

Where Is God When We Hurt?

Session 5 ~ When the Critics Close In

Numbers 20:1-13

Criticism can distract, derail, or destroy us. Near the end of the Israelites' 40-year wilderness wanderings, they again complained about their food and water supplies, blaming their leaders for their problems. Moses and Aaron's response led to God's refusal to allow them to enter the Promised Land. Despite their mistakes, we can learn much from them about facing criticism.

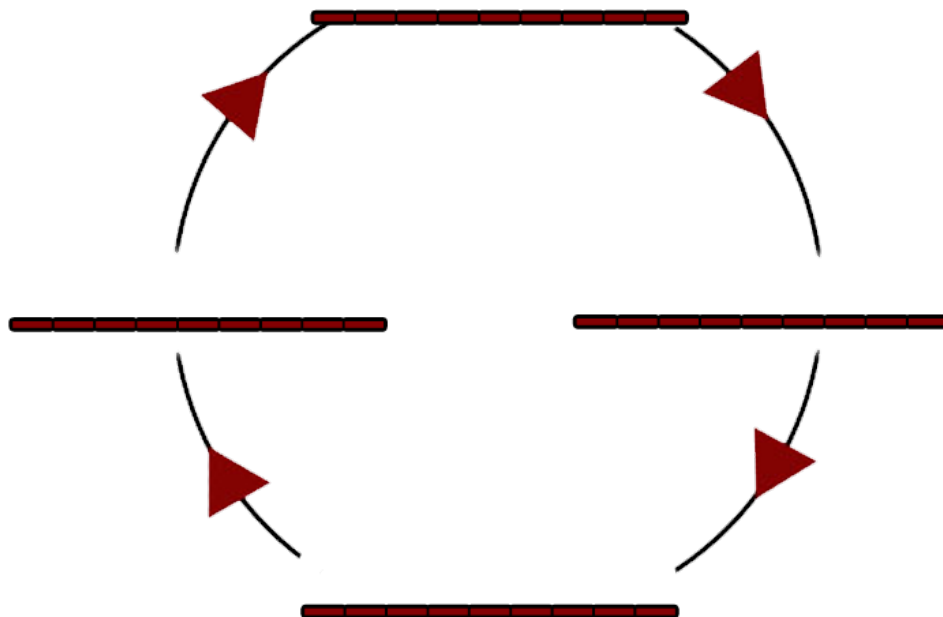
Five steps to follow when facing criticism:

1. **Check** _____

How was Moses' response affected by his circumstances?

2. **Consider** _____

For 40 years, the Israelites were guilty of serial ingratitude:



3. **Contemplate** _____

Were any of the Israelites' complaints legitimate? If so, which one(s)?

4. **Call** _____

What else could Moses and Aaron have done?

5. **Carry** _____

God gave Moses and Aaron specific instructions:

- Take the staff
- Gather the assembly
- Speak to the rock

What did they do instead?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Partial obedience is disobedience.

How can we manage criticism without mimicking our critics?

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Moses and Aaron disobeyed God's directions?
2. Jewish and Christian scholars struggle to understand Moses and Aaron's consequences for disobedience. How do you see it? What lessons can we learn from their experience?
3. When are you particularly vulnerable to criticism?
4. What changes, if any, do you want to make in your response to reproach?