

"...having the eyes of your heart enlightened..." Ephesians 1:18

New Quarter Begins on September 1st.

Welcome Visitors!

You are our honored guests and we are pleased that you have chosen to visit us today. Our goal is to do everything according to God's word, including respecting its silence. This is a church of Christ; we are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church and we have no earthly "headquarters." The five elders oversee this work and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily aimed at our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don't understand something, please do not hesitate to ask one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God's word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

Please fill out a visitor's card and put it in the collection plate. Thank You

Schedule

The Lord's Day

9:30 AM – Classes

Auditorium: How Jesus Teaches Us (The Gospel of Mark)

10:30 AM– Assembly

Speaking today: David Posey

Attitude & Approach

2 PM Class at the Building

Room 13/14

Minor Prophets

5 PM (building)

Fruit of the Spirit

Weekly Young Adults Class

Class at Posey's: 5 PM

Tuesday AM Class

This class resumes on August 27th

Wednesday, 7 PM

Auditorium: How Jesus Teaches Us (The Gospel of Mark)

Men's Saturday Morning Meeting

7 AM, second Saturday of the month (see Tyler Wade)

Information

Children's Classes

We have classes for children from 18 months and up. Please see the map in the hallway or ask any of the members which room is appropriate for you and/or your child. There are several Bible studies in progress on Sunday afternoon and evening. Check with David Posey if you have questions.

Restrooms

There are two sets of restrooms: one off the first hallway to the right of the lobby and another at the end of the first hallway to the left. Ask anyone and they'll be happy to point you in the right direction.

For Small Children

There is a special room for nursing mothers and a separate "cry room" at the rear of the auditorium. You enter them from the first hallway to the right, across from the restrooms.

Online

You can find copies of class material and archives of previous editions of the View and listen to sermons online at www.folsomchurch.com. Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/folsomchurch>

View & Junior View

Be sure to pick up a copy of the View and Junior View; both are sent out weekly, plus there are some hard copies printed on Sundays and available in the foyer.

Disclaimer

The opinions, interpretations and views that appear in the View are those of the author alone and do not necessarily represent the view of the elders or other members of the church of Christ at Folsom.

Criticism

BY DAVID POSEY

I'm super-sensitive about writing or preaching about things that can be perceived as self-serving. Writing about criticism can be construed as an effort to keep you from criticizing me. But bear with me — I'm not averse to critique if it's constructive and healthy. I'm talking about a different animal here.

We are involved in a preacher training program and have been for about 3 years. It is my job (along with a couple of others) to critique the sermons of younger preachers as long as they are in training. For the record, I do not enjoy this part of the training process, but it should be obvious that it is a necessary part of it. So, though I'm a critic (better, a "critiqueur") I have some thoughts about another kind of criticism.

Criticism as Judgment

When Jesus famously said, "Judge not that you be not judged..." (Matthew 7:1) I believe it's accurate to define the judgment he's talking about as negative criticism. The Greek word for "judge" (*krino*) is capable of several meanings, including "making a distinction"; that is necessary or we couldn't apply Matthew 7:6, found in the same context.

In Matthew 7:1, though, "judge" is used in the sense of "condemn" and is a warning against passing that kind of judgment. We talk about "constructive criticism" but the critic that Jesus has in mind here is one whose heart is set on destruction. Jesus says that if you engage in that kind of criticism, expect to be judged by the same standard.

Boy, if I'm right in my analysis of that passage, a lot of people in churches are in big trouble. There are too many brethren who set themselves up as judges of other brethren. I'm not talking about valid critique with a desire to help the one who is critiqued. Abraham Lincoln is reputed to have said, "he has a right to criticize who has a heart to help." I appreciate constructive critique; most of the stuff of value that I've learned in my life has come from that kind of criticism.

But there is another kind that is seriously diabolical ("of the devil") where the aim is to put the person down not to help him or her. Christopher Morley said, "A critic is a gong at a railroad crossing clanging loudly as the train goes by." His point is that there are people who get things done and are too busy to stop to criticize those who are actually doing something. As another said, "a critic is a man who knows the way but can't drive the car."

Jesus said, "Judge (criticize) not that you be not judged (criticized)." God will take the standard of critique you used to judge another and use it on you. That could be bad for you. For a simple example, if you are in the habit of criticizing (or, making fun of) someone for using less than perfect grammar, then you'd better never, ever make a grammatical mistake — because if perfection is the standard you are using, that's the standard that will be used on you. But going to the person and saying, "you know, you said "he should have went..." It

should be, "he should have *gone*..." is a good thing to do. Silently thinking ill of him or, worse, criticizing him to others is ungodly. But people do it all the time. For example:

- Members who can sing but will not learn to lead singing criticize song leaders (but never speak to the leader).
- Members who will not learn to preach criticize preachers (but never talk to the preacher).
- Men who should be preparing themselves to be elders criticize elders (without ever talking to the elders).
- Members who rarely if ever fix a meal, send a card or visit others criticize members who do not fix a meal, send a card or visit *them*.

