



VAMPIRE 1: The Excessively Critical

Opening.

Criticism is “an act of criticizing; to judge as a critic; to find fault; to blame or condemn.” We face a lot of critics in life. While some criticize for our good, others are excessively critical for the purpose of tearing us down, and keep us from our God-given potential. In this study, we will learn how to deal with both, but with special emphasis on the latter, and looking within our individual selves and know if we may be exhibiting an overly critical spirit.

To begin: share a pet peeve (something that you find especially annoying).

Look within.

- Pastor Jon mentioned two windows to the heart: praise and criticism. What you praise in other often reveals what you value most. What you criticize in other often reveals your deepest insecurities.
- Read Ecclesiastes 7:5 and share what you think about that saying?
- When do you know when a criticism is coming from a good place?
- How do you distinguish a sincere praise from mere flattery?

Share your insight.

- What does Jesus say about being overly critical? Read Matthew 7:4 NLT.
- Is there are right way to criticize someone? What do you think is that right way?
- Pastor said there are often two wrong responses when we get criticized: *Fight*—opposing the criticism and the critic. *Flight* —avoiding the critic. Have you ever responded to critics that way? How did it go?
- Read Proverbs 15:31-32. Pastor taught us that the right responses to criticism are: *Listen*— when their motive is to help not hurt; and when the critic can help. *Answer*—when the critic is missing information that would change their perception; and when the person is open to change. Read Proverbs 15:1. What does God’s Word say how we should answer?
- Always remember your motive when you criticize or praise. Whether we criticize or praise, as God’s people, our motivation should always be *to edify*. Read Romans 14:19. What does edify mean and why is it important in our relationship?
- Read Ephesians 4:15-16. What is the right manner, motivation and desired outcome of criticism?
- Pastor Jon shared that there are perennial critics whose goal is to destroy you. Often, overly critical people are emotionally unhealthy or wounded. How do you deal with a perennial harsh critic? *Dismiss/move on*. Read Matthew 15:13-14 and 1 Thessalonians 2:4. *Pray* for the person’s inner healing and change of heart.

Spend time to pray.

Key Scriptures

It is better to be criticized by a wise person than to be *praised* by a fool!

Ecclesiastes 7:5 NLT

How can you think of saying, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye?

Matthew 7:4 NLT

If you listen to constructive criticism, you will be at home among the wise. If you reject criticism, you only harm yourself...**Proverbs 15:31-32 NLT**

A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare.

Proverbs 15:1

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. **Romans 14:19**

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Ephesians 4:15-16

Jesus replied, 'Every plant not planted by my heavenly Father will be rooted up, so ignore them. They are blind guides leading the blind...they will both fall into a ditch.' **Matthew 15:13-14 NLT**

NLT