



## Criticizing and Kissing

One thing I know: a person who is correct in their criticism of you, but doesn't care about you as they offer their criticism, has just given you a really good kiss with very bad breath. At that point it is difficult to embrace what has been offered.

I wish I could take credit for this ingenious metaphor, but it goes to my friend and fellow Design For Ministry consultant Noel Santiago. When he said it it rang so true that the image stayed with me for a number of days.

I pass it on to you now as another window into the generous and expansive spirit to which we are called. We are far too easily in touch with what inconveniences us, and far too insensitive to how our words harm others. This is not the posture of God toward us. Neither should it be the posture of the believer toward other humans.

Our breath needs to be sweet when we:

- Write our critique of someone's work.
- Tell someone in person what we think.
- Decide to alter our giving out of protest over an organization's use of resources.
- Use our estate plan to communicate our wishes to our descendants.

A tender kiss that asks for change holds much greater possibility to result in what we desire than does an angry word. Even when that change does not take place, we are left with more friends than enemies. Having made a friend we are in a better position to also introduce them to friendship with God.

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