

FRICITION

Tools For Better Relationships

TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

CONFIDENTIALITY IS IMPORTANT. Confidentiality is the key to building trust in relationships. Here are a few mottos to remember to be confidential: “What is said in small group, stays in small group.” **Nothing, nobody, never...** *Share nothing, to nobody, never outside of the group.*

LOVING CRITICAL AND CONTROLLING PEOPLE

ICEBREAKER

What’s one habit or preference you have that others don’t always understand? (*Examples: Being very structured or very spontaneous; having strong opinions about routines, parenting, work, etc.*)

INTRODUCTION

We all meet or live with overly critical and controlling people. God created each of us with different perspectives, and we will not always agree. This week, we will learn how to navigate difficult relationships, receive and respond to feedback in a biblical way, and overcome a critical spirit. Loving fault-finders and micro-managers does not mean letting them define or direct you. Only God defines your identity and direction.

READ |

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?
— Romans 8:31 (ESV)

Criticism and control can affect our self-esteem. If we let others define who we are, it uproots us from our identity in Christ (unconditionally loved, created with purpose, valued by God, etc.). When your identity is secure, you can receive correction without absorbing shame and better discern when feedback becomes unhealthy pressure or control. When you know who you are in Him, you learn to discern constructive criticism from negativity, apply growth points without taking on guilt, and let go of what doesn’t serve you.

What helps you stay grounded in your identity when others' opinions feel loud?

(Examples: Talking with a trusted friend or mentor, praying before reacting, etc.)

READ |

But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.
— Galatians 5:15 (ESV)

Critical people can divide, hurt, and tempt us into resentment. Some criticism escalates into control, and both can slowly consume relationships if left unchecked. There are a few ways to protect ourselves: **1) Reflect Before Reacting.** Silence can be powerful. When falsely accused, even Jesus was silent (Matthew 27:14). **2) Don't Avenge.** Negativity can take root in our hearts. Trust God to handle justice. **3) Be Led By the Spirit.** Pray first. Respond calmly, not in anger.

Have you ever seen criticism make a situation worse—either personally or around you?

What happened as a result of that criticism? *(Example: A boss, coach, or family member criticizing so much that someone shuts down. etc.)*

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... gently and humbly help them back onto the right path. — Galatians 6:1 (NLT)

Controlling and critical people often act out of insecurity, fear, or past hurt, not always from a desire to cause harm. When we understand the “why,” we can respond with grace and compassion, even toward ourselves. Jesus calls us to examine our own hearts, forgive offenses, and build others up with encouragement. If you recognize patterns of being judgmental or controlling in your own life, know that Jesus does not condemn you. He invites you into growth and change through grace, not shame. And because we have received this grace, He calls us to extend it to others, especially those who are hardest to love.

Do you have moments where you might be overly critical or controlling? Instead of

offering criticism, who can you encourage this week? *(Examples: "Sometimes I'm critical with my child's choices, but I want to be more encouraging," or "I tend to micromanage at work, but I want to be a better leader and support my coworkers," etc.)*

READ |

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.
— Proverbs 4:23 (NIV)

Extending grace does not mean tolerating overly-controlling or harmful behavior. Even after listening, forgiving, and responding with humility, there are times when love requires

boundaries. In situations where the person is consistently manipulative, emotionally harmful, or abusive, seeking help from trusted leaders, counselors, or professionals may be necessary to ensure safety and healing.

Setting boundaries is an act of stewardship for our hearts. It preserves peace, prevents resentment, and helps us remain rooted in who God has called us to be.

Where might God be inviting you to set a healthy boundary in a relationship and what might that look like in practice? *(Examples: Continuing to help a friend or family member in need, but limiting it to certain times to protect your schedule, etc.)*

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Choose at least one step to try this week:

- **Respond Well:** Pause before reacting, avoid revenge, and let the Spirit guide you.
- **Receive Well:** Root your confidence in Christ, not human approval.
- **Draw Boundaries:** Love without fear or guilt.
- **Self-Check & Forgive:** Admit your own faults and release resentment.
- **Encourage Others:** Speak life, build up relationships instead of tearing them down.

CLOSE IN PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your mercy and grace. Help us to forgive those who criticize or control us. Please guard our hearts, and teach us to remain grounded in our identity in Christ, respond with wisdom, receive feedback with humility, and build others up instead of tearing them down. Help us trust You with outcomes we cannot control. Strengthen our relationships and guide our words and actions. In Jesus' name, amen.



Make Time to be in God's WORD

Reading God's Word daily re-patterns the way you think & transforms your mind. Doing your daily devotions is an excellent way to record, process, & share what God is teaching you on a personal level. We do this using S.O.A.P.

- S - Scripture**
- O - Observation**
- A - Application**
- P - Prayer**

Here's an example:

S: *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "*

--Matthew 4:4 (NIV)

O: Jesus said that we can't live on food alone. Our life is sustained through His Word.

A: Just as food is important to me, God's Word is even more because it will sustain me and give me the strength to live out my life.

P: Jesus, thank You for reminding me that I need Your Word to give me the wisdom & strength to follow You. Help me to make time to spend with You daily. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

Day 1:

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

— Romans 12:18 (NIV)

Day 2:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

— Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

Day 3:

If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

— Matthew 5:41 (NIV)

Day 4:

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace...

— Colossians 3:15 (NIV)

Day 5:

Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing...

— 1 Peter 3:9 (NIV)