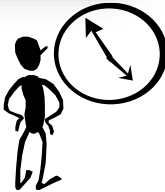


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Time of Assembly



Sunday:

Bible Study	9:00 a.m.
Worship	10:00 a.m.
Worship	5:00 p.m.
(every other week)	

Wednesday:

Bible Study	6:30 p. m.
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Dealing with Criticism

By Mike Grushon

One of the persistent problems young people must overcome is criticism from adults. Paul exhorted Timothy to conduct himself in such a way that he would give no one a basis of truth for such criticism (I Timothy 4:12). Unfortunately, some choose to criticize the young even if they do not provide ample fuel for the critic's fires. This is especially so when young people happen to be actively involved in the Lord's service.

This short article is directed to young people who are trying to use their talents to serve God and proclaim Christ. Our intention is to encourage you not to let the criticism of others deter you from active service. All Christians have an equal responsibility to use their talents to teach the gospel to the lost (Matthew 28:19-20). Do not allow anyone to deter you as a young Christian from fulfilling your responsibility.

The criticism young people receive is one of two classes. It is either deserved or undeserved. Regardless of the type of criticism you receive, you should not allow it to keep you from serving God. If you acted in such a way that you deserved the criticism, you should make the necessary correction, and press on in your service to God. If you were the subject of criticism that you did not deserve, or of that which proceeded from an improper motive, pay it no heed, simply continue to do what you know is right.

In dealing with criticism, it helps to try to understand the reason the criticism has been offered. Some people offer criticism out of a genuine concern for your spiritual well-being. It is usually not difficult [to identify] who such people are. Their attitude and the manner in which they criticize make them easy to spot. Young people should have no problem getting along with such people. No matter how sharp

their criticism may be, you know they are really interested in you.

However, what about the others? I am convinced that some of the criticism leveled against young people who are actively serving the Lord are outright attempts to discourage such activity. When young people show more zeal than the adults of a church, the adults are only left with a few alternatives. They can either

1. allow the young people's zealous efforts to continue and suffer the embarrassment of their own inactivity, or
2. they can follow the young people's activity and become energetic themselves, or
3. they can try to squelch the young people's zeal and try to salve their consciences by removing the constant reminder of what they ought to be doing themselves.

When older members of the church discourage teenagers from doing personal work, visiting meetings, making notes on sermons, etc., I find it hard to believe that they have not selected the third option.

Young people, I am not saying that you should not pay attention to the criticisms made by older Christians. Constructive criticism offered by mature and understanding saints should make your talents even more useful to the cause of Christ. What I am saying is that should not allow the unjust criticism of lazy Christians to hinder or prevent you from doing what you know you should be doing! Be a faithful and active Christian regardless of what others, young or old, may say about you. Look to the faithful Christians that you may know, whether preachers, elders, or teachers. They are often the objects of severe criticism, yet it has not stopped them. Paul was criticized by some of the Corinthians, yet they could not keep him from doing what he knew needed to be done. Do what you know you can do in God's service.

The Humility of Samuel

By Philip North

In 1 Samuel 3, we note where God first called Samuel directly. Samuel was still a young boy at this time, and thought that it was his mentor, the prophet Eli, who called him. In fact, three times he thought that Eli called him. However, it was Eli, now his old age and experiencing dimness of eye sight, who knew that it was God who was calling Samuel. Note verses 8-10: "And the Lord called unto Samuel again the third time, And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth."

How so very wonderful it would be if a lot more of mankind had young Samuel's attitude: "Speak; for thy servant heareth." Of course, Samuel is just one of many examples that manifest to us the attitude of most young children. Mark's account of what Jesus said on this matter reads as follows: "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them" (Mark 10:13-16).

While there are plenty of verses in God's Word to teach us the necessary practicing of maturity, nonetheless, one is not pleasing to God, nor is allowed entrance into Heaven by Him, without having the meek and submissive attitude of a little child. This is why many refuse to become New Testament Christians. Being submissive enough to be baptized for the remission of their sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:4; 1 Peter 3:21) is beneath them, to be sure. Some snub their nose down at baptism. A lot of people see not the serious need to fully obey God. In John 3, after the young Pharisaic ruler, Nicodemus, asked the Savior how it was possible to be "born again," we note Jesus' reply in verse 5: "Jesus answered, Very, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." To many, baptism is just stepping into the water and getting all wet. Well, if that is the attitude, then such is right! You see, to think in such a way as this is merely getting all wet.

Baptism shows humility, acceptance, and submissiveness all combined. Reject baptism, while claiming to accept all of the other commands of God is to still "miss the boat." This is going to be so sad for many when that "rude awakening" takes place at death and on the final Judgment of God. Paul wrote of Christ's second coming, "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (2 Thessalonians 1:8-10).

