



introduction

Criticism can be devastating, dominating our thoughts during the day and keeping us up at night. This week, Pastor John shares practical steps for dealing with our critics and how to transition from anxiety to peace.

discussion

1. How does **2 Timothy 4:14-18** inform our response to criticism and other injustices? How can your small group be intentional about supporting those who are facing emotional or spiritual battles?
2. It may be tempting to strike back when criticized. Read **Romans 12:17-21**, and discuss the scriptural response.
3. Reflect on the compassion Jesus displayed on the cross in **Luke 23:34**. Have you struggled with forgiving your critics? How will Jesus' example help you respond in a more Christ-like manner?
4. Discuss how **1 John 4:16** could be used to help counsel someone struggling with self-criticism. How could an understanding of God's unconditional love apply to other areas of your life?

do something

1. **Learn:** Read Ephesians **4:31-32**. Practicing the spiritual discipline of forgiveness helps us become more and more like Jesus. If you need to forgive someone who has been unkind to you, this devotional provides helpful guidelines.
2. **Include:** Take the first step in repairing a relationship with someone you have criticized.
3. **Bless:** Read **1 Corinthians 13:4-7** and **Romans 15:7**. Think about how you interact with family members. Do you tend to delight in them and reinforce positive behaviors, or are you more likely to find fault and criticize? Write down what you will do this week if course corrections need to be made.

resources

1. Regardless of the source, criticism can overwhelm our thoughts. One of the best ways to redirect our mind is to learn Scripture. "100 Bible Verses Everyone Should Know by Heart" provides practical memorization guidelines along with devotionals for each verse.
2. "Shaken: Discovering Your True Identity in the Midst of Life's Storms" tells the story of a famous athlete who overcame criticism and disappointment to build his identity in Christ.
3. "How Should I Respond to Criticism in Marriage?" explains how an honest assessment of sinful tendencies and accepting the need for God's mercy are foundational to marital peace.