

# *It Is Written*

*A weekly publication of the  
Junction Highway church of Christ in Kerrville, TX.*

*Vol. 4*

*January 16, 2022*

*No. 3*

## What Kind Of Critic Are You?

By Doy Moyer

People are critics of others. Right or wrong, good or bad, people will criticize. We all do it. But there are good and bad ways to go about this. Not all critics are the same. Not all share the same credibility or show the same levels of concern. Think about it on a personal level. For example:

There are critics who loathe you, to begin with, and they will jump on anything that will make you sound or look bad (e.g., Paul in Philippians 1:16-17). They want to spread the news about your problems. They have no desire to help you, but only to take you down and see you fail, and they will be as public as possible about it all. What they ought to understand is that if they have already taken this posture, then their criticisms of particulars are not going to be given much credibility, even if a particular criticism is valid. They want to stir the pot and cause difficulty for you, and that becomes quickly obvious.

***“Hatred stirs up conflicts, but love covers all offenses”*** (Proverbs 10:13).

There are critics who don't know you much at all, but they are happy to chime in with their opinions anyway. They don't say they hate you, but they don't particularly like you either because they just don't know who you are and what you stand for. They generally will make assumptions about you without trying to get to know you personally. They would say they aren't really trying to hurt, but neither are they actually interested in helping. Their criticisms will only be marginally effective because they don't have anything to gain or lose. Their credibility is nullified by their general apathy toward you. If they really cared, they'd come to you.

***“A fool does not delight in understanding, but only wants to show off his opinions”*** (Proverbs 18:2).

But then there are the critics who are also your friends. These critics care about you. They want to see you succeed and have no desire to spread something that is going to hurt you. Their criticism comes from a heart of love and desire to help. These friends will usually come to you privately because they want to show genuine, personal concern. They have credibility with you because they know you and you know they care about you. These are the ones you are eager to listen to. You welcome their critiques because you know they can help you become better.

***“The wounds of a friend are trustworthy, but the kisses of an enemy are excessive”*** (Proverbs 27:6).

When you feel you must engage in some form of criticism, then what kind of critic are you? The hateful one, the apathetic one, or the loving one?

On the receiving end, however, we should always try to listen for valid criticisms regardless of the source. Even if I know someone who does not like me, that person might have something to say that I can take and use to make some improvements. If I know someone is apathetic about helping, I might still find that voice useful to improve how I do something. And of course, I want to hear from the one I consider my friend. That one will know me best and will help me because “Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17).

Let us be careful about the kind of critics we are, but let us also seek to take criticism in a way that can help us grow and improve how we act and speak.

# *Led By Who?*

By Boyd Sellers

Some claim that the Holy Spirit is still speaking to them in a direct, miraculous way IN ADDITION TO what He recorded in the Bible. However, the Holy Spirit Himself tells us that His revelation, the New Testament of Jesus Christ, is “perfect,” “complete,” and “final” (See Jas. 1:25; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Jude 3). The New Testament is the Word we must live by because it is the Word we will be judged by (Jas. 2:12; Jno. 12:48). It is the ‘ONLY’ way God speaks to men today.

It would be interesting to know just what the Holy Spirit would say to these men that He has not already said in the Bible. If He said the same thing as the Bible, it would not be necessary, and if He said something different, one would be “accursed” if he taught it (Gal. 1:8-9).

Please consider these obvious facts: FIRST, the Holy Spirit would not teach a doctrine that denied what He already said in the Bible. Yet, all who claim direct guidance today teach doctrines which conflict with the Bible. SECOND, the Holy Spirit would not teach conflicting doctrines. Yet, such as claim direct guidance (Mormons, Catholics, Pentecostals, etc.) teach opposing and conflicting doctrines. Who can believe that the Holy Spirit is the author of such chaos? CONCLUSION: Men who claim miraculous guidance today are frauds who teach THEIR OWN doctrines instead of God’s. Jesus said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall NOT pass away.” Read your Bible and do what it says. It’ll make you perfect and thoroughly furnished (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

## Escape Without Freedom

By Joe R. Price

Two convicted murderers escaped from a maximum security prison in New York state last weekend. It was an elaborate escape that took a much planning and evidently help on the inside. At this writing they have been on the lam for about six days. Although they escaped from prison, one would be hard pressed to say they are free. It appears at the moment they may be in a thickly wooded area trying to evade capture while being hunted by over 500 law enforcement agents (“Search for escaped killers focuses on wooded area near New York prison,” J. Freedom du Lac and Sarah Larimer, The Washington Post).

This serves as a reminder that sin promises freedom and liberty, but in truth it enslaves everyone who chooses to indulge its lustful passions and futile promises. Peter observed this principle and applied it to false prophets whose sinful teaching seduces people to follow error: “While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage” (2 Pet. 2:19).

Jesus said, “whoever commits sin is a slave of sin” (Jno. 8:34). Yet, the world views sinful activities as an “escape” from life’s monotonous routine. Yet, sin never delivers what it promises. Drugs and alcohol, pornography, fornication, lewd, irreverent behavior, and gambling are just some of the so-called escapes offered by the world and indulged in by the worldly-minded (Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Jno. 2:15-17; Col. 3:5-10). The momentary escape sin offers invariably makes life harder; not to mention the spiritual ruin it causes (Rom. 6:23). But, that is never mentioned during the sinful escape; afterwards it becomes evident.

Jesus gives real freedom from the prison of sin: “Therefore, if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed” (Jno. 8:36). The release from sin that Christ gives is obtained by obeying His gospel: “But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness” (Rom. 6:17-18). The gospel is the only successful escape from sin.