

# S.O.H.L.

## WEEKLY MINISTRY MEDITATIONS

*Pronounced "Soul"*

July 11, 2016

## Criticizing God's Leaders

**ACTS 7:51-53 NKJV** – (51) “You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did*, so *do* you. (52) Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, (53) who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept *it*.”

Criticism is the act of judging unfavorably or faultfinding. It is often appropriate to judge a person, thing, or action unfavorably. In fact, a true friend will speak the truth even when it is hard to hear: "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy" (**Proverbs 27:6**). Jesus was quite critical of the Pharisees' hypocrisy, and He expressed His disapproval forcibly on several occasions (as in **Matthew 23**). However, Jesus' criticisms were always truthful and, ultimately, loving.

Today I want to address the criticism of leaders who are doing right in the eyes of God. There is a significant difference between helping someone improve and having a critical spirit. A critical spirit is never pleased. A critical spirit expects and finds disappointment wherever it looks. It is the opposite of **1 Corinthians 13** - a critical spirit arrogantly judges, is easily provoked, accounts for every wrong, and never carries any hope of being pleased. Such an attitude damages the critiqued as well as the critic. Many leaders are facing this negativity.

Leaders are going to draw fire. People will criticize leaders, while others will second-guess those in positions of leadership. Often, motives will be assigned that are not present. A few will falsely accuse their leaders. They did it to Jesus and, therefore, will do it to anyone. Yes it hurts. And yes. It is going to happen. Let me encourage you with scripture.....

**Offenses are inevitable.** Jesus Himself said, “Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!” - **Matthew 18:7**. “**Offenses can be good for us.** Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.” - **Genesis 50:19-20**. **Being offended is a choice.** Every leader should memorize this verse - The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression.” (Proverbs 19:11). Also, remember what happened to those who criticized His leader....

**Miriam:** She mocked Moses because he had a Cushite wife and was struck with leprosy (**Numbers 12:1-2, 10**). **Korah and followers:** He led the people of Israel to rebel against Moses' leadership and was swallowed up by the earth (**Numbers 16:1-2, 31-32, 33, 34**). **Michal:** She despised David because he danced before the Lord and remained childless her whole life (**2 Samuel 6:16, 20, 23**). **Some Youth:** They mocked Elisha and laughed at his baldness and got killed by bears (**2 Kings 2:23-24**). **Hananiah:** He contradicted Jeremiah's prophecies with false predictions and died two months later (**Jeremiah 28:15-17**). **Bar-Jesus, a sorcerer:** He lied about Paul in an attempt to turn the proconsul against him and was struck with blindness (**Acts 13:6-12**).

It may not be easy but hopefully these words provide you with strength and the ability to persevere.

### SCRIPTURE READING:

JAMES 5:9

### THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

If criticism cannot be expressed in keeping with the fruit of the Spirit, it's better left unsaid.