

Messy People

Session 6: David—Overcoming the Mess of Criticism

“I depend on God alone; I put my hope in him. He alone protects and saves me; he is my defender, and I shall never be defeated. My salvation and honor depend on God; he is my strong protector; he is my shelter.” Psalm 62:5-7 GNT

“But when David’s eldest brother, Eliab, heard David talking to the men, he was angry. ‘What are you doing here anyway.’ he demanded, ‘What about those few sheep your’re supposed to be taking care of. I know about your pride and deceit. You just want to see the battle.’ ‘What have I done now?’ David replied, ‘I was only asking a question.’” I Samuel 17:28-29

Everyone is criticized from time to time.

You simply cannot please everyone. It’s inevitable that you will be misunderstood, misquoted, unfairly judged, verbally attacked and gossiped about. Criticism hurts!

Do you agree with this statement? How you deal with the mess of criticism will have a big impact on your life.

How do you feel and generally respond to criticism?

Main Point: When God gives us an important assignment there are going to be those who are critical of the job we are doing or the fact we were doing the job in the first place. However, if we keep our eyes on God we can overcome criticism with confidence and a sense of peace.

David faces criticism as a teenager

“So he asked Jesse, ‘Are these all the sons you have?’ ‘There is still the youngest,’ Jesse answered, ‘He is tending the sheep.’ Samuel said, ‘Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.’” I Samuel 16:11

Read I Samuel 16:1-12 How do you imagine young David might have felt in this situation?

According to verse 7, what mattered most to God in choosing the next king?

Acts 13:22 tells us how God perceived David.

Read I Samuel 17:28-37 What kind of criticism did David face on this occasion? How did he respond?

Read I Samuel 17:41-44 Why did Goliath despise David and how did he taunt him?

Read I Samuel 17:45-47 How would you summarize David’s response?

Read Psalm 62:5-7 Just how did David overcome criticism and what can we learn from his words in this Psalm?

David faces the destructive criticism of Saul

“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” Proverbs 15:1 NIV

One of the most volatile relationships David encountered was with the first king of Israel, Saul.

Read I Samuel 15:10-11a to understand how God was feeling about Saul just before David was selected as king.

Read I Samuel 18:28-30 and 19:1a What was Saul’s problem and what did it lead him to do?

David’s response as an innocent but wanted man was first shock, then denial and then fear because Saul tried to kill him.

Read I Samuel 24:1-7 and I Samuel 26:7-12. Why do you think David did not retaliate?

Read Proverbs 15:1. When in the past have you experienced the truth of each statement?

Three Biblical Principles to guide us when we are hurt by unfair criticism

Listen carefully -- James 1:19-22

Forgive quickly – Colossians 3:13-14

Love deeply – I Peter 4:8

David and Nathan – constructive criticism

“Then David confessed to Nathan. ‘I have sinned against the Lord.’ Nathan replied, ‘Yes, but the Lord has forgiven you and you won’t die for this sin.’” II Samuel 12:13

Read II Samuel 12:1-13. What is the background story?

David’s response: no excuses, no anger, repentant, accepted consequences.

Nathan’s response to God’s request and his response to David after David’s confession. He only told David what God told to tell David. Read Proverbs 9:8-9

He did not abandon David but continued to care about him and for him.

