

Criticize Me!

Ex. 18:13-27

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. Illustration about man complaining that his wife scrambled the wrong egg, *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*, #2114.
- B. Criticism is going to come in this life.
 1. "That sweater makes you look like you weigh a ton."
 2. "You need to learn how to better control your children. I was embarrassed to admit that I know you are after the way they acted in Wal-Mart last night."
 3. "Honey, I can't believe you're going to wear that tie with that coat. It looks like something a clown would wear."
- C. Since criticism is going to occur, we want to examine how we ought to deal with criticism.

II. EVERYONE CAN USE ADVICE, vv. 13-18.

- A. Moses needed some advice.
 1. He sat to judge the people of Israel from morning until evening.
 2. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, asked, "What are you doing? Why are the people standing before you from morning until evening?"
 3. Moses said that the people came to him so that he could inquire of God. Moses made known the statutes and laws of God.
 - a. To inquire of God means to ask for a decision from him — this was a desire to have God resolve disputes between individuals,
 - b. When the people had difficulty, they would come to Moses for him to judge between them. When there was a disagreement, the parties would come before Moses so that he could settle the matter,
 - c. Moses made known the statutes and laws of God.
 - There was no written Law at this point, for this was before Sinai and the giving of the Law.
 - Therefore, the people had to come to Moses, God's mediator, so that they would know what God wanted.
 4. Jethro told Moses that the thing he was doing was not good.
 - a. This was not good, because Moses and the people would wear out.
 - Moses was asking too much of himself; he was working too hard.
 - Moses was asking too much of the people — they were standing in line all day to plead their case, justice was probably often delayed, and because justice was likely delayed, many probably took the law into their own hands.
 - b. This was not good, because Moses could not perform this task by himself — it was too much for one man to handle.
- B. There are times we are going to need advice.
 1. There are many times I need advice:
 - a. When Tammy asked me to place some rolls in the oven, I didn't remove the saran wrap.
 - b. After conducting a funeral, I thought my car was in drive rather than reverse, so I hit the hearse
 2. There are times we need spiritual advice.
 - a. "Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors there is safety (Prov. 11:14).
 - b. "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But he who heeds counsel is wise" (Prov. 12:15).
 - c. "By pride comes nothing but strife, But with the well-advised is wisdom" (Prov. 13: 10).
 - d. "Better a poor and wise youth Than an old and foolish king who will be admonished no more" (Eccl. 4:13).
 - e. "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one" (Gal. 6:1).
 3. We are going to need spiritual counsel.
 - a. We may be dealing with a particular sin, and the elders come to advise us about giving up that sin.
 - b. We may not be growing in Christ as we should, and a brother may encourage us to grow more.
 - c. We may not be active in the work of the church, and a Bible class teacher may stop by our home to

exhort us to be more active.

- d. We may say something in Bible class which isn't correct, and the teacher may need to lovingly correct us.
4. At one point or another, we will all need advice.

III. EVERYONE CAN USE GODLY ADVICE, w. 19-23.

- A. Jethro proceeded to advise Moses on a better way of doing business.
 1. Moses was to stand before God so that he could bring the difficulties to God.
 2. Moses would teach the people the statutes and laws of the Lord.
 3. Moses was to choose qualified men to be rulers over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.
 - a. These rulers were to judge the people at all times.
 - b. The difficult cases were then to come before Moses.
 4. If Moses did this, he would be able to endure and the people could go to their homes in peace.
- B. There are two interesting statements Jethro made:
 1. Jethro told Moses:
 - a. "God will be with you," v. 19.
 - b. "If you do this thing, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their place in peace," v. 23.
 2. Jethro realized that he was not the final authority about what Moses needed to do, but that God was. Therefore, Jethro wanted Moses to appeal to God to be sure that God was pleased with this advice.
- C. When people give us advice, we need to be certain that the advice comes from God and not just from them.
 1. The Bible serves as the final authority on all matters, and we need to be certain that the advice we get comes from it.
 - a. The Bible is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16).
 - b. Jesus said, "The word I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (Jn. 12:48). — The words of Jesus, rather than the advice of our friends, will judge us at the last day.
 - c. Those in Berea "searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11) - It would not hurt us at all to see if the things we're told are so.
 2. When we are given advice, let us be certain that it is godly advice.
- D. There is an interesting aside here — the one who gave Moses this godly advice was a pagan, a Midianite.
 1. Just because someone isn't a Christian doesn't make his advice automatically null and void.
 2. A member of a denominational church might be able to give some good advice.
 3. Some methodologies we use were first developed in denominational churches the Sunday school, Wednesday evening Bible study, bus ministries, etc.

IV. EVERYONE CAN IMPLEMENT GODLY ADVICE, vv. 24-27.

- A. Moses did what his father-in-law advised.
 1. The text says, "Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said."
 - a. That's a statement about the goodness of Moses' character.
 - b. Honestly, if I had been in Moses' situation, my pride would probably have prevented me from following my father-in-law's advice.
 - Quite frankly, I probably would have thought, "I know what I'm doing. God chose me, not you, to lead his people. Get out of here."
 - But, that wasn't Moses' attitude. He recognized good advice, and he followed good advice.
 - c. What type of heart do we have? Do we have a heart that would accept good advice, or do we have a proud heart that doesn't heed sound advice very well?
 2. Moses chose able men in Israel and made them judges over the people.
 3. These men judged the people at all times, but the hard cases they brought to Moses.
- B. It would do us well to implement godly advice.
 1. So much tragedy can be averted if we listen to godly advice.
 - a. If people would listen to good counsel, many marriages could be saved.
 - b. If teens would listen to their parents, many would never become alcoholics, would stay in school and be able to support their families, would not end up maimed in a traffic accident.
 - c. If people would listen to godly counsel, they could avoid hell.
 2. Many biblical characters would have averted tragedy had they listened to godly counsel.

- a. When Rehoboam's subjects asked that he lighten the burdensome service of his father, the elders advised him to speak good words to them, yet he refused and caused Israel to be divided (1 Ki. 12).
 - b. When Jesus was before Pilate, Pilate's wife told Pilate, "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him" (Mt 27:19), yet Pilate refused to listen.
- C. Illustration about how Kathryn Kuhlman reacted to criticism, *Illustrations Unlimited*, pp. 135-36.
- D. Is there godly counsel to which you need to listen?