

**Lord, please change my attitude (Before it's too late).
Chapter 5: Replace a critical attitude...**

Introduction:

There is a person in your life. A person that has very strong opinions; a person that seems to find a problem with everything; they love to give advice, especially when they haven't been asked for it. This person seems to slice and dice without a moments notice and they always seem to come out on top; they never loose. By now I'm sure you've all realized who I am describing. I'm describing the critical person (which means all the other people in the room except you). And the most uncomfortable question I could ask this morning is this...Is that person You? Now we may not all be full blown "sworn" cynics who go around tearing people to shreds, but we all have the tendency to criticize and certainly all of us are capable of falling to the temptation.

Read Numbers 12:1-12

"A continually critical attitude toward those around me will consume all that is healthy and joy-producing in my life"

- This is one of the attitudes that got Israel wandering in the wilderness, and it's the same attitude that will get you and I there as well.

I. What exactly is a critical Attitude?

A. Criticism

1. Generally – Our negative thinking that relates to people.
2. Specifically – Dwelling upon the perceived faults of another with no view to their good.

Note: Criticism happens face to face, but often it stays right where it started...in our minds. A critical spirit is an obvious root to bitterness. (destructive)

B. Definition broken down

1. Percieved – My perception of what is wrong with you is not necessarily accurate.

Prov. 13:10—“Through *presumption* comes nothing but strife, but with those who receive counsel is wisdom.”

2. Dwelling upon -- If you choose to mull over and over other peoples faults in your mind, it will affect and perpetuate a critical attitude. Like feeding a flame.

Phil. 4:8 -- “Finally brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.”

3. With no view to their good
 - a. Dwell just long enough to:
 1. Pray about it.
 2. Pursue a solution (ASAP).
 - b. Communication is key, but make sure you’re following the example given to us in Matt. 18 with regard to the circle of knowledge (keep it as small as possible).
 - Matt. 18:15 – Confront in Private
 - Matt. 18:16 – Take one or two to establish every fact
 - Matt. 18:17 – Go before the church

“If you are not clear about your motives in sharing the situation with a third party, then you’re probably practicing gossip and not a genuine, helpful spirit.” –pg. 103

II. Six principles to keep in mind

A. Criticism is wrong (Sin)

1. It is very clear how God feels about critical attitudes.
 - a. Num. 12:11—Aaron said, “Do not account this *sin* to us, in which we have acted foolishly and in which we have *sinned*.”
 - b. Matt. 7:3—“Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?”

Point: We are playing God and we don't meet the qualifications.

2. Effects of a critical attitude

a. Criticism ruins our fellowship with God.

- Matt. 5:22-24 “first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.”
- *If you know that your fellowship with God is broken...* “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”—1 Jhn. 1:9

b. Our critical attitude hurts us.

- This is the logical consequence of living in sin and out of fellowship with God
- “Choose to sin; choose to suffer”

c. A critical attitude destroys our fellowship with others.

B. Criticism is Petty

1. Heart issues: Three significant issues hide under the covers of criticism

- a. A blend of unforgiveness
- b. Envy, jealousy, resentment

Prov. 14:30 —“A tranquil heart is life to the body, but passion (*Envy/Jealousy*) is rottenness to the bones”

Titus 3:3—“For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.”

c. Personal failure

- Don't try to level the playing field by comparing yourself to others.

C. Criticism is self-exalting

- It takes the focus off me and my faults and highlights me as the one who knows.

Prov. 8:13—“The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way, and the perverted mouth, I hate.”

Prov. 11:2—“When pride comes, then comes dishonor, but with the humble is wisdom.”

Prov. 16:18—“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.”

D. Criticism is painful

*Input: What do we generally feel when we are being criticized?

Various answers: pain, anger, sorrow

1. Our response depends on our life focus.
 - a. A focus on self (approval of men)
 - b. A focus on God
 - Gal. 1:10 “Am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ”

Quote: “It’s not the critic who counts, not the one who points out how the strong man stumbles or how the doer of deeds might have done it better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred with sweat and dust and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again, who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause, who, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly; his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

--Theodore Roosevelt

E. Criticism is often inadvertent

1. A healthy portion of things that people say are words they wouldn’t say if they thought twice.
 - a. This shows us how important it is that we guard our heart.

Mat. 12:34—“The good man out of the good treasure brings fourth what is good; and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings fourth what is evil.”

- b. Hastily spoken words cannot simply be excused but must be acknowledged and repented of.

Matt. 12:35—“ And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment.”

- Aaron said, “We have acted foolishly” (Numbers 12:11).

F. Criticism plugs the flow of God’s blessing

- Past hurts, frustrations, and unresolved conflicts tend to snow-ball into new relationships and circumstances.

Quote: “Criticism makes us hard and vindictive and cruel. It leaves us with the flattering notion that we are superior persons. It is impossible to develop the characteristics of a saint and at the same time maintain a critical attitude. Criticism harms our relationship with God and others, and that will block the flow of God’s blessing.” Pg. 114

Personal questions:

1. Am I a critical person?
2. Am I reaping the consequences in my relationship with God?
3. Am I willing to repent?

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“A continually critical attitude toward those around me will consume all that is healthy and joy-producing in my life”

III. What exactly is a critical Attitude?

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3. With _____
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IV. Six principles to keep in mind

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