

Dealing with A Critical Spirit (Tongue)

"You Make Me Crazy" series- Part 2

Connect: Describe a time when you felt that you were unjustly criticized. Why did this person(s) feel the need to criticize? How did you handle the criticism at the time? What do you wish you had done differently?

Hook: In the book of James, the author speaks of the dangers of an untamed tongue. James says that the tongue can do good things, but when controlled by our fleshly nature, it can be ruinous, destructive, and wicked. There can be many reasons for why one's tongue may get out of control: Anger, hurt, jealousy -to name a few. And sometimes when we take on a "critical spirit", we will find that we use words that do not build up, affirm, or inspire others. In fact, when we think of someone who is a constant and harsh critic, we may describe them as bossy, arrogant, power-hungry, or just plain mean! How do we deal with the "critical spirit"?

In our text below, we read about a very dark day in King's David's life. His son Absalom has taken the throne away from him, and David and his loyal followers are running for their lives. On this day, David would meet a man with a severe case of a critical spirit with a tongue running out of control.

Book: 2 Samuel 16:5-14

2Sa 16:5 As King David came to Bahurim, a man came out of the village cursing them. It was Shimei son of Gera, from the same clan as Saul's family.

2Sa 16:6 He threw stones at the king and the king's officers and all the mighty warriors who surrounded him.

2Sa 16:7 "Get out of here, you murderer, you scoundrel!" he shouted at David.

2Sa 16:8 "The LORD is paying you back for all the bloodshed in Saul's clan. You stole his throne, and now the LORD has given it to your son Absalom. At last you will taste some of your own medicine, for you are a murderer!"

2Sa 16:9 "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king?" Abishai son of Zeruiah demanded. "Let me go over and cut off his head!"

2Sa 16:10 "No!" the king said. "Who asked your opinion, you sons of Zeruiah! If the LORD has told him to curse me, who are you to stop him?"

2Sa 16:11 Then David said to Abishai and to all his servants, "My own son is trying to kill me. Doesn't this relative of Saul have even more reason to do so? Leave him alone and let him curse, for the LORD has told him to do it.

2Sa 16:12 And perhaps the LORD will see that I am being wronged and will bless me because of these curses today."

2Sa 16:13 So David and his men continued down the road, and Shimei kept pace with them on a nearby hillside, cursing as he went and throwing stones at David and tossing dust into the air.

2Sa 16:14 The king and all who were with him grew weary along the way, so they rested when they reached the Jordan River.

Look:

What can we speculate was the cause of Shimei's criticism?

What was David's response to Shimei's attack?

Read verses 10-12 once again. What truths did David come to rely upon during this personal attack from Sheimei?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Some Christians allow the attacks of others to drive them away from the Lord, whereas for some it drives them to the Lord. What makes the difference?

How can we know whether to defend ourselves before critics or just ignore them? What biblical principles apply?

How can we know when to confront and when to let something go?

Should Christians take pleasure, or be grieved at the thought of God judging their enemies?

Would David have an opportunity to show forgiveness to Shimei? Read 2 Samuel 19:16-23

How can a Christian who has been deeply hurt truly forgive?

Took:

What is the first clue for you that you are "reacting" with a critical spirit?

How can you truly let go of a personal hurt that you have carried for a long time?