

Relational Vampires

Week 1: Critical People

TALK IT OVER

Key Scriptures

When they hurled their insults at him [Jesus], he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

1 Peter 2:23 NIV

A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense.

Proverbs 19:11 NIV

... "Why have you treated us like this? Why didn't you call us when you went to fight Midian?" And they challenged him vigorously. But he answered them ...

Judges 8:1-2 NIV

...When the men of Ephraim heard Gideon's answer, their anger subsided. Judges 8:3 NLT

If you listen to constructive criticism, you will be at home among the wise. If you reject discipline, you only harm yourself ... Proverbs 15:31-32 NLT

Some people make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise bring healing. Proverbs 12:18 NLT

So why do you condemn another believer? Why do you look down on another believer? ... we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ... Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God. So let's stop condemning each other. ... Romans 14:10,12-13 NLT

Start talking. *Conversation starters for your group.*

- What is the most ridiculous criticism you've received?
- How long has it been since you were last criticized?

Start thinking. *Use these questions to get your group thinking.*

- Think about some of the most critical people you know. What do you think causes all their criticism?
- Read 1 Peter 2:23. What is your take-away from this Scripture?

Start sharing. *Use these questions to create openness.*

- When facing criticism...we learned the best course of action is: often you don't respond, sometimes you respond carefully, and occasionally you make a change after criticism. What's your typical response?
- Which do you struggle with more? Being overly critical or being overly sensitive to criticism? How do you think this came about?
- How has criticism stood in the way of God's love and healing in your life? What is God's truth about you that can replace these critical words?
- Read Proverbs 12:18. What are the most common reasons you look down on others or cut them down? What will you do to start bringing healing instead?

Start praying. *Be bold and pray with power.*

God, You are good. You are loving. You are full of grace and mercy. Jesus, thank You for all You have done to replace cutting words with words of life. We ask You to set us free from words that bring death. Lead us to love others with Your love. Amen!

Start doing. *Commit to a step and live it out this week.*

- Identify any criticism you've accepted that stands against God's work in your life. Then, find true replacement words in Scripture.
- Apologize to anyone you've been overly critical of. Consider asking them to help you know when you're being too critical.
- Start the *Relational Vampires* Bible Plan with some friends: www.go2.lc/relational