

# CRITICAL THINKING IN THE CHURCH

**EXPOSITOR:** Willie A. Alvarenga

**THEME:** Critical Thinking

**TEXT:** Proverbs 23:7

**PURPOSE:** To encourage critical thinking skills in the church, and to show how such is essential to living faithfully in Christ.

## INTRODUCTION:

1. How often do we think about the way we think?
2. There is a great need in the church about critical thinking!
3. Most of the time we train our children in critical thinking! (At least some parents do – 2 Chronicles 22:3 Athaliah gave wicked advice to her son Ahaziah.
4. **2 Timothy 2:7**, “Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.”
  - a. **voέw (noέo)** – To think over a matter with care. To think carefully, to consider well.
5. **Deuteronomy 4:39**, “Therefore know this day, and **consider it in your heart**, that the LORD Himself *is* God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; *there is no other.*”
6. **Proverbs 23:7**, “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he...”
7. **These are passages regarding our thinking!**

## 1. WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING?

### A. Critical thinking is defined as:

- a. The art of analyzing and evaluating thinking with a view to improving it.
- b. The ability to analyze information objectively and make a reasonable judgment.<sup>1</sup>
- c. Making reasoned judgments that are logical and well-thought out. It is a way of thinking in which you don't simply accept all arguments and conclusions you are exposed to, but rather have an attitude involving questioning such arguments and conclusions. It requires wanting to see what evidence is involved to support a particular argument or conclusion.<sup>2</sup> (cf. Acts 17:11).
- d. To think critically means that you will take the time to analyze the matter under consideration, and in the end, you will only draw such conclusions as are warranted by the evidence, that is, logical conclusions.
- e. To think critically means to think logically!

### B. How often do we think about the way we think and act?

- a. There is a great need to spend time thinking about how we can best think!
- b. Children need to learn how to think critically – We actually teach them from a very early age.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.thoughtco.com/critical-thinking-definition-with-examples-2063745>

<sup>2</sup> <https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-critical-thinking-definition-skills-meaning.html>

- c. Things would be such much better in the church and in the world if people knew how to think critically! *Don't you think?*
- d. Now that we know that critical thinking is, let us now examine why critical thinking is essential in our lives.

**C. What are the characteristics of a critical thinker?**

- e. He takes time to think critically before answering.
- f. He questions everything in order to arrive at the logical conclusion.
- g. He reasons correctly about the matter at hand and only draws such conclusions as are warranted by the evidence.
- h. He uses sound arguments to arrive at a correct and valid conclusion. In other words, when you make a statement, you have to back it up with premises, evidences, reasons that support your conclusion.
- i. He investigates as much as he can before arriving at a logical conclusion.
- j. He does not base his conclusions on emotions or bias, but reasons objectively. *He is not partial in his thinking.*
- k. He is willing to spend time searching for truth.
- l. He is humble in admitting when he or she has not reasoned correctly about a particular matter.
- m. He is open to suggestions in order to improve the matter being discussed.
- n. Do we have these characteristics in our lives?

## **2. WHY IS CRITICAL THINKING NECESSARY?**

**A. God commands us to think critically. He has spoken about the subject!**

- a. He wants us to take care of our hearts/thoughts (Proverbs 4:23).
- b. He wants us to think on things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, of virtue, praiseworthy (Philippians 4:8-9).
- c. "Does not the ear *test words*, and the mouth taste its food?" (Job 12:11).
- d. He has given us the supreme example to follow – *His Son, Jesus!* He was a critical thinker, and we can see this by the way he handled various situations throughout his ministry (Matthew 22; Luke 20). *Jesus was the Master Logician, the best critical thinker ever to walk the face of the earth!*
- e. He wants us to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good (1 Thessalonians 5:21). The word "**prove or test**" implies critical thinking. You cannot hold fast to that which is good unless you thought about it!

