

Avoid Criticizing - Lesson

Lesson Summary: Guard your mouth against criticizing others. It leads to arguing or resentment, which is never useful, and it doesn't benefit you or them.

2 TIMOTHY 2:23-24 (NIV)

Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.

There is a difference between criticizing and rebuking or bringing correction to another person. Criticism is brought with a bad attitude.

1) Don't criticize people

- a) Criticizing someone to their face breeds strife.
- b) Criticizing someone behind their back is gossip and can create more trouble.
- c) Difference between criticizing and helping
 - i) Criticizing is pointing out flaws and tearing down others
 - ii) Helping has a loving attitude that shows people ways to grow, or how to do something better. Sometimes you have to wait for them to ask for help.
 - iii) Sometimes a firm but loving rebuke is needed if someone is in sin. That is different than criticizing. Humility is a key difference.
- d) Criticizing leads to resentment even if it is accepted and the person changes by it.
- e) Criticizing leads to arguments.

2) Don't argue with people

- a) Arguments rarely bring help, only resentment.
Even if you win, they resent you and it damages your relationship.

3) Learn to be accepting in weaknesses of others and find ways to teach without hurting.

"Nowhere else in the entire New Testament is the humanity of the great apostle [Paul] seen so clearly as when he staggers under the cruel attacks of the anti-Paul bloc in the Corinthian church. His sufferings are there the most poignant and nearest to the sufferings of Christ because they are inward and of the soul. For always the soul can suffer as the body cannot....

A contentious spirit will find something to quarrel about. A faultfinder will find occasion to accuse a Christian even if his life is as chaste as an icicle and pure as snow. A man of ill will does not hesitate to attack, even if the object of his hatred be a prophet or the very Son of God Himself. If John comes fasting, he says he has a devil; if Christ comes eating and drinking, he says He is a winebibber and a glutton. **Good men are made to appear evil by the simple trick of dredging up from his own heart the evil that is there and attributing it to them.**"

Source: We Travel an Appointed Way, A.W. Tozer, (Christian Publishers, 1988), pp. 79-80.

What are some ways to deal with a situation differently and with love and respect, where you would normally criticize someone?