

**PROVERBS SERIES SEVENTEEN  
ON PROFITING FROM CRITICISM**

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**Proverbs 1:1-5;2:1-5;12:1,15;13:14,18;17:10;29:1**

Honest criticism is hard to take, particularly from a relative, a friend, an acquaintance, or a stranger. No one enjoys it; but Proverbs teaches that good criticism is one of the best things that can happen to us. Proverb 12:1 declares: “Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid.”

Since criticism is hard to handle, mentally, emotionally and physically, we want to learn how to handle it well—like David handled it when Nathan confronted him over his sin of adultery with Bathsheba and subsequent murder of her husband, Uriah.

But, what if our critics are wrong?

This morning, in our study of Proverbial wisdom, we will engage with some of the many proverbs which guide us in the proper handling of—and profiting from—criticism.

THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

No One Knows Everything; So, Don't Be A “Know It All.”

Proverb 29:1

No One Knows Everything; So, Develop A Yearning Heart To Learn.

Proverb 4:13

Proverb 23:12

Proverb 2:1-5

No One Is Perfect, So Welcome Rebuke, Even If It Stings.

Proverb 25:12

Proverb 9:8-9

Proverb 17:10

Proverb 27:5-6

People Have Different Priorities And Expectations; So Evaluate Criticism In Light Of Your Purposes And Calling In Life.

Proverb 1:1-6

Consider The Source. Some People Can't Be Satisfied; Some Criticisms Aren't Worth Engaging; Some People Aren't Worth Listening To.

THE RIGHT RESPONSE

1. Stop and look at the person. Criticism is serious business.

Proverb 10:17

Proverb 13:14

2. Listen to what they have to say. Don't answer too quickly.

Proverb 18:13

3. Not everyone sees from the same perspective. Accept their perception as real and valid.

Proverb 12:15

4. Resist the temptation to defend. Don't accuse or use labels.

Proverb 23:9

5. Don't act like a fool by changing the subject or joking.

Proverb 10:8

6. Seek to understand what was really meant—and said. Restate the critic's words and feelings in your own words to ensure that you both are talking about the same thing.

Proverb 16:21

7. Let your wisdom show. Respond appropriately.

7a. Humility and gratitude

7b. Apologies

7c. Evaluations: If the criticism is true, make appropriate changes. If not, ignore it.

Proverb 13:18

Proverb 15:31-32

## A WORD TO CRITICS

Words are powerful things. Be careful what you say and how you say it.

Timing is sometimes more important than truth.

You may not know as much about what is going on as you think you do.

“Great is the man who can accept criticism. Greater yet is he who welcomes it. But greatest of all is he who knows how to administer it in a spirit of love and sensitivity without causing pain or chagrin.”  
(Rabbi Norman Lamm)