

## Major Tests of Our Faith – Lesson One

### *Criticism*

**It doesn't matter who we are, it happens to all of us.** At some point in time, and perhaps frequently, someone is going to criticize our efforts. It doesn't matter how hard we are working to do a good job, it will not matter how many hours we have put into the effort, someone will only have negative comments to offer.

Being a Christian does not lessen the chance of disapproval coming our way. In fact, one needs to understand, being truly active in the Lord's work may increase the criticism. Discouragement can easily be the result and even lead one to slack off his work. ***Criticism, then, should be recognized as a major test of one's faith.***

1. What are some reasons people criticize those who are diligent in the Lord's work?
  - a. Does criticism of the Lord's work and people come from within or without the church?
  - b. Which do you think has the greater potential to cause problems for God's servant?
  - c. Why?
2. Read **John 12:1-8** and consider the anointing of Jesus with oil.
  - a. Why was criticism focused on Mary?
  - b. On the surface, did the criticism seem reasonable? Why, or why not?
3. In Matthew's account of the same event **Matthew 26:6-13** it appears Judas was not alone in offering criticism of Mary for using the expensive oil to anoint the Lord.
  - a. What would have caused the others to join in?
  - b. Can we learn something from this about joining others who are being critical?

4. Can you think of other Bible examples of unjust criticism?
  
5. Look at the warning given in **Galatians 5:15**. What is our takeaway from that text?
  
6. **1 Corinthians 13:4-8** is viewed as a text that describes the characteristics of love.
  - a. List the ones that should be especially helpful in overcoming a critical attitude.
  
  - b. Do you see characteristics that would be particularly helpful to you to be less critical?
  
7. As mentioned before, criticism leveled toward us can be a major test of our faith, so we need to learn how to react properly to criticism.
  - a. Can you think of scriptures that would help us to stay properly focused?
  
  - b. Think about this; and list some *wrong* reactions to criticism.
  
8. Is there such a thing as positive or constructive criticism?
  - a. How should we react when on the receiving end of such criticism?
  
  - b. How might we want to offer criticism?

***SOUL SEARCHER...*** Think fairly and honestly

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Did you find yourself being critical of someone in class today?

Will you find yourself being critical of someone during the worship period?

If Jesus were here in bodily presence, would He join you in the criticism or would He defend the one being criticized?