

Critical Spirit

Sermon:

"Critical Spirit"

Scripture:

Matthew 12:24-25

Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me." It's a catchy saying! It's also a big lie! How have critical people hurt you? What can you do about the person in your life who continually finds something wrong? Be an Encourager – Not a Critic...

What Is The Root Cause Of A Critical Spirit?

Wrong Belief:

"My sense of significance is enhanced when I point out the wrongs of others. Like riding a seesaw, the more I push others down with criticisms, the higher I rise above them, and the more powerful I feel. The fact that I am right justifies my criticism of others."

However, the Bible says, "You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgement on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgement do the same things" (Romans 2:1).

Right Belief:

"When I am critical of others, I am only exposing my own sin. God thought I was significant enough to create me with His plan and purpose for me. Because Christ lives in me, continually extending His mercy toward me, I will reflect His mercy by caring for the hearts and lives of others rather than criticizing their attitudes or actions" (1 Thessalonians 5:14-15).

How Do I Change My Heart From Critical To Caring?

Perhaps you've been convicted of caustic criticism (harsh or corrosive in tone) and you no longer want to be a "ditch dweller", slinging your derogatory mud. Begin now to climb out of the ditch *one kind word at a time*... and you'll find yourself on the path to recovery and peace.

Identify your shortcomings (Psalm 139:23-24)

- Humble your heart to see your own sin, your imperfections, and your immense need for God's mercy.
- Help others see their significance in God's eyes.
- Pray, "Lord may I see my sin as You see it; may I hate my sin as You hate it."

Practice compassion for others (Colossians 3:12)

- Look closely at the life of Christ to learn His compassionate way of confronting truth.
- Pray that you will not be a critical stone thrower, but a compassionate need-meeter.

Draw out the heartfelt needs of others (Proverbs 20:5)

- Don't listen only to what people say on the surface. Listen for the needs and feelings beneath the surface — feelings of being unloved or feeling insignificant or insecure.
- Pray that God will give you a discerning spirit as you seek to draw others out.

Offer acceptance to others (Romans 15:7)

- Realize that everyone has an innate fear of rejection and a deep yearning for acceptance.
- Choose to be a channel through which God extends His acceptance to others.

See the God-given worth in others (Luke 12:6-7)

- Treat every person, especially the one most problematic to you, as someone with God-given worth. The truth judges our hearts, attitudes, and actions toward others.
- Pray that the Lord will not allow you to despise anyone whom He created and loves.

Praise the positives in others (Philippians 4:8)

- Avoid the temptation to try to catch people doing something wrong. Instead, comment on what they are doing right.
- Pray that you will see something positive in every person, then faithfully make that your focus.
- Pray that you would see others as God sees them and value them as He values them.

Refuse to wound others with words (Colossians 3:16)

- Consider the fallacy of saying, "Talk is cheap." Talk is costly when it tears others down. Prayerfully consider the possibility that what you are criticizing in someone, may be something God wants to deal with directly, and that God may want you to pray and remain silent.
- Before speaking words of criticism, ask a wise friend to evaluate the content and tone of your words. Realize that after critical words are spoken, you can never take them back.
- Inspire those who need to change by sharing with them your belief that they can change. Encourage them by saying, "Don't give up. Trust God to guide you in the way you should go. I know you can make the right decisions. I believe you can experience God's best."
- Present your words to God as His instrument for good, and pray that He will put His words into your mouth.

See the unmet needs of others (Philippians 4:19)

- Instead of judging the inappropriate actions of others, seek to understand the need behind the action.
- Realize that people who speak forth cutting words reveal that they have unmet inner needs (for love, significance, or security).
- Realize that people don't always mean what they say nor understand their own deepest needs.
- Pray that your critics will allow the Lord to meet their deepest inner needs.

Rely on God's Word and God's Spirit for wisdom

- Seek God's wisdom by reading a chapter a day from the book of Proverbs.

- Write down every verse from Proverbs that pertains to the tongue.
Check your words against this list and see if you are being wise with what you say.
- See God at work in every circumstance and trust Him for wisdom to know how to respond (wisdom is the ability to look at life from God's point of view).
- Pray that God's Spirit will teach you spiritual truths and lead you to speak these truths in love.

"This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words"
(1 Corinthians 2:13)