

The Gospel of Mark
Hardened Hearts
Mark 3:1-6

Thinking critically is very different from being critical. Thinking critically means to think objectively about ideas presented in a book or in a lecture. It means that everything gets that is said gets evaluated against some standard or presupposition. It means agreeing where we can agree and disagreeing where our convictions take us down different paths. We should all learn critical thinking skills. It keeps us from being gullible and to use the words of Scripture with regard to doctrine, it keeps us from being tossed by every wind and wave of doctrines that claim to be Christian but are not.

1. Following Jesus will invite scrutiny.
2. Following Jesus will require conviction.
3. Following Jesus will incite hostility.

May we overcome the scrutiny that comes when we choose to follow Jesus and take a stand for what is right and just and equitable to all. May we have the convictions to stand firmly on the foundation established by Christ and His teachings so that we might have the bold conviction to do what is right in the face of adversity. May we be given the courage to withstand the opposition that will come when we choose to live for the purposes of the kingdom that is not of this world.

For further consideration:

Have you ever seen someone resisting something good only because they are defending their “turf” or because they resent the one proposing it? When is it a good idea to do something that you know will result in public criticism? What situation might tempt us to withhold compassion from someone who needs it? How are a legalistic spirit and a critical disposition related? How can a long-term habit of criticism and fault-finding result in ridiculous restrictions and foolish regulations? Have you been susceptible to any, or are you willing to have others speak your life to help you identify those “blind spots” of legalistic self-righteousness? If you have caused someone hurt because of a legalistic attitude toward their actions, how can you make it right? How can you keep fear and hatred from being a powerful motivator in your life?