This judgmental attitude causes division and creates dissension. Paul was concerned that when he went to Corinth he would find that kind of church:

For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. *II Corinthians 12:20.*

When this is the status quo, churches will, sooner or later, split at the seams. And it often starts with just a few who, instead of having a heart to help, choose to see the negative in everything. They are like those Pharisees that Jesus rebuked:

They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. *Matthew 23:4*

Before you critique someone, as the old saying goes, walk a mile in his shoes. It takes a lot of effort and work to do something and do it well. It takes time; and people who love as Jesus loved are patient with those who are trying (1 Cor. 13:4).

This is highly relevant at Folsom right now because we are engaged in various efforts to help women teach and young men preach. Progress may be slow, at first, but those who are involved in training are working hard to help them. Constructive critique encourages; condemning criticism discourages.

Criticism — even if it's valid — hurts if it's not carried out properly. That means that we do not criticize the man or woman *to others*; it means we go to the person, privately, and share our thoughts, with the attitude that we want to help. It means, if you have some level of expertise that you can share, you remain ready and willing to work with him or her so that they can improve. And, all of this is for the purpose of bringing glory to God, not to any person.

You are not a critic! I am not a critic. That prerogative belongs to God. And, of course, we know that his criticism is fair.

Banning Snapstreaks!?

What it is: New legislation to ban social media features like autoplay, infinite scrolling, and—gasp!—Snapstreaks was introduced in the US this week.

Let's pause here and describe "Snapstreaks." Here's an article from the July 26th issue of *Business Insider*:

If you've ever exchanged Snapchats back-and-forth with a friend consecutively for more than a few days, you may notice that a flame count will appear that tracks just how long you can keep that streak alive.

That feature — dubbed Snapstreaks— is so addictive that users will actually email Snapchat if they happen to accidentally miss a day and break the streak. These streaks, which count into the high hundreds for Snapchat's most loyal users, have come to signify a certain loyalty to friendships, despite both physical and emotional distances.

The "stickiness" of these Snapstreaks is something that *The Verge* explored in the most recent episode of its podcast, "Why'd You Push That Button?" *The Verge* talked to a few active Snapchat users, including one college student who said her only contact with an old high school friend was via Snapchat, where they have a streak of 880 days and counting.

"I guess you could say Snapstreaks are a real signal of your friendship," the college student says. "Sometimes when I get into fights with my friends, they purposefully ignore the Snapchats I send them to break our streaks, so I know that they're mad at me, instead of them actually saying something to me."

Why teens will care: Dubbed the SMART (Social Media Addiction Reduction Technology) Act, it seeks to address "social media addiction" and rid platforms of "psychological tricks that make it difficult to look away." The bill would also require platforms to have a default time limit of 30 minutes per day (it'd be removable). Yet critics say there's not yet good evidence to show that social media addiction is real and that its measures are too extreme. Chances are that it won't pass, but it does highlight important questions about how the form and format of something are subconsciously shaping our habits. Ask your teens what they think: How would they feel about Snapstreaks being taken away? Have they ever wondered if Snapstreaks, badges, and infinite scrolling are tricks to keep them mindlessly engaged? Why or why not?

— Via *Cultural Translator*, August 2, 2019
and *Business Insider*, July 26, 2019

"Purity Culture" Fallout

Joshua Harris, author of now-renounced *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, announced he's no longer a Christian, triggering shockwaves throughout Christendom. If you or your loved ones are confused, hurt or angered by his book, the culture it spawned, his subsequent revocations, his divorce, his leaving the faith, or the myriad and varied reactions by Christians to it all of it,

you are not alone. And if you're unsure of what's good and true and right in the wake of it all, we get it. Harris' book spawned something that became known as the "the purity culture."

The term "purity culture" is used in this and other articles to define the decisions of many young people to abstain from sexual relations (and other sins) before marriage. The application of that extends to not dating and not kissing before marriage.

I know some young people who have applied these principles and I admire them. The term "purity culture," however, is now being used pejoratively, in articles like [this one](#), from *National Review*, to describe the lasting effects of failing to live up to the standards promoted by that book.

Some have criticized the notions put forward in the book because it seems to suggest that certain sins (mainly of a sexual nature) made one "impure for life." In other words, if you had sex before you were married — or, presumably, even kissed — you didn't go into your marriage "pure." The book's aim was to deter young people from sexual sin and that, of course, is a good thing.

But its critics say it went too far, because it left the impression that if you failed to live up to those standards, you are *never* "pure" and your marriage is tainted. This unintentionally cast some young people in despair, feeling they were damaged goods, unredeemable. The book was long on holiness, but short on grace.

Living at the extremes is almost always a bad thing ("the truth is in the tension") and that can happen even in matters of purity and holiness. Ecclesiastes 7:16 says,

Be not overly righteous, and do not make yourself too wise.

Why should you destroy yourself?" That's a difficult verse, but if by "righteous" the Preacher means "holier than thou," then we get the meaning. Perhaps Joshua Harris, with the best of intentions, promoted a standard that even he couldn't keep and that zeal for purity, as he defined it, was unsustainable.

It's never a good thing to promote any sin. It is equally egregious — and displays our ignorance of the Bible message — to say or imply that we are tainted for life by particular sins. Jesus died for all people and his death is powerful to take away all sin, even the sins of our youth. No one is beyond the loving grace of God.

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