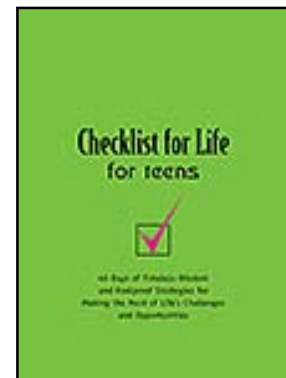


## Criticism, “Zipped Lips”

It’s easy to be critic...and some may it a lifestyle. Even if the habit has not yet reached the level of lifestyle, the tendency and occasion to criticize is both attractive and addictive. Once you begin this practice, the effort to stop becomes increasingly difficult.

To be a critic is to be self-empowered – a kind of judge made so by your own decision. Understand that there is “constructive criticism”; but the real test of your words or comments is in both the content and the context – what you say and where (and how) you say it.

**Intent is also important: not just good intentions, but also could expectations;** in other words, an intention of genuine concern and care, followed by the expectation that your words will offer help and hope to the other.



Of course, criticism that is indirect – or lodged through some *outlying ears* – is neither well intended or has good expectations. Criticism of this sort is of no good – but is driven by the desire to hurt others whether through the truth or through lies. **Gossip and such cruel intentions have no rightful place in the life and lifestyle of the true believer – regardless of you age!** Lies, false or misleading statements, and other foul play are equally on scale...

## Homework:

### Please try to do these:

- Depend on God to help me change my negative attitudes
- Turn my criticisms into opportunities
- Keep critical thoughts to myself
- Help me (to think) when I see something that could be done a better way; in other words, that I be prudent or wise in how I process and possibly participate in such...
- Judging others is easy...because it raises “our worth” in our own eyes. Ask for help in the tendency to judge others...and the desire to build-up or artificially raise your own worth...

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus instructed his disciples on the risks of seeing the faults in others...while being figuratively blind to your own faults. As described above, words can be used to condemn others (their lives, actions, etc.) while, at the same time, elevating self. The tendency or habit of a “double-standard” (in the matter of faults or flaws) has many consequences: first, it encourages pride in the worst sense of the word; second, it diminishes the real need for God

### Criticism, “Zipped Lips”

(as Lord of our lives)...as pride will do; third, it dilutes and distorts our view of reality – in that we are fooled into believing that we are better than is true or factual.

Again, the tendency to *fall prey* to this trap is high and frequent; hence the need to periodically reflect on the life and words of Christ – who humbled himself before the Father. **Don't be spiritually blinded so as to overlook your self – your true self, and your need for Christ as Lord.**