

Critical People

Gregg Brenes

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. John 13:34

Quick to love, slow to judge

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ² For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Matthew 7:1-2

How do you respond to critical people?

1) Most of the time, you don't respond. (Proverbs 19:11)

When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to [God] who judges justly. 1 Peter 2:23

2) Sometimes, you respond carefully. (Judges 8:1-3)

...When the men of Ephraim heard Gideon's answer, their anger subsided. Judges 8:3 NLT

3) Occasionally, you listen and grow from it. (Proverbs 15:31-32)

Could it be me?

“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? 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? 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. Matthew 7:3-5

So why do you condemn another believer? Why do you look down on another believer? Remember, we will all stand before the judgment seat of God... ¹²Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God. ¹³So let's stop condemning each other. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not cause another believer to stumble and fall. Romans 14:10, 12-13 NLT

Connect

- What is the most ridiculous criticism you've received?

Word and Reflection

We all have *relational vampires* in our lives. Some of them are critical people who seem to get pleasure tearing you down, instead of building you up. While we should embrace constructive criticism because it is invaluable to help us grow, we need wisdom to know when or how to respond to criticism. Ask God for grace and humility to help you overcome your critical nature.

John 13:33-34; Matthew 7:1-5; Proverbs 19:11; 1 Peter 2:21-23; Judges 8:1-3; Proverbs 15:31-32; Romans 14:10-13; James 2:12-13

- Which part of the message made an impact, caught your attention or challenged you?
- Read 1 Peter 2:21-23. What is your take-away from this Scripture?
- Read Matthew 7:1-5. What types of criticism are you currently receiving? How is some of the criticism you're receiving building you up and helping you to grow? How will you deal with unjust criticism you are currently getting from others?
- Why do you think we so often put other people's opinions of us ahead of God's opinion of us? What steps will you take to put God's opinion of you ahead of other people's opinions?
- Read Romans 14:10-13. What will you do to overcome your own critical nature so you can build up rather than tear down? What insecurities and/or areas of pride might be fueling your critical nature?

Action

- Identify any criticism you've accepted that stands against God's work in your life. Take steps to replace those critical words with words of truth.
- Apologize to anyone you've been overly critical of. Ask someone you trust to help you know when you're being too critical.

Prayer

- God, You are full of grace and mercy, quick to love and slow to judge. Jesus, thank You for all You have done to replace cutting words with words of life. We ask You to set us free from words that bring death. Lead us to love others with Your love. Amen.