

Why I Avoid Mudslinging Battles With Destructive Critics

Constructive criticism is life-giving and life-saving, and we should all listen to truthful words of correction, exhortation, reproof and rebuke. As the psalmist said, “Let a righteous man strike me—that is a kindness; let him rebuke me—that is oil on my head. My head will not refuse it” (Ps. 141:5a, NIV).

But destructive criticism kills. It tears down and does not build up. It is without kindness or love. It uses unequal weights and measures, straining out a gnat while swallowing a camel. It is self-righteous, mean-spirited and without a redemptive heart.

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That being said, if a destructive critic has something truthful to say to me, even if in a harmful or hateful way, I want to hear it. But I will not get into a mudslinging battle with destructive critics or spend my time refuting their claims or responding to their challenges. To do so would be dishonoring to the Lord and doing a disservice to the body of Christ.

We gain further insight on this from Nehemiah.

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Nehemiah was a Jewish exile living in Persia who returned to Judea to rebuild the ruins of Jerusalem. But his people's

enemies were not happy with his progress, so they invited him to meet privately at a distance outside the city in order to hurt him.

In response, he sent them messengers, saying, "'I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?'" (Neh. 6:3b). Not to be deterred, they sent him the same message four more times, and each time he responded the same way (Neh. 6:4).

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