



# Criticizing ... Others

His answer was startling. Humorous, too. The reporter asked a visiting statesman from China this question: "What is the oddest thing that you have noticed about American people?" Said the visitor: "The slant of their eyes." Such a reply makes you think. Americans comment about the eyes of a Chinese as being so different. Yet the Chinese are surprised at the shape of our eyes. It all depends on who is looking at whom.

## Trustworthy?

A man was complaining: "You can't trust anybody these days. Not even the old fellow selling papers on the corner. Yesterday he passed a phony quarter off on me." "He did? Let's see that phony quarter." The complainer coughed a little and finally admitted: "I don't have it. Last night I got it to work in one of the cigarette machines." Isn't that typical of many of us? We criticize another's action and in a weak moment do the same thing he did.

## **Self-Mastery**

It is unfortunate that criticism is so common. Some people even think they are intellectual just because they are critical. By tearing apart the government, the police force, the boss, school teachers, Church officials, organization officers or anybody in authority, certain individuals feel that they are showing their brain power. Not so. It doesn't take too many brains to be critical but only self-mastery will hold back an uncharitable remark.

## **Inside Story**

No one is perfect. Yet it seems so easy to criticize another's walk or talk or what she wears. Maybe her friends are our target, or her driving or the way her children act. Again it may be some serious sin of another that we keep discussing. Recall that very disturbing remark of our Lord. A woman had just been caught in adultery. The crowd was eager to stone her. Our Lord, knowing the heart of every person, quietly remarked: "Let him who is without sin be the first to cast a stone at her. . . But hearing this, they went away, one by one, beginning with the eldest." No stones were thrown. What a showdown!

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## Rush Judgment

An intelligent man learns by his mistakes. He knows that his judgment has been faulty in the past. So he hesitates to quickly judge a given situation. Without a doubt, many rush judgments become rash judgments. Then, too, no one is a mind reader. That is why St. Bernard said: "If you cannot excuse the act, you can at least excuse the intention."

## Grave Diggers

Some people cannot carry on a long conversation without going back into the graveyard of their memories and digging up all the scandals they have buried close to the surface. God's warning is severe: "With what judgment you judge, you shall be judged." What a sorry mess we will be in, if God judges us the same way that we judge others. If we see only the faults, failings and shortcomings in others, God's hand will be heavy upon us.



## Think it Over

Here's a pointed question from the *Imitation of Christ*: "If you cannot make yourself as you would like to be or should

be, how can you expect to have another according to your liking?" How skillful we are at finding excuses for our own faults but not for the faults of others!

### **Ideal Parish**

Members of an organization might ponder over the words of this pastor: "If all the energy involved in the uncharitable remarks that follow meetings of parish organizations were channeled into constructive criticism (with a few prayers thrown in for good measure) it would almost make the parish a Utopia."

### **Try It**

Train your mind to look for good things. Automatically your character will improve. Of course one would have to be blind not to notice faults. But why spread them? Discussion with the one at fault might help, but so few have enough courage and tact to do that. No one will go wrong in following this policy: If you cannot say something good about a person, do not speak of that person.

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