

## Today's Message Outline: "The Dark Cloud of Criticism"

<sup>36</sup>One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. <sup>37</sup>And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, <sup>38</sup>and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. <sup>39</sup>Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." <sup>40</sup>And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "Say it, Teacher." <sup>41</sup>"A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. <sup>42</sup>When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?" <sup>43</sup>Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." <sup>44</sup>Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. <sup>45</sup>You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. <sup>46</sup>You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. <sup>47</sup>Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little." <sup>48</sup>And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." <sup>49</sup>Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" <sup>50</sup>And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

— Luke 7: 36-50 (ESV)

15% not well, 15% raised poorly, 70% are in pain or fear

Conflict versus Criticism

**Constructive** Criticism Defined

1. "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" - Romans 8:31 (ESV)
2. "Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality." - Romans 12:13 (ESV)
  - 21 days to **make or break** a habit
3. "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." - Romans 12:15 (ESV)
4. "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.." - Romans 5:10 (ESV)

My Own Worst Enemy Series / week 3

Pastor Scott Stevens

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## MY OWN WORST ENEMY SERIES

### A Prayer For ... A Critical Spirit

Father, your ways and your thoughts are higher than my ways and my thoughts. Renew my mind.

Remind me that my value and worth are founded only in who you tell me I am - your beloved child, made in your holy image. I confess that oftentimes I am easily offended, that I have a critical tongue that tears others down, and that I engage in arguments that aren't necessary. Father, forgive me for speaking critical and discouraging words when I should be speaking words that build up and encourage. Father, forgive me for being easily offended when it is only your words to me and your thoughts about me that matter.

Lord, empower me to control my tongue. Lord, empower me to grow in your peace, kindness, gentleness, and self-control so that your love may flow through me to everyone you place around me today.

*"A soft answer turns away wrath,  
but a harsh word stirs up anger."  
Proverbs 15:1 (ESV)*

### Small Group or Personal Reflection Questions:

1. Would you consider yourself less critical or more critical of others than 'average?' (You can not say average!)
2. In your life, who do you tend to be most critical of? Why do you think that is?
3. When it comes to criticism, which of these four do you tend to do most...
  - a) point it out to the person
  - b) point it out to some friends and sit around and chat about it
  - c) file it, and add it to the prosecutions case for a future hearing
  - d) not do or say anything but it will bother you. It will fester. It's going to be like a 4<sup>th</sup> meal-late night-Taco Bell burrito-heart burn!
4. When was the last time you received constructive criticism? How did you receive it? If you said you received it well how can you be sure?
5. Review the four scriptures from Romans. Which resonates with you most? Which do you struggle with most?