

## Giving Criticism

In acts 20:35, Jesus is quoted as saying – “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Many people simply do not believe Jesus words here. The world, in general, is much more interested in **receiving, not giving** ---except, that is, when it comes to **criticism**. The world most certainly believes that is better to give than it is to receive it.

No matter what you do in life, there will always be critics. Some critics will try to help you; others will destroy you, if you let them. Some critics are always ready to point out your shortcomings while describing their strengths. Other critics genuinely care for you, desiring to help you grow and improve.

It’s been said that there is only one way to avoid being criticized: **do nothing, say nothing** and **be nothing**. Of course, even this approach to life won’t guarantee freedom from criticism. A person who doesn’t do anything with the life God has entrusted to him should be rebuked, for he is either a coward or lazy or both.

Those who are wise understand that for every action, there is an equal and opposite criticism. We may not always hear the criticisms, but they exist, nevertheless. **It is impossible to please everyone**. What pleases one person will offend another, and vice versa. May we always seek to please the Lord in what we say and do (Gal. 1:10). I believe Christians should learn how to both give and receive criticism to the best of their ability. Criticism is a significant part of human communication.

**When it comes to criticism, if we don’t have the heart (or desire) to genuinely help someone, then we really don’t have the right to criticize them at all.** In fact, if our attitude is not right, it would be better for us to simply remain silent than to criticize someone. Galatians 6:1 addresses this theme – “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in **any** trespass, you who are spiritual **restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself** lest you also be tempted.” Criticism must be presented in **a spirit of gentleness!** If we criticize someone without any real devotion to helping them, we are treating that person as an enemy (cf. Matt. 5:44)?

When we criticize others, let’s make sure that we do it constructively, showing a genuine concern for them and their feelings. In many circumstances, the best way to constructively criticize is to begin with simple, friendly questions – questions that will give the person a chance to explain his/her position without automatically being offended or becoming excited or agitated. Then, **after you’ve listened carefully** (Prov.18:13), share any **suggestions for improvement** that you believe might be helpful to him/her. That’s right, constructive criticism should always include some suggestions for improvement, not just uncovering of shortcomings or mistakes.

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