

Are You Being Criticized?

“My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.”

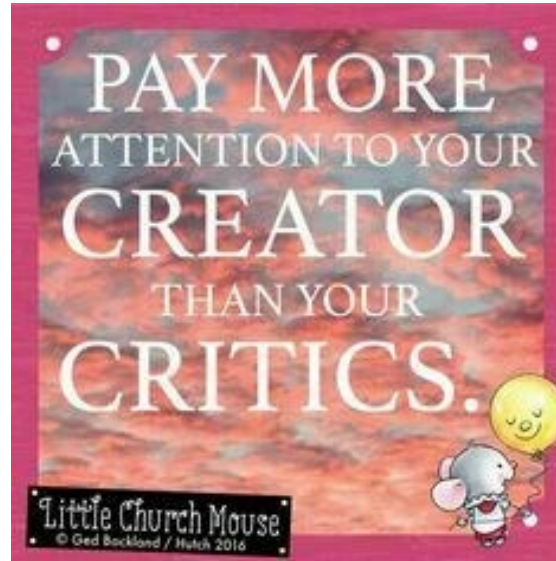
Hebrews 12:5-6

At first reading, this Scripture doesn’t sound like it comes from a loving God. He wants us to be happy when someone is harassing us because someday we will know that we were right and then we will be blessed? Are we supposed to accept criticism and not reply?

Even Christ got upset with the actions of people, but he didn’t hurt the people. He may have stopped their actions and disrupted their practices, but he did nothing to physically hurt them. He disliked the sin, but he always loved the sinner.

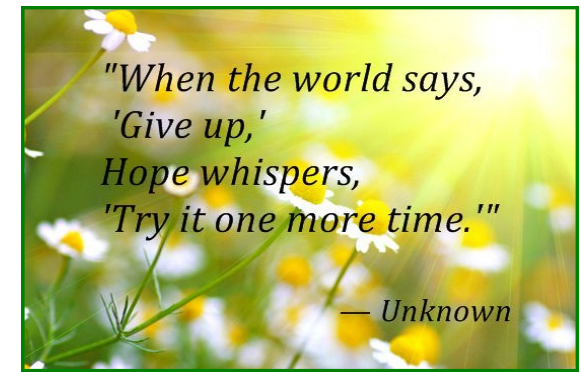
I believe Christ is telling us that if we react in an aggressive or forceful way, we are not going to accomplish anything. If we react in love, we can do much more.

Sometimes the best thing to do is just “do nothing” and wait until we know what would be a good response. Or we can allow the person to see what is right for himself. Maybe if we allow the person a little time to think things through, he will see the positive side of the discussion.



Eugene Peterson translates it “*You’re blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God’s kingdom.*” Sometimes, we need to dig deeper and look at the person and not the sin. We need to make sure that we know the reason for the actions of the other person, and then react in love to help correct that attitude against us and our beliefs. Only then can we really feel the love of God working through us, and we will be blessed. We have to be willing to stand up 100% for what we believe to be true.

When should we be committed to God? There are many times things come up for discussion in a group of Christians,



and there are differences of opinion that lead to separations into different denominations and different churches. God doesn’t say that we need to be Presbyterian, Methodist, Roman Catholic, or Lutheran. Yet we “fight” over these small differences and sometimes they get so big they get in front of our real mission.

Not too many years ago, a female missionary was killed by ambush in Africa. These people are in danger for their lives because they want to tell others about Jesus Christ and his love. We have a wonderful freedom in this country to talk openly about our love for our God.

We see fishing mentioned many times in the Bible. Jesus had given the beatitudes to His disciples, many who had been fishermen. But they didn’t just sit on a shore and cast their line waiting for a fish to bite. They didn’t put out fancy lures and try to trick the fish. They were not what we could call “line fishermen.” They were net fishermen. Their fishing was very labor-intensive. Sometimes they got no results and sometimes they had a “big catch.” The same is true for us today. We need to be persistent and

dedicated. Sometimes we will have great results. Sometime we will be criticized for our beliefs.

