



# OVERCOME A CRITICAL SPIRIT

We are all guilty of letting careless words and complaining get the best of us from time to time; but when it becomes habitual, there is a danger of inviting a critical spirit to take up residence in our hearts. In the video *Overcome a Critical Spirit*, Willie Dudley delves into how detrimental a critical spirit can affect you personally, damage relationships with others, and drive a wedge between you and God.

**First:** Watch the *Overcome a Critical Spirit* video featuring Willie Dudley, Director of Men’s and Marriage Ministries at SBC-Fountain Hills, to discover steps you can take to gain victory over a critical spirit.

**\*Please note:** We use the first person throughout our study guides. We do this with the hope that it will enable you to overcome your personal struggle (in this case with a critical spirit) and to grow in your personal relationship with God.

## Dive Deeper

Read Matthew 12:36 and Ephesians 4:29. What do these verses reveal about a critical spirit?

Have you ever been in a group setting where the conversation turned overly critical? How did it change the tone of the conversation?

How do you think you could have turned the conversation towards a more positive discussion?

*Additional Thoughts:*

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What is Willie’s point in telling the joke about the guy who takes a vow of silence?

*Additional Thoughts:*

Read Galatians 5:22–23. In what ways do you think a critical spirit can rob you of the fruit of the Spirit?

## Tools to Overcome a Critical Spirit

### 1. Identify the critical spirit and repent.

It may be hard to see how you are hurting yourself or others by your complaining. A critical spirit is the tendency to harshly criticize and speak unfavorably about others, without grace or edification. It tears others down and condemns them.

Reflect on your relationships, such as work, family, and friends. Do you find that you are critical towards others? Do you at times lack grace and tear down rather than edify (build up) others?

Take a few minutes in prayer and ask God to reveal if a critical spirit has taken root in your life. This might be evident through traits that oppose the fruits of the Spirit, such as unkindness, impatience, agitation, and harshness. Write down each trait that God reveals to you by name (recognize that these may be spirits you are dealing with). They often run in packs, so don’t be surprised if God reveals more spirits in addition to the critical spirit.

Now that you have identified a critical spirit and related spirits that you struggle with, repent of each one to the LORD in prayer



Read Galatians 5:22-23. List each of the characteristics that describe the fruit of the Spirit.

*Additional Thoughts:*

Committing these verses to memory will help you combat negative thoughts and patterns.

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## Recap

### How to overcome a critical spirit:

1. Identify the critical spirit and repent.
2. Ask God to forgive you for it and accept His forgiveness.
3. Rebuke the critical spirit in the name of Jesus.
4. Replace the critical spirit.

A critical spirit is detrimental to the fruit of the Spirit that God desires you to actively live out. Willie shared how a critical spirit can damage your love, joy, peace, being kind, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and even self-control. Besides hurting yourself, being critical also harms your relationships with others and dishonors God.

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## Live It Out

- Be aware of your speech and attitude by asking yourself, “Are my words building others up and glorifying and pleasing God? Am I bringing grace to those hearing my speech?”
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to bring to your attention when your speech is not focused on truth, humility, and goodness.
- Read the Bible and meditate on verses that direct you to use edifying speech.
- Where possible, redirect conversations that are centered on complaining or of a critical nature. If not possible, do not join in with others in negativity, complaining, gossiping, or engaging in any form of corrupt communication.
- Remember that you will be held accountable by God for the careless words you speak.
- Seek the Lord and His Presence. Remember the works that He has done.

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## Salvation through Jesus

If you don't know Jesus as your Lord and Savior, we encourage you to visit [www.anchorpointmedia.org/the-truth](http://www.anchorpointmedia.org/the-truth). There you will discover the truth of who Jesus is and how you can have a relationship with Him.

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## About Willie Dudley

Willie Dudley is Director of the Men's and Marriage Ministries at SBC – Fountain Hills. Prior to his role at SBC, Willie was served as Director of Men's Ministry, taught as a featured pastor, and served as an elder at North Chapel Bible Church in Fountain Hills, Arizona. Willie was also influential in the development of teenagers as they matured into young men while coaching high school football. Willie's heart is to teach sound biblical doctrine in ways that promote relational growth through Christ Jesus.

## About Anchor Point Media

We create Christ-centered videos and material to encourage people to seek the Truth of who Christ is and to grow deeper in their relationships with God.

We partner with Bible scholars and Bible-teaching pastors & leaders who teach biblically-sound doctrine. The teachers we work with have hearts to reach the lost, bring hope to the hopeless, and strengthen relationships with our LORD & Savior.

With God's help, we are actively transforming lives with the Love, Truth, and Hope of Jesus.

Discover more videos from the Overcome series, as well as other series, at [www.anchorpointmedia.org](http://www.anchorpointmedia.org).