
Critical Thinking vs. Critical Spirit

Critical impact.

Proverbs 15:4; Proverbs 18:21; Proverbs 12:18

Reactionary • Angry • Fault finding • Easily wronged
Disappointment with (others, self, God) • Joyless

Critical protection:

1. Guard your heart against critical words.

Proverbs 4:20, 23

2. Speak life-giving words to others every chance you get.

Romans 12:14; Ephesians 4:29

3. Speak life-giving words to yourself and your circumstances.

Matthew 12:34-37

My intentional momentum:

I confess and repent from my critical words that I have spoken. I recognize the power of the Holy Spirit at work in my life to bringing healing and change. Today I speak God's life-giving truth over my life and the people in my life.

NEXT STEPS

To prepare for this week's life group, take some time to focus on the questions below and be prepared to share your answers with the group.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

While you were growing up, did you hear more positive or negative words spoken to you? How did these words impact your life?

Digging Deeper

Read Proverbs 12:11-23, 18:21, 15:1-4 and James 3:3-12. These verses describe how powerful our words are and show both the positive and negative impact they can have.

How are critical words infecting your life currently?

What type of words do you tend to speak most—critical or life-giving? Explain.

Describe a time when you were encouraged and uplifted by the power of positive, life-giving words.

Read Proverbs 4:20-23 and Ephesians 4:22-32. These verses encourage us to guard our hearts against critical words and to speak life-giving words to others.

You may not be able to stop critical words from being spoken to you, but how can you guard your heart against them?

Who do you need to start speaking more life-giving words to? How will you go about doing it?

Why do you think we tend to speak more critical words than life-giving words even when we don't intend to?

Read Mark 11:20-25 and Matthew 12:34-37. Jesus shows us in these verses the importance of speaking life-giving words to our situation and ourselves.

In which situations that you are currently enduring do you need to stop speaking critical words to yourself?

Why do you think it is so important for us to speak life-giving words to our situation and ourselves?

Take it Home:

Here are some specific things you can do this week to help you speak life-giving words into your own life and the lives of others:

Probably at least one person in your life has been hearing critical words from you. That person may be a family member, friend, co-worker or teammate. Commit this week to changing your critical words into life-giving words.

Make contact with that person and intentionally speak life-giving words to them.

Many times the most critical words we hear come from ourselves. Change your own critical words into life-giving ones by writing down your most critical comments to yourself. Next to each critical comment, write down a life-giving statement that you can change it to. For example, if your critical words are, "You'll never amount to anything," change it to, "God has great plans for me."

- Commit to God that you will strive to use life-giving words in all of your relationships.
- Pray and ask God to help you remove critical words from your thoughts and mind so that you won't speak them.
- Pray and ask God to help guard your heart from critical words that are being spoken to you currently.
- Thank God in prayer for those that speak life-giving words to you and are an encouragement to you.
- Pray and ask God to deliver you from the pain critical words have caused you throughout your life.

Memory verse: consider memorizing this verse to help you guard your heart and mind from a critical spirit:

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. **Ephesians 4:29 NIV**