

# L MESSAGE

## Filtering Criticism

"Others will judge you, not by what you can be, but by what you are; but you must judge yourself, not by what you are, but what you can be." - Ivan Panin

The harsh reality in leadership is that criticism will occur, and it will disarm you and hurt you. So how do you respond? How do you deal with it? So often people in ministry are there because they want to help others, serve God and create something worthwhile using the gifts and abilities they have. Therefore when they are criticised by someone from within, someone they are seeking to serve, it can hurt surprisingly deeply, as if you've been bitten by a pet you've been trying to look after. When that bite comes, and it will, the way you handle it will make all the difference.

Like all bites, once a wound is created it will take time to heal. If we care for that wound, by cleaning it, sterilising it, bandaging it, resting it and taking some anti-biotics the wound will heal more quickly than if we left it to fester. Leaving a wound to fester is inviting disaster. The same is true with the criticism you receive. If you let it fester and leave it unaddressed, you are invited disaster.

So here are some measures you can put in place when you receive criticism to help the wound heal quicker. Every single criticism we need has to be filtered. Often we, as leaders need to do filter it, as those dishing it out aren't always going to do it for us.

- **Truth Filter:** Is what has been said true? Is there any truth in what has been said? What can I learn from it? Is there sound cause for this person's concern/criticism?
- **Integrity Filter:** Were my actions a breach of what would be required of a Christ-like disciple? Did I act inappropriately?
- **Vision Filter:** Did my actions betray the vision? Did I cease or halt the working of the Spirit? Did I breach values that were in place? Does the accuser understand the reasons why? Does the person understand the philosophies guiding the decisions that are made?
- **Heart Filter:** What is the person's heart like? Are their intentions in the right place? Are they speaking out of judgment or concern?
- **Perspective Filter:** Is their concern more about where they are and the personal issues they have? Is their concern one of an innocent concerned onlooker?

If you run the criticism you receive through these and other filters you are able to begin to discern what to do with it. Often our desire with criticism is to throw it out, dismiss it or run from it. But it can serve us as an important tool with which to build the Church stronger.

Having filtered the criticism it's important to take it before God, from perhaps the following perspective: Are the comments right? Is it a fair statement of my intentions? Do I need to change, will you help me? Help me to love the person who is criticising me. Renew me. Heal me. Refocus me.

After having filtered the criticism and laid it at God's feet, it is wise to then reconnect with the person who spoke the criticism. This can often be the hardest part of the process but if you approach it with a fresh outlook of understanding (having filtered it) you may be able to help both that person and yourself to grow in understanding and grace.

### Challenge

Are the effects of unresolved criticism 'festering' in your spirit and causing you to want to get back at those who have hurt you? If there is, address it, using these filters and allow healing to begin.