However, due to the plethora of methods utilized by Satan, many individuals, even after going far as to be baptized, do not maintain that child-like attitude. They do not grow in Christ, or else they grow in Christ only so far, then remain a spiritual stalemate. Still yet, they "pick and choose" what to obey. Such attitudes as the aforementioned are not possessing the disposition of a little child. Meekness, humility, and willingness to continually desire to please God are not there.

May we not become so set in our ways that we brush aside the proper and godly thinking of the young lad Samuel, who said, as Eli instructed him to say, "Speak; for thy

servant heareth.”

I personally cannot think of any sin that will cause more precious souls to be lost than that of pride! King Solomon stated in Proverbs 11:2, “When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.” Solomon further teaches in chapter 16:18, “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” Read 1 Samuel 15-31. Pride was a major downfall of King Saul.

We need many more Samuels and a lot less Sauls. How is it with you, gentle reader? Is your attitude of being fully submissive to God like that of King Saul, or of the prophet Samuel?

Hey Dad (and Mom Too)!

By Todd Wilson

Not to alarm you, but your kids are more aware than you think. I use to believe when it comes to TV that most of it goes right over kids’ heads, but we still always tried to be careful. We didn’t allow bad language or bad scenes...but some of the subtler areas...we sometimes overlooked.

But back when our kids were little, the subtleties, were...littler. Bad attitudes, disrespect for parents, siblings, and God, and evolutionary teaching eliminated some of the kids’ classics of the time.

But now...the subtleties are bigger and more targeted, trying to make things that are deviant and sinful look...normal. As a parent, I’d be tempted to say about a well-liked show, “Oh, the kids probably won’t notice...it’s not the focus of the show or episode.”

But guess what? Kids notice.

Just the other night, our granddaughter Renley (6) told us about a show she likes. She said, “Guess what? The dad married a dad so the kid has two dads instead of a mom and dad. But Mom made us turn it off.”

I was flabbergasted...and angry. I felt the need to hurt something and wanted to go down to the local station and punch that producer in the nose. “How dare they try to foist their crud on my granddaughter!”

Of course, my granddaughter is as sharp as a tack and notices everything. But what troubles me even more is the kids who don’t notice it as being abnormal. Maybe they’re in greater danger because of slowly absorbing the skewed message.

That scares me, fellow watchdog dad...and it should get your hackles up and put a growwwl in your throat. Don’t blow it off or think it’s not a big deal because it is! And it’s creeping in everywhere!

Truth is, “they” are after our kids. They’re adding sinful content to innocent kids’ shows in order to normalize it and brainwash your children. I’m telling you, Dad, you need to rise up, switch channels or turn it off, and scrutinize everything your chil-

dren watch.

You're the guard dog...and nothing...NOTHING gets past you!!

Does it Matter What I Believe?

By Jarrod Jacobs

Many ask this question in reference to religious matters. A large number of people in our society try to say that it does not matter what we believe so long as we are honest and sincere about religious issues. Is this true? Let us study the Bible and see the consequences of one reasoning that it does not matter what we believe so long as we are sincere.

If it does not matter what we believe just as long as we are sincere people, then why did Jesus condemn the Pharisees while He was on earth? Let us read Matthew 15:9. There Jesus said, "In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." Does this sound like Jesus does not care how we worship Him? How is it possible to worship "in vain" if it doesn't matter what we believe? Further, in Matthew 22:29, Jesus condemned the Sadducees, telling them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures, nor the power of God." How can Christ say that people are "wrong" if it does not matter what you and I believe on religious matters?

Let us look at an early teacher and preacher of the gospel: A man by the name of Stephen. This space will not allow us to print the entire text, but please read Acts 7 so you can understand the entire context. Toward the end of Acts 7, Stephen condemns the Jews for refusing to believe that Jesus was the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecy (vs. 51-53). Please notice what happened. "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth...They cast him out of the city and stoned him" (Acts 7:54, 58). Does this sound like the reaction of a people who heard a sermon suggesting that it doesn't matter what we believe so long as we are sincere in what we do?

We could add to this study by relating the various reactions of people who heard the apostle Paul preach. The Bible shows us that he was run out of Antioch in Pisidia, stoned at Lystra, run out of Thessalonica, and Berea as well (Acts 13:50, 14:19, 17:10, 13-14). These are but a few examples, and more of Paul's suffering is recorded for us in II Corinthians 11:23-28. Please note the responses to Paul and when they came. This is not the reaction of folks hearing, "I'm OK and you are OK," or "It doesn't matter what we believe!" Instead, we know he preached the gospel and the gospel only (Gal. 1:6-12; Rom. 1:16; I Cor. 2:2, 5)

My friend, what we believe matters! What we believe will determine whether we go to Heaven or Hell (Jn. 8:24)! This is how serious it is. When people declare that it does not matter what you believe as long as you are honest and sincere, they are saying something completely foreign to the Scriptures.