

“Criticism is something you can avoid easily by saying nothing, doing nothing and being nothing.” — Aristotle

2 Samuel 16:5-13, 5 ...a man from the same clan as Saul’s family...Shimei...cursed as he came out. 6 He pelted David...with stones... 7 As he cursed, Shimei said, “Get out, get out, you murderer, you scoundrel! 8 The Lord has repaid you for all the blood you shed in the household of Saul, in whose place you have reigned. The Lord has given the kingdom into the hands of your son Absalom. You have come to ruin because you are a murderer!” 9 Then Abishai...said to the king, “Why should this dead dog curse my lord...? 10 But the king said, “...If he is cursing because the Lord said to him, ‘Curse David,’ who can ask, ‘Why...?’” 11 David then said..., “My son...is trying to kill me. How much more, then, this Benjamite! ...let him curse, for the Lord...told him to. 12 It may be that the Lord will look upon my misery and restore to me his covenant blessing instead of his curse today.” 13 So David and his men continued along the road while Shimei was going along the hillside opposite him, cursing as he went and throwing stones at him and showering him with dirt.

David had to shake off this criticism just like he had to shake off this dirt!

### **How should Christ followers handle criticism?**

#### **#1 Have a little humility, because it may be true.**

- Try and determine if it’s constructive and destructive criticism by asking a few key questions:
  - Are they trying to build you up or to tear you down?  
Ephesians 4:29, Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit...
  - In what spirit is it given (gently or with a judgmental attitude)  
Galatians 6:1, ...restore that person gently...
  - When and where is the criticism given (privately or publicly)?  
Matthew 18:15, If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you...

#### **#2 Give appropriate weight to the source of criticism.**

- Is it from a wise person you respect?  
Proverbs 15:31, Whoever heeds life-giving correction will be at home among the wise.
- Don’t just see the critic alone, see if there’s a crowd.  
Proverbs 11:14, ...multitude of counselors there’s safety.
- Do the people who love you most believe this about you?  
Proverbs 27:5-6, Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted...
- Is God trying to say something through a difficulty person?  
2 Samuel 16:11, If he is cursing because the Lord said to him...
- The greatest weight needs to be given to God’s Word!  
2 Timothy 3:16, All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting...

2 Samuel 19:18-23, 18...Shimei...fell prostrate before the king 19 and said..., “May my lord not hold me guilty. Do not remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. May the king put it out of his mind. 20 For I your servant know that I have sinned...” 21 Then Abishai ...said, “Shouldn’t Shimei be put to death for this?...” 22 David replied, “...Should anyone be put to death in Israel today? Don’t I know that today I am king over Israel?” 23 So the king said to Shimei, “You shall not die.” And the king promised him on oath.

#### **#3 Don’t rush to defend yourself. Let God do that.**

- You don’t have to correct every lie/rumor. Time will prove what’s true. Just wait.  
Psalms 33:20, ...my soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.

#### **#4 The truth sets you free from having to prove it.**

- If you know the truth, if you know who you are, if you know that one day Jesus will judge all things rightly...relax. 1 Corinthians 4:3-5, *I care very little if I am judged by you...My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart...*

#### **#5 Extend mercy because you've received mercy.**

- This is important because how we judge others is how we're judged ourselves. Mathew 7:2, *in the same way you judge...you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured.*
- David's absolute last Words before dying in 1 Kings 2:4-10 were about Shimei, *"Bring his gray head down to the grave in blood."*
- It obviously ate away at him! That's not forgiveness, that's bitterness.
- I'm so thankful that's not how God forgives. He forgives us completely!

#### **A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom.**

Psalm 3, *1 Lord, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me! 2 Many are saying of me, "God will not deliver him." 3 But you, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high. 4 I call out to the Lord, and he answers me from his holy mountain. 5 I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me. 6 I will not fear though tens of thousands assail me on every side. 7 Arise, Lord! Deliver me, my God! Strike all my enemies on the jaw; break the teeth of the wicked. 8 From the Lord comes deliverance. May your blessing be on your people.*