Christ said *“Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer everyone.”* What does salt do to our speech? I know that it tenderizes meat, does it mean it should tenderize our speech. I have known some people that were what we call “Sacchariny.” They are always sweet, but it is artificial; it doesn’t mean anything. Do we sometimes need to “tender” our speech when talking with others? We also know that salt brings out the flavor. Do we need to make sure that our speech has the correct message of love?

I have known people that are always happy because they have a peace with God that cannot be explained. We may think we are persecuted but if it will help someone else come to know Christ as their personal Savior, then that is what we are suppose to do.

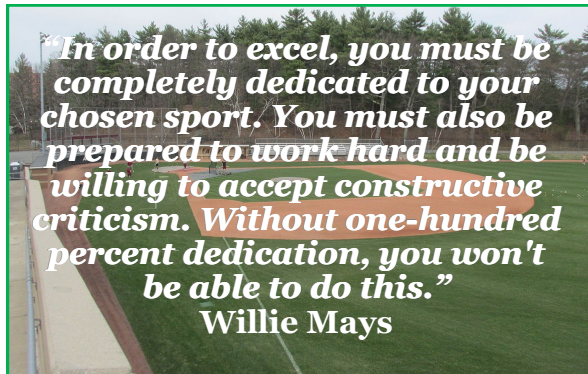


Today will Never
come again. Be a
blessing. Be a friend.
Encourage someone.
Take time to care.
Let your words heal,
and not wound.

As a child I remembered one lady who always had a favorite hymn she wanted sung. It is an old “folksy” song, but it

said a lot about how we should act. The song was called “Brighten the Corner Where You Are” by Ina Ogdon. The words still tell us a lot today.

*Do not wait until some deed of greatness you may do,
Do not wait to shed your light afar;
To the many duties ever near you now be true,
Refrain:
Brighten the corner where you are!
Brighten the corner where you are! Some-
one far from harbor you may guide across
the bar;
Brighten the corner where you are!
Just above are clouded skies that you may
help to clear,
Let not narrow self your way debar;
Though into one heart alone may fall your
song of cheer,
Here for all your talent you may surely
find a need,
Here reflect the bright and Morning Star;
Even from your humble hand the Bread of
Life may feed,
Brighten the corner where you are.*

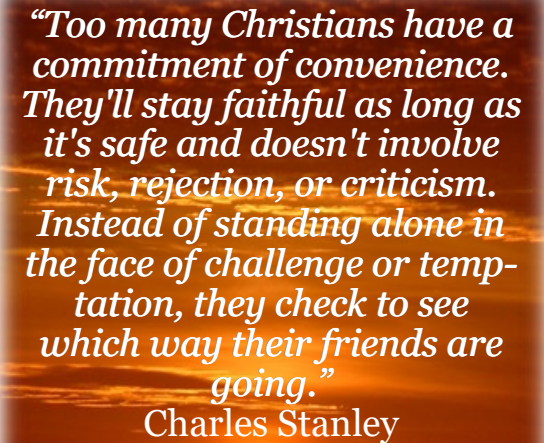


We have two choices when being criticized. We can react in a positive or a negative way. Unfortunately we aren’t always positive, but it helps if we can help someone else and spread a little sunshine and some will fall into our lives too. Sometimes we may not make the correct choice, but that is why we have the wonderful Grace of God.

Prayer: Amazing God, You can see so much more than we can see. Sometimes, we want to do things our way. We want to retaliate for the person that disagrees with us. Help us to be like You as much as possible, to seek to do Your will to the lovely and the unlovely alike, and then give us the courage and strength to act in a way that You would have us act each day. Amen.

1. How can our commitment to God provoke persecution?
2. What can help us re-act in a positive way to criticism from others?
3. How can we let them know we are Christians just by our love?
4. Is your God an amazing God? How?
5. Why should we be thankful for the beatitudes and their message? [Hebrews 12:6](#) Prov. 3:11,12

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“Too many Christians have a commitment of convenience. They'll stay faithful as long as it's safe and doesn't involve risk, rejection, or criticism. Instead of standing alone in the face of challenge or temptation, they check to see which way their friends are going.”
Charles Stanley