

The Early Acts Series: Acts 11

ACTS

Dr. Michael Erickson

Acts 11

- The reason for Acts 11 and the retelling of the story of Peter's vision and what happened at Cornelius' house was to answer criticism from Jewish believers.
- Only 3 references in the NIV Bible to the word criticism.
- Acts 11:2 Judges 8:1 and II Corinthians 8:20
- Let's read Acts 11:1-18

Criticism

- The Greek word used for “criticized” in Acts 11:2 means to separate oneself, or to withdraw from. To oppose, to hesitate, to discriminate against, to strive against, to compete against. To contend, challenge and to judge.
- You will find a lot of these qualities in the area of sports, music, the arts, in writing etc. Criticism used to improve.

Criticism

- Criticism can be destructive. Especially when the spirit behind the criticism is not to improve but to divide or even destroy.
- Often critics with this type of spirit have no solutions for improvement so they judge, criticize and separate.
- The results is that it is someone else's fault and they are wrong

People are critical when

- People are critical when something seems to be at variance with what they have been taught.
- People are critical when there are changes that they did not initiate.
- People are critical when they feel left out of the process of change.
- People are critical when there are prejudices.

People are critical when

- People are critical when there is pride.
“It should have been done this way.”
- People are critical because of personal preferences and feelings.
- People are critical when they lack all the facts, lacking insight, knowledge and understanding.
- Some people have a critical spirit.

How to handle criticism

- 1. Take what is being said and humbly examine yourself to see if it what is being criticized is fair, accurate and true.
- 2. Like Peter take the time to answer the objections and criticisms. There are times when an explanation satisfies the critic.
- 3. If someone is critical of you share with them how God is working in you.

How to handle criticism

- 4. Don't get offended and go on the defensive.
- 5. If you are being criticized, fairly or unfairly remember to be considerate of other's feelings. Treat them the way you want to be treated.
- 6. Seek to understand before being understood.

A word to the critical

- Examine your motives for being critical. Is it to improve or to destroy?
- Don't be judgmental. Matthew 7:1
- Separate your personal preferences and realize that people are different.
- What is God saying?
- Be part of the solution and not the problem.

Acts 11:19-30

- The advancement of the Gospel.
- Some of them “telling the message only to the Jews”.
- Some of them taking the message to the Greeks (the gentiles of the Greek speaking world).
- The start of the ministry of Paul and Barnabas.

Benevolence

- Benevolence is money, offerings, and services meeting physical needs.
- Acts 11:28-29 the early church was always concerned with the needs of the poor, collecting money to meet physical needs.
- Jesus' parable of the sheep and goats in Matthew 25:31-46

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