

Responding to Critics



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Responding to critics can be a common experience, so we need God's help to respond in a *right* and *scriptural* manner—a way that is according to the instructions in the Bible. Believers in Jesus can expect to meet with unbelieving critics of the world. ^{2 Timothy 3:12} “*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*”

It seems difficult to be silent when meeting with criticism, but a *right* response is often *no* response. Regardless of the persecution, the criticism, or the opposition we face because of obeying God's *Word*, we must keep our focus and trust on God's *Son*. ^{2 Timothy 3:14} “*Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.*”

As we continue to trust God by faith in the atoning Blood of Jesus—His divine power will protect us from deceit and false teaching that would lead away from a position of trust. ^{2 Timothy 3:15} “*And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*”

When we choose the scriptural way, we are ^{1 Peter 1:5} “*Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.*”

There will always be *critics* in the world, and if someone already *knows* God's Truth, but

refuses to accept it or live it, we are to leave them alone and not argue with them. We are instructed how to deal with critics of God's Truth—^{Matthew 10:14} “*Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.*”

The *right* response to those who mock true faith and trust on God, and who ridicule our faith in Christ, is often *no* response at all. To argue with anyone who knows what the Bible says—such as ^{John 14:15} “*If ye love me, keep my commandments,*” would be to give the pearls of God's Truth to those who would ^{Matthew 7:6} “*Trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.*”

If anyone wants to know God's Truth and plan of life, that information is available to anyone by reading the Bible. The Holy Spirit will enlighten anyone—^{John 16:13} “*When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.*”

If anyone refuses to *believe* and will *not* obey New Testament teaching—which means they are refusing to *believe* and *obey* the Words of Jesus—then they would not be convinced by anything we could say. The Holy Spirit is the only One who can bring spiritual conviction, so our response to such people is to just pray for God to *open* their heart to His Truth.

Jesus said of those who refused to repent; who would not believe; and were unwilling to follow Him—^{Luke 16:31} “*If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*”

There are times when it is best that we walk away from a conversation—if remaining in the discussion would not solve anything nor bring peace. Jesus often withdrew to a quiet place to meditate and pray. Concerning those who criticize our faith in God, we must keep in mind ^{Romans 12:18} “So far as it depends on you, live at peace with all the world.”

Jesus always knew *how* to respond, so when a high priest questioned Him ^{Mark 14:61} “*He kept silent and answered nothing.*” When the priest kept asking “*Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?*” Jesus said: ⁶² “*I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*”

When King Herod questioned Jesus ^{Luke 23:9} “*He answered him nothing;*” When brought before Pilate, ^{Mark 15:5} “*Jesus still answered nothing.*” The right response to most opposition from critics is the way Jesus responded. ^{1 Peter 2:23} “*When he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not.*” That is the *right response*—no reply; no argument; and no insulting answer—but just placing the matter before God in prayer.

The Holy Spirit enables us to know *how* to avoid arguments; when to walk away; and when to respond—if we *should* say anything at all. Jesus promised that we would be part of His family, if we would learn to respond in a right way to critics of His Truth; ^{Matthew 5:9} “*Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*”

Jesus commands us to *give* to those who ask; to *love* our neighbor; to *help* anyone who needs it; to *not resist* an evil person; to not *slander* in anger; to *forgive* everyone; to *pray* in our room; and to keep no *treasure* on earth—but to *sell, give* to the poor, and *send* it ahead to Heaven.

Jesus said not to put financial reserves aside on which we could trust—no real estate nor house, and no insurance coverage—which are all for financial protection. The insurance system is 100% from the devil, as it eliminates trust on God. We should separate ourselves from that system.

Jesus prayed for *wisdom* when He had to *respond* to opposition. He wanted to *do* His Father's will—giving a *right response* to critics.

We also must pray for wisdom when responding to critics who mock true faith in Christ.

Jesus always defended the Word—Matthew 4:4 “*It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*” Hebrews 4:12 “*The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*”

Any critic should be informed if possible, that there is only *one* way to Heaven—the path of faith and trust on the Atonement Blood of Christ. Ephesians 4:4-6 “*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*”

Many who profess faith in God say they love Him with their words, but they do *not* in their heart. Matthew 15:8 “*These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.*”

Millions *claim* to love Jesus, but their life gives no *evidence* that their heart is right with God. John 14:15 “*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*” The Sermon on the Mount Matthew 5, 6, 7, contains valuable teaching, instructions, and advice. Matthew 12:30 “*He who is not with Me is against Me.*”

Silence is not *always* the right response—as there were times when Jesus spoke boldly of God’s truth to His critics. If we need to *reply*, God will give us the *words*. 1 Peter 3:15-16 “*Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.*”

When a response to critics was needed, Jesus Mark 7:6 “*Said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.*”

He explained how they avoided obeying the *commands* of God which they did *not* like, while keeping the *traditions* they *did* like—it was just making the *outside* clean with no inner change of heart. Mark 7:7-8 “*In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men.*”

Jesus explained about the commandment—Exodus 20:12 “*Honour thy father and thy mother,*” and how they avoided obeying *that* to follow their own *rules*. Because of their refusal to obey the Word of God, Jesus said Mark 7:9 “*Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.*”

The Holy Spirit enables us to obey the *Word* and give a right *response* to critics of God’s Truth. Matthew 5:17-18 “*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.*”

Jesus spoke clearly on how to conduct our life. Matthew 5:19 “*Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*”

If our religion is only outward, Jesus said, 19 “Ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

We are to give up a house or real estate holdings for *His* sake—so we could follow Jesus in day-by-day trust on His Father’s faithfulness to

provide the needs of that day. Luke 14:33 “*Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*”

That means we are to be willing to give up anything *not* in God’s will—whether it be a job; real estate; a worldly friend; unscriptural entertainment; and anything we are addicted to or obsessed with. The Holy Spirit will enable us to get rid of *anything* for the sake of the Kingdom.

The disciples gave up *everything*—and they asked if there would be any reward for doing this. Jesus said Matthew 19:29 “*Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.*”

We may have to give up a *person*; *something* or *anything* to obey the Word of God, but whatever it may *be*; or whoever it *is* we give up for the sake of the Truth, it will be worth it all to see Jesus and to live with Him forever.

It is a promise that is *written*—1 Corinthians 2:9 “*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him*”—and adding 10 that His Spirit will *reveal* to us the reward *awaiting* us.

God will give us the *words* and the *way* when *responding to critics*—if we *are* to respond at all—but whatever our answer is to those who ridicule our faith, let it always be a reply that brings honor and glory to God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son.



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