

## Criticism – A Personal Journey: Part 2

by Moe Becnel

Last month we began discussing CRITICISM, and the negative affect it has on people personally, and on families.

If you have not read **Criticism – A Personal Journey: Part 1**, read it before continuing with this article. (In [www.blendingafamily.com/articles](http://www.blendingafamily.com/articles))

### Negative Criticism - What Scripture Says

Romans 14: 3 states, "Let not him who eats look down on or despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains criticize and pass judgment on him who eats; for God has accepted and welcomed him."

Romans 14: 10 reads, "Why do you criticize and pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you look down upon or despise your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God."

Matthew 7: 1-2 says, "Do not judge and criticize and condemn others, so that you may not be judged and criticized and condemned yourselves. For just as you judge and criticize and condemn others, you will be judged and criticized and condemned, and in accordance with the measure you [use to] deal out to others, it will be dealt out again to you."

### Does criticism infect your family?

Does criticism exist within the walls of your home – either verbally to family members, or behind their backs?

Do siblings put each other down?

Is there a "ruling" opinion in your home that everyone must follow?

Do your children hear the adults speak negatively to each other, or gossip about someone outside the home?

Have the children picked up parents' or peer's behavior – criticizing other people?

### What about you?

Are you critical? Is it a way of life to you? Are you miserable because of it? Do you know the origin of your critical nature?

Is there no peace and contentment in your life because of your critical attitude, or because of another family member's critical spirit?

### David's Prayer

There will be times in each of our lives when we need a new heart - a breath of LIFE from God - in some dead and dry area in our life.

➤ King David, a man after God's own heart, had times in his life like that. He was not flawless. There were days he had to ask God for forgiveness, or for strength, or to meet some deep need.

➤ In **Psalm 51:10** David prayed, "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew (make new) a steadfast spirit within me."

**Psalm 139:22-24** "I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies. Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

➤ Other days he felt discouraged or defeated. (Psalm 57: 1)

➤ There were times when he had no more strength to go on. (Psalm 18: 4-5)

We are no different from David in our emotions. What set David apart from many of us was the level of intimacy he had with God, which dictated his prayer life. He drew strength, healing and deliverance from his intimate relationship with God.

### How to Stop Criticizing:

I got over my critical spirit as I saw that God chose to focus on my potential rather than my faults.

Here are some things for you to consider:

1. Identify the source of the criticism. The source may not be obvious. Criticism may be spilling into your family from a hurt unrelated to the family – possibly guilt, shame, anger, pride, etc.

2. Realize the damage of being critical – to all your relationships AND you own personal happiness.
3. Go to God with your feelings, as David did. Ask God to show you where you need change, and ask Him to help you make the change.
4. Stop being an “unskilled” judge. Stop having an opinion about everything. Expect others to NOT do things as you would. Accept their views of things, and embrace the unique individuality that God created in them. Thank God that they are NOT like you, because He created them different from you on purpose.
5. Take your negative thoughts captive. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you when you are being critical. As you have negative thoughts, keep your mouth shut. Do not discuss them. And change your thoughts to positive ones about that person or situation. The glass IS really half-full, every cloud DOES have a silver lining, and every person HAS potential.
6. Lift your loved ones up, even when they do not do things the way you want. (*Make a list of who they are!*) Encourage the people that are important to you – tell him or her that they bless your life.

Everyone (your spouse, children, stepchildren, peers, parents, etc) has value. Focus on that fact with a microscope! Remember that they too were created by God with creativity, talents and abilities that make them unique.

### **There is Effective Criticism**

As already stated, not all criticism is meant for harm. We should all seek Godly counsel for our life. The Bible tells us that we should receive criticism (rebuke, reproof) as instruction and correction.

**Proverbs 13:18** “Poverty and shame will come to him who disdains correction, but he who regards a rebuke will be honored.”

**Proverbs 15:31-32** “If you listen to constructive criticism, you will be at home among the wise. If you reject criticism, you only harm yourself; but if you listen to correction, you grow in understanding.”

**Proverbs 25:12** “Valid criticism is as treasured by the one who heeds it as jewelry made from finest gold.”

**Proverbs 29:1** Whoever stubbornly refuses to accept criticism will suddenly be broken beyond repair.

**Ecclesiastes 7:5** “It is better to be criticized by a wise person than to be praised by a fool!

Positive criticism comes from wise men and women. We may not like what they tell us, but God sends people to reproof us. The truth will set you free, but it often will first make you mad. That’s OK. Just get over it, and receive the reproof.

How do you tell the difference between Godly reproof and negative criticism? Godly reproof:

- ✓ Will always be founded on scripture,
- ✓ Will never be harsh or degrading – God speaks to us in kindness and gentleness (Galatians 5: 22-23)  
Jesus never tears His bride down.

Don’t get mad – just choose to get better!

Develop the heart of David, a heart that wants to stand righteous before God, a heart that wants to know his faults so he can get rid of them.

~~*Changing the way you view your blended family*~~

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