

## Idols ..... Me Part 4

### “The Critic”

We are in our fourth week of our Idols ..... Me series and I want us to stay with the theme of defining idols by using Webster’s dictionary definition and King James’ Old Testament definition.

#### Webster’s Dictionary

- an object of extreme desire.
- a representation or symbol of an act of worship.
- a pretender or imposter.
- a false conception.
- a form or appearance visible but without substance.

The King James Version meaning of Idolatry in the Old Testament means to prostitute one’s self, become an adulterer or to participate in whoredom.

Another key point about idols is that when idols are threatened, or exposed anger is present. Not all anger is sinful, but we must remember that the bible teaches in Ephesians 4 “to be angry and sin not”. When idols are exposed the anger is always sinful.

This morning we are going to address the idol of being “The Critic” and we are also, going to share the remedy for that idol which is “Grace”.

**Luke 6:37-42**, ““Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. <sup>38</sup> Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” <sup>39</sup> He also told them this parable: “Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into a pit? <sup>40</sup> The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher. <sup>41</sup> “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? <sup>42</sup> How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You

hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

## **The Critic**

I want us to first identify the attributes of "The Critic".

### *The Critic Will Judge and Condemn*

What does it mean to judge and condemn others? When do you know you have become or that you are becoming "The Critic"?

Pastor JD Greear of Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina shared seven things that may indicate that you are struggling with being judgmental and condemning toward others.

1. You are more enraged at someone else's sin than you are embarrassed by your own.
2. You refuse to forgive (or when you forgive you refuse to forget).
3. You "cut off" those who disagree with you.
4. You gossip.
5. You refuse to receive constructive criticism or loving instruction (rebuke/reproof).
6. You refuse to correct someone's position.
7. You write someone off as hopeless.

### *The Critic Struggles with Receiving Instruction*

Jesus makes this clear in our text by saying, "can the blind lead the blind"? "The Critic" is blind because of their prideful outlook toward others. Jesus is clearly stating that this should not be, but instead the student should show a great deal of humility toward the teacher and both toward one another. "The Critic" is incapable of leading because they possess a high level of pride and a low level of humility.

In academic and athletic terms "The Critic" would be not teachable and not coachable. You and I must remember at the core "The Critics" idol is an inflated

view of self and a deflated view of God. “The Critic” must be critical, must judge others and must condemn others, so that self can be exalted. It is kind of like trying to feed a pit that cannot be filled.

When “The Critic” is confronted with the truth such as being kind, tenderhearted and forgiving they typically will deflect the truth by stating that “this is just the way I am”. They might proudly proclaim, “well I just tell it the way it is and if you can’t handle it so be it.”

Tragically these attributes of “The Critic” can manifest their selves into marriages, families, churches, work places and most importantly our relationship with God.

The fact is that “The Critic” has a big problem with God that they typically do not want to acknowledge or deal with. Scripturally this problem is a BIG deal and puts “The Critic” in a very difficult position with God.

**James 4:6**, “But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”

Being “The Critic” is a place we never want to be if we are a Child of God because God by His truth won’t be displeased or disappointed with us, but He will literally oppose us.

#### *The Critic Cannot See Their Own Faults*

Jesus then went on this passage by saying, “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?

<sup>42</sup> How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”

To be “The Critic” we must do little self-evaluation but be very quick to point out the smallest deficiencies in others.

I learned this the hard way very early in our marriage although I was very thankful for a Godly lady who rebuked me in my love and grace. After a service was over she approached me and asked to speak to me. I thought that she might be going to complement my sermon or share a prayer need with me. Instead she rebuked me in love and grace with this statement ..... Why is it that you love everyone in

this church more than you do your wife? That statement jarred me and was the beginning of me changing some things. I am still a flawed husband that is saved by God's grace, but that was a turning point for sure.

I had become "The Critic" and it was very easy for me to see my wife's faults, but not my own. At the same time, I was quick to show myself a lot of grace but showed her little.

### *Summing It Up*

"The Critic" is someone who fails to recognize and practice God's love and grace toward others. They do not realize that every time they judge, criticize and condemn others they are literally judging, criticizing and condemning God because He is the one that created that person.

### **"The Critics" Antidote: God's Amazing Grace**

In his book *Bono in Conversation*, author Michka Assayas recounts a remarkable discussion he had with the lead singer and songwriter of the mega-star rock group U2. While Bono is frequently criticized by some Christians for his salty language and liberal social views, it remains a fact that U2 began as a Christian fellowship and still plumbs biblical themes in many of their chart-busting songs.

Mr. Assayas, who is not a follower of Christ himself, began by asking the rock star: "Don't you think appalling things happen when people become too religious?" Bono acknowledged that there were certainly risks there, but then countered by saying something fascinating: "It's a mind-blowing concept [to me] that the God who created the Universe might be looking for company, a real relationship with people ... but the thing that keeps me on my knees is the difference between grace and karma."

Assayas wanted to know what he meant by that last line, and Bono answered: "At the center of all religions is the idea of karma. You know, what you put out comes back to you: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, or in physics—in physical laws—every action is met by an equal or an opposite one .... And yet, along comes this idea called grace to upend all that .... Love interrupts, if you like, the consequences of your actions, which in my case is very good news indeed, because I've done a lot of stupid stuff. I'd be in big trouble if karma was going to

finally be my judge." Bono added: "It doesn't excuse my mistakes, but I'm holding out for grace, because I know who I am, and I hope I don't have to depend on my own religiosity .... Christ took on the sins of the world so that what we put out did not come back to us, so that our sinful nature does not reap the obvious death. It's not our own good works that get us through the gates of Heaven."

It's God's grace. It's that amazing grace.

How many of you watch "The Voice" or "American Idol"? Pam and I watch "The Voice" and she watches the new version of "American Idol". It is interesting that you have all these contestants that get on these shows and some of them are good and some of them are bad, but then there is the group that is good, but the judges find some flaws in their performance and choose not to advance them to the next round. The point is that several get to try out, but only a few make it and some good singers go home without getting a chance.

God's grace has a totally different approach than "The Voice" or "American Idol" in that God's grace is His unmerited favor in that He gave us Jesus who died on the cross, resurrected from the grave and now sits on the right hand of God saving all that call upon His name for the remission of sins and salvation.

**Ephesians 2:8-9**, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast."

There is nothing that you and I can do to save ourselves from the penalty of sin. However, by believing in the finished work of Jesus Christ we can be saved from the penalty of sin.

Sometimes I can think that I am a decent guy, but that inside itself has absolutely no bearing on God's grace and His free gift. I am a sinner saved by God's grace period because of my personal faith in what Jesus has already done to save me.

Bob Geelhoed and Vickie Bare suggest that "grace is like being offered a heart transplant free of charge. Until we accept the heart, however, and allow the

surgeon to cut us and implant the new heart into us—until we undergo that operation, the heart can't pump its life-giving blood through our body. The reality is that we don't just need a ticket to heaven, we need a heart transplant now. Our problem is that severe. And the free gift is that radical."

## **Restoring Grace**

We must always remember that we are saved by His grace and in turn we should be quick to show others grace, mercy and love because of how much grace, mercy and love that God has shown us. God did not give any of us the right to judge and condemn and even when we are called on to speak truth about sin we must be motivated by our love for the person to share with them God's truth concerning their sin.

**Galatians 6:1**, "Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted."

The question is clear ..... will we choose to be "The Critic" or will we be people who constantly and consistently show others Jesus Christ through showing them His grace, mercy and love?

How much grace is enough to be shown? Consider Jesus ..... it was the cross!