

## GO DEEPER

use these questions for further study

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**Pray** the Lord's Prayer together or individually to begin the time (Mtt 6:9-13).

### **Share with the group:**

Talk about a time you were criticized by someone. What happened? How did it feel? What long-term impact did it have on your life?

Did you grow up in home environment that tended to be more critical or more encouraging? What form did criticism take (direct, indirect, sarcasm, etc)?

### **Read Galatians 5:13-15**

Why does Paul need to warn against criticism (biting and devouring)?

What is the cost of criticism? What do we gain from being critical?

Carefully consider the people/places/relationships where you tend to be most critical. What might your criticism be destroying?

### **Read Matthew 7:1-4**

Pastor Adam said that when we criticize others we assume the seat of judgment, or even the role of the satan (the accuser). What is your reaction to these statements? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

How would we act differently if we took Jesus' words in Mtt 7 seriously?

### **Read Ephesians 4:29**

How does criticism qualify as "unwholesome talk"?

Why do we tend to find it easier to criticize than to build up?

What does building up cost you that criticism doesn't?

What benefits does building up bring that criticism doesn't?

### **Consider your own life:**

Where do you struggle the most with criticism? In what ways do you tend to let yourself off the hook and excuse your criticism of others?

How can you move from being a grace-stealer into being a grace-dealer? What obstacles (internal and external) do you face in this journey?

Who is one person you can build up this week?

**Close** by reading Galatians 5:14-15 & 1 Corinthians 13:1-7

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