



## KEYS TO POWERFUL LIVING - OVERCOMING A CRITICAL SPIRIT

Source: CBN

(<https://www1.cbn.com/keys-powerful-living-overcoming-critical-spirit>)



Do you judge others? Is it easy for you to find fault with those around you? Then beware: Your spiritual life is in danger.

A critical attitude can hinder your walk with God and distract you from God's purposes for your life.

### Why We Judge

We judge because of our own selfish interests. For example, we sometimes become critical when comparing ourselves to those around us. We try to find fault in others to prove that we are smarter, better looking, happier or wealthier. But these are selfish reasons. We simply want to feel better about ourselves. We also get critical when others fail to do what we ask, or do not do what we think is right. Often, it is a family member, friend or co-worker who fails to meet our expectations. Our expectations lead to a judgmental attitude.

Even our own frustrations can lead to a critical attitude. If life is not turning out the way we desire, we hide our own frustrations by finding fault with others.

### Judge Not...

Finding fault and being critical are some of the easiest things to do. They seem to come naturally to us. But Jesus told us not to judge "lest you be judged" ([Matt. 7:1](#), NASB). We should obey His command.

Jesus then explained why a judgmental attitude is so dangerous: "God will be as hard on you as you are on others! He will treat you exactly as you treat them" ([v.2](#)).



When we judge, we invite judgment upon ourselves. The Bible says that "judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy" ([James 2:13](#)).

By judging others, we hide our own hypocrisy. For example, when the religious leaders brought a woman to Jesus who had been caught in sexual sin, they wanted to kill her. But Jesus responded, "If any of you have never sinned, then go ahead and throw the first stone at her" ([John 8:7](#)). Nobody threw one.

God alone reserves the right to judge each person ([Romans 14:4](#)). As the Apostle Paul said, "Dear friends, don't try to get even. Let God take revenge. In the Scriptures the Lord says, 'I am the one to take revenge and pay them back'" ([Romans 12:19](#)).

## The Cure for Criticism

Judgment is very important. The Bible says that "God is a righteous judge" ([Psalm 7:11](#), NASB). The cure for criticism is found in understanding the nature of God's judgment. The Bible says that every person is a sinner. This sin drives a wedge between God and man, and deserves judgment ([Romans 3:23; 6:23](#)).

Regardless of how "good" we think we are, "all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment" ([Isaiah 64:6](#), NASB). We cannot make up for all the bad things we have done. Left alone, we still deserve God's judgment: death and eternal torment in a place the Bible describes as a "lake of burning sulfur" ([Rev. 19:20](#)).

Only God could satisfy the judgment against us for our sins. So God sent His Son into the world to pay the price for our sins. Jesus Christ took our judgment on Himself and died in our place. In return, God offers to each person all His blessings -- including eternal life, forgiveness, peace, joy and hope -- provided we acknowledge Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

If we truly understood the judgment that we each deserve from God, we would be less inclined to judge others.

## Giving Grace Instead

Have you learned to receive God's grace and mercy? This is the first step to overcoming a critical spirit. If you have never thanked Jesus for paying the penalty you deserve, do so now. Simply repent of your sins and turn your life over to Him ([Acts 3:19; Romans 10:9,10](#)).

If you know Jesus as your Savior, thank Him for His grace and mercy. Thank Him for forgiving you of your sins. Thank Him for giving you a second chance at life.

Now, offer grace and mercy to others, Jesus said, "Freely you received, freely give" ([Matt. 10:8](#), NASB). Instead of judgment, extend God's love to those around you, beginning with your family, your friends and your co-workers. Often those closest to us feel the harshest effects of our judgmental attitudes.

From now on when you feel the temptation to become critical, follow Jesus' clear instruction to take a close look at your own life first ([Matt. 7](#)). Ask God to forgive you for your sins. You may even discover why you are so critical of others.

Remember, it's easy to be critical. The faults of others are often very obvious to us. During these times we need to make sure we give grace instead. Thank God for those people and ask the Lord to bless them and reveal His will to them.

It's really quite simple: God has granted you mercy. He has paid the debt for your sins. Now, the only debt you owe is to offer His love and mercy to others, for "mercy triumphs over judgment" ([James 2:13](#); NASB).



Finally, be sure to spend time with God in prayer and study the Bible. As you read the Scriptures, ask God to help you to be patient with those around you. In time, you will change from a fault-finder to a grace-giver as you learn to live like Jesus lived.

### As You Pray

If you are a fault-finder, turn to the Lord right now and ask Him to set you free. "Dear Lord Jesus, I'm so sorry for the times when I have allowed judgmental attitudes to rule me. Please forgive me. Help me to remember Your mercy toward me so that I can extend Your mercy to others. Thank You so much for loving me. In Jesus' name. Amen."

### God's Word on Criticism

"Always be humble and gentle. Patiently put up with each other and love each other. Try your best to let God's Spirit keep your hearts united. Do this by living in peace" ([Eph. 4:2-3](#)).

### Scriptures for Study

1. [John 8:7](#) - No one qualified to judge
2. [Matthew 7:1-2](#) - Effects of judging
3. [James 2:1-13](#) - Pitfalls of judging
4. [1 Peter 2:1-3](#) - Antidote for judging
5. [Philippians 4:4-8](#) - Learning to put up with others' faults