

JUST SAYIN' PART 2: CRITICISM

Introduction: Words are powerful. They can beat us down and lift us up. They wound and they heal. And the right words at the right time can be exactly what we need to hear—or what we need to say. We all know someone we just want to tell off. It's easy to point out when someone else is doing everything wrong—and it hurts when we're on the other end. Let's get critical about criticism in this study.

ICE BREAKERS

- Talk about a time when you were criticized. How did it feel?
- Did you grow up in a home that was more critical, or more encouraging?

EXPLORE

We'll look at some places where the writers of Scripture encourage us to use our words in positive ways. Then we'll take a look at a time when Jesus saves a woman's life with his words. What do you notice in these passages?

- Read Galatians 5:14-15, Proverbs 12:18, and Ephesians 4:29.
 - What do these passages say about the words we use to talk to others or about others?
 - These verses lay out two options for us. We can be Fault Finders or Grace Givers. Which comes more naturally for you?
- Read John 8:1-11
 - Do you feel the Pharisees are just in their accusations of the woman? Why or why not?
 - How does the reaction of Jesus toward the woman differ from that of the Pharisees? Why do you think he chose to react this way?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What would it look like if each day your words overflowed with hope as is described in Romans 15:13? Have you ever experienced that from someone else?
- Why do you think it seems easier to criticize than to build up?
- On a typical day, are you more of a Fault Finder or a Grace Giver? How so?
- Who are you most critical of? What could your criticism be destroying?
- Who can you begin to give grace to? What obstacles would there be to providing hope to them in this way? How will you go about it? How can this group help?

PRAYER & PRACTICE

Take a moment and check in on last week's practice goal of living a complaint-free week. How did everyone do?

This week, challenge each member of your group to provide encouragement, grace, and hope to at least five people. Especially if it is someone they are typically critical of. Then pray for one another's hearts and thoughts, that God might grant each of us the ability to see people the way that Jesus sees people, and to love them in that way.

