sup>21</sup>The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

**Proverbs 21:23** He who guards his mouth and his tongue keep himself from calamity.

## **HOW DO WE GO FROM CRITICISM TO CELEBRATION? IT’S AS SIMPLE AS A,B,C,D!**

**A great \_\_\_\_\_ to the Great Commandment crushes criticism.**

- 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

**B \_\_\_\_\_ a culture of appreciation and respect.**

- Remember the “magic ratio” is 5:1!

**C \_\_\_\_\_ without blame.**

- The XYZ FORMULA: “In situation X, when you do Y, I feel Z.”

**D \_\_\_\_\_ you know your spouse’s/kids’ love language?**

- [www.5lovelanguages.com](http://www.5lovelanguages.com)

## **QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS IN LIFE GROUP OR WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS:**

1. Which of the four Horsemen do you see present in your relationship(s)? Is there more than one?
2. Review the passages taken from **Proverbs**. Which one or two resonate with you and why?
3. How are you doing as it relates to “A, B, C, & D” of making the shift from criticism to celebration? Review and discuss each of the priorities listed above. Personalize them as much as you can giving examples from your own life.
4. What was *for you* in this message? What, from this message, is God pressing upon you to *share* with someone else?

**NEXT WEEK: Game Changers (Week 4): From Hurried to Healthy**

**Passages to prepare: Psalm 46:10; Deuteronomy 6:4-9**

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<sup>1</sup>Definition of *criticism* taken from Google Dictionary.

<sup>2</sup>Definition of *criticism* taken from Steven C Riser, “How to Understand and Approach Someone With a Critical Spirit,” *John Ankerberg Show*, [jashow.org](http://jashow.org)

<sup>3</sup>John Gottman, *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail*, 1994

<sup>4</sup>Rick Warren, *Developing a Faith that Works: James Volume 2*, 2005