**B. Critical thinking can help us to be more tactful and wiser in the way we express our thoughts.**

- a. Most of the time we hurt people by the way we speak to them.
- b. Some say, "I just don't beat around the bushes, I say things the way I think them." You can't do this! You cannot say everything you think! *Be wise about it!*
- c. Members visiting another member at the hospital and asking the sick person what is wrong with him or her. Be tactful and wise about how you speak.
- d. *We will speak wisely when we learn how to think critically.*

**C. Critical thinking can help us in the area of evangelism/apologetics:**

- a. Critical thinking is necessary and useful when sharing the Gospel of Christ with others.
  - b. People will present us with arguments to defend their doctrines, which are contrary to what the Bible teaches. We need to know how to help them think critically by showing them the evidence from the Bible.
  - c. Critical thinking will help us to acknowledge the fact that we need to be ready to give an answer (1 Peter 3:15).
  - d. Critical thinking will help us to reason correctly about the fact that people are lost and stand in need of obeying the Gospel of Christ.
- D. Critical thinking can help us to solve problems within the church:**
- a. As long as the church exist in this earth, problems will be present within members.
  - b. Critical thinking can help us to reason correctly about how to handle different situations that may arise within church problems.
  - c. Critical thinking will help us to examine carefully every problem that may arise, and then we will take the time to carefully examine the situation and only arrive at logical solutions that will strengthen the church.
  - d. Diotrephes was causing a lot of problems in the church, but the Apostle John said he would visit the church and resolve the problem in a logical way.
  - e. Critical thinking will help us to avoid problems in the future.
  - f. *"Give a fish to a member, and he will eat for a day; teach that member to fish, and he will eat for the rest of his or her life."*
- E. Critical thinking can help us to live a faithful life in Christ.**
- a. Before sinning against God, we will critically think about counting the cost of our actions (Romans 6:23).
  - b. Faithful critical thinking will help us to obey God's commandments that have the purpose of helping us make it to heaven.
  - c. Critical thinking will help us not to stay home when we can be here to worship God together!
  - d. Critical thinking will help us be more involved in the work of the church.
  - e. Critical thinking can help us to be a blessing to the church!

### **3. HOW DO WE DEVELOP CRITICAL THINKING?**

- A. #1: We must recognize the need for critical thinking.**
- a. Unless we recognize the problem, we will not seek a solution!
  - b. If we are honest, we will all recognize the need for critical thinking!
- B. #2: We must determine in our hearts to seek and develop critical thinking in our lives.**
- a. After we acknowledge the fact that we need critical thinking skills in our lives, then we will move forward into doing something about it!
- C. #3: We must treasure God's Word in our hearts, that is, we must be diligent students of God's Word.**
- a. According to Deuteronomy 4:6, those who hear and practice God's Word will become wise and understanding people.

- b. The more we study, the more knowledge we will have, and such knowledge will help us to know how to live a faithful life in Christ.
- c. Let God's Word dwell in you richly (Colossians 3:16; 2 Peter 3:18).
- D. #4: We must ask God to help us be more careful in the way we think and express our thoughts.**
  - a. We must include in our prayers the need to be more careful in the way we think and act!
  - b. After you pray, then make every possible effort to start living with a view to a daily practice of critical thinking.
- E. #5: We must take the time to study the life of Christ, Paul, and those great men of the Bible that are a great example about critical thinking.**
  - a. Jesus Christ was the greatest critical thinker ever to walk the face of the Earth (Matt 22; Lk 20).
- F. #6: We must keep sin away from our lives.**
  - a. Sin not only separates us from God (Isaiah 59:1-2), makes us slaves (John 8:34; Rom. 6:16, but it will also mess up our thinking.
  - b. God's people in the OT did not think straight because of sinful practices (Jeremiah 6:16).
  - c. Sin will keep you away from thinking logically and critically!
  - d. Therefore, we must take heed to God's exhortations on staying away from sinful practices.
- G. #7: We must acknowledge the blessings critical thinking can bring into our lives.**
- H. We will be better thinkers!
- I. We will become a blessing to the church and our own families!
- J. We will make better decisions in life!
- K. We will help others come to the knowledge of God's truth!
- L. We will live a faithful life in Christ!
- M. Tools recommended for critical thinking:**
  - a. We must train our minds in the art of critical thinking!
  - b. The Bible. Be a diligent student of the Word!
  - c. Logic and the Bible by Thomas B. Warren
  - d. Ascertaining Bible Authority by Roy C. Deaver
  - e. Books that may teach good principles on critical thinking.

## CONCLUSION

1. May God help us to be critical in our thinking, since this will help us to be better in the way we live our Christianity.
2. May we be diligent in our search for critical thinking!