

## Living in the Dash

### Day 1: Handling Criticism with Grace

#### Scripture:

*"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."* —  
Proverbs 15:1 (NIV)

#### Devotion:

Criticism is inevitable. Whether it comes from a family member, coworker, church leader, or even a stranger online—sooner or later, we all face it. The challenge isn't whether we'll be criticized, but how we'll respond when it happens.

Our natural response may be to defend ourselves, become angry, or shut down emotionally. But God calls us to something higher: grace, humility, and discernment.

There are two kinds of criticism—constructive and destructive. Constructive criticism can be uncomfortable, but it often carries truth that God uses to refine us. It may come through a trusted friend, a mentor, or even a difficult situation. Rather than resist it, we are called to listen, reflect, and grow. Destructive criticism, on the other hand, often comes with a spirit of judgment or negativity. It may not be rooted in truth, but it can still wound us if we let it take root in our hearts. Even then, our response should reflect the Spirit of Christ: patience, self-control, and forgiveness. Jesus faced criticism constantly. Religious leaders accused Him, crowds misunderstood Him, and even His own followers questioned Him. Yet He never lost His peace or identity. He knew who He was—and He let the Father's voice be louder than the voice of man. Handling criticism with grace means refusing to be shaped by offense. It means pausing to ask, "Lord, is there something in this that

You want to teach me?” And even when there isn’t, it means choosing love over retaliation.

**Prayer:**

Lord, we know that criticism will come. Help us not to react in pride or anger, but to respond with wisdom and grace. Teach us to discern what is true, and to grow from it. Guard our hearts from bitterness and help us find our identity in You alone. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.

**Discussion Questions:**

- Why is criticism so difficult to receive, even when it may be true?
- How can we tell the difference between helpful correction and harmful criticism?
- What habits can help you respond to criticism with grace instead of defensiveness?