

Handling Criticism: Lessons from Jesus

When someone wants to complain to you about a person, ministry, etc., follow the guidelines Jesus gave in Matthew 18:15-20.

¹⁵ “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.” ¹

Ask the person, “Have you talked to _____ ?” (the person who offended them; the person in charge of the ministry they are concerned about, etc.)

If they say, “No,” then graciously stop the person and tell them to practice Mathew 18:15. Graciously tell them to stop gossiping, complaining, and/or venting to someone else.

If they say, “Yes, but the person didn’t listen,” then you can listen to their concern. Afterwards, go with the person to help them seek reconciliation and/or resolution, the second step in Matthew 18:16.

Remember that your role is not to serve as the complaint department or the problem solvers of the church.

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Mt 18:15–20). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.