

## HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO CRITICISM?

### PSALM 141:5

#### Introduction

David here envisions himself as a guest in the home of a godly man, rather than the home of a wicked man.

He says that it would be a blessing for him to sit at such a man's table and be rebuked by him! Listen to me, true friendship does not flatter! A true friend speaks words of truth to be of help, even though the words may sting!

*Proverbs 27:6—"Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."*

Sometimes it may feel like you are a bull's eye for criticism. Have you ever been there? No doubt there are times when some of the criticism that comes our way may be justified, while other criticism may not be justified.

Could I tell you that it matters very much how we RESPOND to criticism!

Understand that we are ALL apt to REACT to criticism the wrong way!

That usually happens because it goes against our ego, our personal pride!

So, **HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO CRITICISM?**

#### **I. WHO ARE OUR CRITICS?**

##### **A. Criticism Can Come From Sinners!**

We need to realize that the nature of those who are not saved is ungodly and is going to naturally run against the grain of both what we are and what we stand for!

*1 Corinthians 2:14--But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."*

##### **1. Moses And Aaron Faced The Criticism Of Pharaoh.**

*Exodus-5:2—"Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go."*

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##### **2. Nehemiah Faced The Criticism Of Sanballat And Tobiah.**

*Nehemiah 4:1-3* says that Sanballat was "wroth and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews."

*Criticism Can Come From Sinners!*

#### **B. Criticism Can Come From Saints!**

##### **1. That Saint Could Be A Baby Brother Or Sister!**

- a. Maybe a young Christian who hasn't grown in the Lord to know better.
- b. Maybe its a carnal Christian who hasn't grown in the Lord but should know better.
- c. e.g. The Corinthian Church.  
*1 Corinthians 3:1-3*  
*"envying, strife, and divisions"*

##### **2. That Saint Could Be A Backsliding Brother Or Sister!**

When people get away from God it is easy to develop a critical spirit.

##### **3. That Saint Could Be A Band Of Backsliders!**

- a. **Birds of a feather flock together.**  
Critics always run with critics.  
If more than one critical spirit is in the Church, it usually doesn't take very long for them to find one another.
- b. **One good critic can develop into a whole band of critics one critic at a time.**  
  
Sometimes the critical talk surfaces and you can trace the trail of criticism back to its one point of origin.

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*A Baby Brother, Backsliding Brother, Band Of Backsliders...*

#### 4. **That Saint Could Be A Beleaguered Brother Or Sister.**

Sometimes someone has been beat down by Satan and his forces and the person really doesn't mean to be critical, but nevertheless they can become that way because of Satanic oppression!

Their situation may be making them bitter. They get critical of others because they perceive others have it better than themselves! (Whether it be true or not!)

To make themselves look better, they begin to criticize and tear others down! And they may not even realize WHAT they are doing or WHY they are doing it!

#### 5. **That Saint Could Be A Beloved Brother!**

##### a. **Sometimes People Can Mean Well, But They Are Wrong!**

(Jobs three friends meant well, but they were wrong!)

##### b. **Sometimes We Need Rebuke And But We Interpret It As Criticism!**

(Our passage is referring to this)

1. David needed Nathan's rebuke when he sinned! (2 Samuel 12:7)
2. Peter needed Paul's rebuke when he dissembled over the matter of breaking bread with Gentiles in their homes because of his fear of Jewish believers who held other beliefs. (Galatians 2:11)

**Criticism Can Come From Sinners, Saints...**

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#### C. **Criticism Can Come From Self!**

We can sometimes be our worst critic!

Have you ever beat yourself up over something before?

We can get down on ourselves over something in our past!

We can get down on ourselves over something we said!

We can get down on ourselves over something we did!

We can get down on ourselves over something we didn't do!

We can get down on ourselves when something doesn't go the way we expect!

#### D. **Criticism Can Come From Satan!**

*Revelation 12:10*—Satan is called “*the accuser of our brethren. . . which accused them before our God day and night.*”

Satan accused Job before God of being a paid lover.

Satan will use whatever is at his disposal, especially criticism, to attack us and try to beat us down!

*Ephesians 6:12*—“*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*”

He'll use a lost sinner if he can.

He'll use a saint if he can.

He'll use self if he can.

He'll use your life before you got saved if he can.

He'll use sins you've already made right if he can.

He'll use whatever he can.

I not only want us to see WHO ARE OUR CRITICS, but lets ask the question:

## II. **WHY ARE WE CRITICIZED?**

### A. **Because Some People Hate The Work Of The Lord!** (Sinners and Satan)

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### B. Because Some People Desire To Pull You Down To Their Level!

(Lost Sinners, Satan, and Those Who Have Backslidden)

#### 1. This Can Be Because Some Are Jealous Of Us!

#### 2. This Can Be Because Some Hate Us!

The quicker you realize that Satan hates your guts, the sooner you'll realize the true source of most of the criticism that comes your way!

Satan and most of wicked crowd that runs with him hate the Work of the Lord!

#### 3. This Can Be Because Some Just Want To Justify Their Wicked Ways!

### C. Because Some People Don't Have The Facts!

1. Some make judgments based on third and fourth hand information. ("Well I heard. . ." The last time I checked, that was called gossip!!!)

2. Some make judgments based on their feelings. The facts could be worlds apart from folks feelings!

Feelings are not good to base your faith on and they are not good to base the facts on.

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### B. Lets Talk About The Right Way To Respond:

#### 1. Be Strong In The Lord!

*Ephesians 6:10*—"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

Sometimes the best offense is a good defense.

#### a. Go Into The Battle Whole Armored!

*Ephesians 6:13*—"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

#### b. Go Into The Battle With Your Shield Of Faith!

*Ephesians 6:16*—"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

#### 2. Handle The Matter With Prayer And The Word Of God!

*Philippians 4:6*—"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

#### 3. Give Place To Wrath!

*Romans 12:19-21*—"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

## III. HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO CRITICISM?

### A. Lets Talk About The Wrong Way To Respond:

#### 1. We Can Get Angry Or Hostile!

We like to think of it as "righteous indignation" when many times there is not much righteous about it.

#### 2. We Can Retaliate!

This is when we respond to the Critic rather than the Criticism. We want revenge!

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4. **Take It Patiently! (1 Peter 2:19-23)**
  - a. **If The Criticism Is Justified, Adjust As Needed!**
  - b. **If The Criticism Is Unjustified:**

*Colossians 3:12-14—“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.”*

    - 1) **Reconcile As Needed!**
    - 2) **Forbear As Needed!**
    - 3) **Forgive As Needed!**
    - 4) **Love As Needed!**

### Conclusion

Brethren these aren't the easy things to do, but they are the right things to do