

L MESSAGE

Higher Ground

'The scripture says, "Weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice." There are those who weep when others are successful and rejoice when they can tear others down. It's a character issue.' – Ian Hackingbotham

John Adams said "It is playfully instructive to note that the word 'reactive' and the word 'creative' are made up of exactly the same letters. The only difference between the two is that you 'C' (see) differently! Creativity just requires a new way of thinking." Let me give you a new way to face criticism creatively and not reactively.

Often when we are criticised, it is at the expense of the truth. This is where a leader's dilemma becomes difficult, especially if the criticism comes from an *outside* source. Often when this happens rumours are created and circulated, and there appears to be no way of truly apprehending these rumours. If this becomes the case then you have a single Creative response at your disposal, a response which you can put in place today, before the criticism comes knocking, that response is character.

You have two choices in the face of criticism:

1) You can retaliate, strike back, act cruelly, take revenge, hurt them where they hurt you, squash the critic in their own insecurities. If you behave like this, then you forfeit the responsibility God has placed on you to lead. Jesus, even under the harshest of situations refrained from doing the very things his critics deserved. If you go with option one, you undermine your own leadership intentions, you jeopardise reconciliation and understanding, but most of all you give away the higher ground and compromise your only defence.

2) Higher Ground is the second option where you act with character, choosing not to let the critic drain you, instead you filter their criticism (as we have already covered), you draw any truth from it and then continue to lead in the way and the direction that God has entrusted to you.

Always work on the basis of *let your character be seen and the critic's audience will make their own decisions about you*. The reality is you can't cover your back. But because you can't cover your back, let people see your front. i.e. your character. This will in turn cause the judgment to fall upon the critic, not you, the one initially criticised.

It has been said that character is like a sponge, when put under pressure that which is within comes to the surface. So the question becomes what is within your spirit? Have you the character of a leader that God desires, to do what is right and grace filled regardless of the opposition of situation? Or do you need to be reintroduced to the character and spirit of Jesus? Is the fruit of your leadership love; joy; peace; patience; kindness; goodness; faithfulness; gentleness; self-control or something contrary to this. If it's contrary – you have to address it, NOW.

'who do you weep with and what do you rejoice over?'