

LESSON 7

ON THE DEFENSIVE?

2 CORINTHIANS 7:2–16



1 Imagine you have to confront an employee you like but who is not performing well. How will you begin your conversation?

2 Imagine you are an employee being confronted by a supervisor, whom you like. What goes through your mind as your boss starts to speak?



Read 2 Corinthians 7:2–16, the chart, “Principles of Confrontation in 2 Corinthians,” and the following notes:

☐ 7:10 ☐ 7:11

3 How did the Corinthians respond to Paul's criticism (7:8, 9)?

4 What effect did Paul's confrontation have (7:8-16)?

5 What is the value of "sorrow" (7:10)?



Much of 2 Corinthians is confrontational. In fact, Paul wrote this letter because a face-to-face confrontation would have been too volatile. But the Corinthian believers had received criticism from Paul before, and Paul had only praise for the way they responded. Despite all their problems, the Corinthians responded with "sorrow" when Paul confronted them. Inevitably, Christians find themselves on the receiving end of criticism or confrontation from a person or group. Whether it is justified or not, we need to receive criticism with humility and a genuine desire to learn from it.

6 Why is it difficult to receive criticism?

7 Why do we get defensive when people criticize us, even when we know they're right?



8 Why do people often try to avoid confrontation?

9 Recall a time when you benefited from criticism. What caused the positive outcome?

10 What is the best way to receive criticism, whether it is deserved or not?

11 How have people come to expect you to react to criticism?

12 What can you do to be defensive to criticism?

13 What criticism have you already received that you can respond to this week?



14 Whom can you thank for their helpful criticism?

A How did Paul feel about the Corinthian believers, despite all their problems (7:2–4)? To whom could you say similar words?

B How did God use Titus (7:6)? How can God use you?

C How did Titus encourage Paul (7:7)? Whom can you encourage? How can you encourage him/her?

MORE
for studying
other themes
in this section