

## **BEFORE WE CRITICIZE**

### **Heath Rogers**



There are times when mistakes are made, and things need to be pointed out. And, unfortunately, we all know that offering criticism can sometimes make a bad situation even worse. Serious thought needs to go into what we will say. Maybe it would help if we would ask the following questions before offering criticism:

#### **WHY AM I DOING THIS?**

Do I really want to help this person, or am I just doing this to make myself feel better? Am I trying to improve the situation, or do I just want to say, "I told you so!"? What is my motive? "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others" (Philippians 2:3-4). Regardless of what the world believes, we don't have the right to let off some steam at the expense of another. Criticism that is only going to make us feel better needs to be kept to ourselves.

#### **DO I HAVE A RIGHT TO CRITICIZE?**

Was I available when this person could have used some help before? Can I sympathize with what they are going through? Can I offer some positive suggestions to go along with the criticism? Some people like to just sit on the sidelines and criticize the labors of others. Such people really have no right to criticize.

#### **HAVE I EXAMINED MYSELF?**

It is not right for me to give criticism that I am not willing to take. Jesus says that I must make sure that the log is out of my eye first, then I can offer to help my brother get the speck out of his eye (Matthew 7:3-5). Criticism is respected when it comes from a respectable person, but no one appreciates a hypocrite.

#### **WHAT WILL I SAY, AND HOW WILL I SAY IT?**

This is very important. I must choose my words very carefully. They have the power to build up or to destroy (Proverbs 12:18; 16:24). As Paul said, "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt" (Colossians 4:6). What we say, and the way we say it, will make all the difference in the world.

#### **WILL IT GLORIFY GOD?**

"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). Whose glory am I seeking? Am I saying something to help the cause of Christ or just to be heard? If it is just to be seen and heard by men, then truly I have my reward (Matthew 6:1-6).