

Doctrine of Unjust Criticism

1. Eliab, the oldest brother of David, watched David's reaction to the taunts of Goliath, and his sadness at the fearful words of the men in the military camp of Israel. Eliab sensed something that surprised, and disturbed him. David was not afraid of Goliath! With that discovery Eliab became upset, and suddenly lashed out at his younger brother in foolish fury and unjust accusations.
 - *1 Samuel 17:28 And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.*
2. In a burst of angry passion, Eliab accused David of three terrible deeds.
 - Eliab accused David of abandoning his responsibility to the sheep back home.
 - Eliab accused David of pride.
 - Eliab accused David of seeking selfish pleasure.
3. David was astonished at the unjust criticism leveled against him, because it was not true.
4. What is a person to say when blindly, and emotionally, and irrationally assaulted by unjust criticism? A natural response is to defend oneself. That is what David did. His answer to Eliab is given.
 - *1 Samuel 17:29 And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?*
5. While it is not wrong to offer a logical reason for one's words, it can be harmful if a spirit of bitterness is allowed to spring up. Augustine recognized this, and prayed "Lord, deliver me from the lust of vindicating myself."
6. It is possible to follow the wise and godly example of others who have come under unjust criticism.
 - Winston Churchill had the following words of Abe Lincoln framed on the wall of his office: "I do the very best I can, I mean to keep going. If the end brings me out all right, then what is said against me won't matter. If I'm wrong, ten angels swearing I was right won't make a difference."
 - A pastor by the name of Dr. Mitchell was criticized by a lady after a sermon he preached. Instead of retaliating, or trying to defend himself, he looked at the woman, and said "If what you say is true, would you mind praying for me?"
 - Moses was severely and falsely criticized by the Exodus Generation of bringing them into the desert to die.

Exodus 14:11 And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? 12 Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.

The criticism of Moses was not only unjust, it was irrational. Moses had not brought two million people into the desert to die. Most criticism does not make sense when analyzed. But then, the emotionally charged person who is being critical does not care about being fair, or making rational sense.

The response of Moses was to tell the people they should stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, and then, Moses said, they were to hush.

Exodus 14:13 And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. 14 The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

7. Sometimes a pointed rebuke is not wrong. Warren Wiersbe, in his book, *Angry People*, wrote, "An incident in the life of Joseph Parker, the great British preacher, illustrates this tragic truth. He was preaching at the City Temple in London. After the service one of the listeners came up to him, and said, 'Dr. Parker, you made a grammatical error in your sermon.' He then proceeded to point out the error to the pastor. Joseph Parker looked at the man and said, 'And what else did you get out of the message?' What a fitting rebuke!"
8. Because the Christian is not above Christ, every born again believer can anticipate unjust criticism at some point in their journey into grace. Since people hate Christ, they hate His ministers.
 - *John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*
9. May the Lord give grace in the moment of a personal fiery trial.