

Faithful Afflictions

Faithful are the wounds of a friend
Proverbs 27:6

Verbal abuse has no place in Christian conduct. When we read about the conversations Jesus had with people, there are no instances of Him verbally abusing anyone, even those who persecuted and betrayed Him.

However, when a friend sees error in the thinking of someone close or observes the friend acting sinfully, the observer ought to speak up and criticize the offending person. In so doing the individual will inflict a verbal wound in a friend who is at fault.

Speaking up and being critical of another person may be a really loving and helpful act to perform. However, the criticism must be offered in love and with humility or the Lord will not honour the action.

Some of our most positive steps forward in life occur right after we stop to listen and take to heart the criticism of a friend. The worst thing that can happen when we receive criticism is that our pride chokes out the truth we have just heard.

Those who have become biblical Christians have already received the most significant criticism of all. The criticism has come from the most faithful of friends, Jesus Christ. We have received the news that we are sinners in need of a Saviour. Nothing is more significant than that.

If you are a believer in Jesus, the worst possible criticism has already been laid at your feet. So when a friend wounds you with faithful words it is easier to accept. Learn to accept criticism as a building block instead of a stumbling block.

Faithful afflictions may be the kindest things true friends can do for you in life. Accurate criticisms are bridges that take us into greater and more useful areas of service as believers.

If you have had one of these “faithful wounds” consider yourself blessed and use the difficult information as a guide to better work for the Lord in the future. Keep yourself from resenting the person who has given you the

criticism. Thank the Lord for bringing to your attention the deficit in your walk.

Criticism can be a better friend than praise as we seek to constantly improve ourselves as Christians. We will never arrive at perfection in this life but we certainly may use all means possible to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord.

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