

# Correcting Our Criticism

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from Internet sources)

## Introduction:

- A. When a brother needs help overcoming a mistake, there is a Divinely ordered manner in which one must do it - Gal. 6:1
  - 1. Whether you want to hear it or not, according to the scriptures the manner in which you speak to a person is often as important as the substance of what you say.

## I. WHEN ONE MUST CRITICIZE OR CORRECT

- A. Criticize the action, not the person.
  - 1. Rom. 7:22-23 - Can you identify with this? So can your erring brother
  - 2. Psalm 25:7 - Is this what you want? So does your erring brother
- B. Correct the person in private
  - 1. John 21:17-22; Acts 18:26; Prov. 12:16
- C. Don't exaggerate
  - 1. Words like, "always," and "never" are usually untrue and give a person reason to reject what you are trying to communicate.
  - 2. Titus 2:8, 15
- D. Consider your motive
  - 1. Gal. 6:1
  - 2. The purpose of correction or criticism should be to help a person and win them back to fellowship, not to get them "told" or "rub it in."
- E. Realize that criticism is not a talent
  - 1. Some are known only for being critics. Be known for better things.
  - 2. It is a very short distance between correction and complaining
  - 3. Rom. 14:19; Acts 4:36
- F. Be humble, and don't fake it
  - 1. Because we're all imperfect, we need instruction on how to give and how to receive correction and criticism.
  - 2. With a proper attitude, we can help one another to mature and prepare for eternity.

## II. WHEN ONE MUST RECEIVE CRITICISM OR CORRECTION

- A. Prov. 9:7-10
  - 1. Because we are all fallible, we all need correction from time to time.
  - 2. Yet, very few of us have learned to take correction very well.
  - 3. In fact, we can nearly always find a good excuse to reject correction and instruction offered to us.
- B. Be as humble in receiving correction as you are supposed to be when giving it
  - 1. If you are so proud, stubborn, or sensitive that when you fall into sin, you blame your departure from the faith on the brother who loves you enough to try to restore you, then as Fred Dennis used to say "Get on out of the meeting house and go on to perdition like a man."

2. If you are here merely because you think no one is going to correct you when you fall into sin, you are mistaken to the point that you will probably miss heaven.
3. One of the great expressions of religious ignorance of our time is to respond to someone who makes the effort to pull you back from the brink of sin, "You have no right to judge me!"
4. They may be the only thing standing between you and hell. Your conscience has ceased to function, your will has given up the battle, and you've emotionally bullied everyone else into being afraid to say anything to you.
5. Realistically, what else is standing between you and eternity? Do you believe the fairy tale that you will be the extremely rare exception and come back to the Lord after living a life of dissipation?
6. God bless, and so should you, the brother who takes the risk and pulls you back from the brink.

C. What is written?

1. Prov. 1:7, 8:33, 12:1, 15:5, 32, 19:20

D. Excuses we use to reject instruction and correction

1. Weaknesses of the people who correct us
  - a. We find it hard to take correction from someone who has their own set of problems.
  - b. Something people in sin find hard to accept is that the person who points it out is completely irrelevant. The only question that means anything is, are you in sin?
  - c. The one who corrects you will answer to God, too, but that's not your problem; your problem is you are gullible enough to let Satan distract you from correcting your own sin by getting you focused on someone else's
  - d. If we wait for perfect people to show us our faults, we'll die as lost fools.
2. The correction is not 100% accurate.
  1. "Get the details right or I'll dismiss your correction."
  2. "You have missed services for three months." I only forsook the assembling for two months, so there!"
  3. Don't demand that every detail be perfectly accurate before listening. Don't be a fool.
3. The correction wasn't worded or handled right. You thought the corrector's attitude was a little off.
  - a. Either we won't like their tone, the way they carried themselves, when and where they came to us, etc., so we dismiss the substance of their instruction.
  - b. Being corrected isn't fun - Heb. 12:11
  - c. It's time for brethren who do their best in good faith to restore the erring to stop apologizing for the hurt feelings of people who haven't grown up enough to stop being deceived by the Adversary.

d. It's time for erring brethren to decide whether they want to be in Christ or if they want to face the Judgment as a scoffing fool.

e. Excuses just build a wall that keeps you from being saved

E. How to receive correction and instruction

1. Remember that a fool can always find an excuse to ignore instruction

a. Prov. 12:15

2. Develop a respect for God, His will, His word, and His purpose above everything else in your life, then it will become easy to be humble

a. James 4:10

3. Show respect for the one who is helping you to go to heaven

a. James 5:19-20

4. Receive the correction with honor

a. Who are you, really? - Rom. 3:23, 6:23; Isa. 64:6

b. You and I are blessed to have someone who cares enough for us to help lift us out of that condition!