

Cybercolumn by Jeanie Miley: Talk, action and love_61404

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CYBERCOLUMN: Talk, action & love

By Jeanie Miley

For most of my life, I've been seduced into thinking that critical people are also critical thinkers.

Now, I know that critical people are ... well, they are critical, and just because they have a wide audience or a big vocabulary doesn't mean they are necessarily smarter than anyone else!

I've been (mis)led into believing that people who are really adept at articulating the problem really are concerned about the problem. I've (mis)thought that those who rant and rave about what has gone wrong in the world are the ones who care most about the world. And I have allowed myself to be manipulated and sometimes bullied by folks who made me think that I just couldn't possibly understand the grave and dire outcomes that were just around the corner.

Jeanie Miley

Hopefully, I'm catching on to something that could, in some important and

powerful ways, change my life for the better! I'm waking up to the wonderful reality that anyone can state and re-state the problem, each time getting louder and more dramatic. I'm learning, as well, that zeal comes from the will to control and dominate, but true passion comes from the heart and that the difference in the two is profound.

People who really care about something don't stand around making pronouncements about the problem but are in the middle of things, often quietly going about doing good. People who care about solutions don't have time to listen to the rants about how bad things are, and they are often oblivious to the obstacles that others love to announce, analyze and bemoan.

People who care don't repeat the same dire warnings over and over, but are effectively involved in finding solutions, seeking resolutions and making a difference in the small and large details of everyday life. Critics and complainers, whiners and belly-achers sit around and vent about the smoke in their eyes; problem-solvers figure out what to do about the fire that is causing the smoke!

People who care don't get bogged down in negativism and criticism. They don't have time for mumbling and murmuring, complaining and censoring, and they aren't interested in rumors and gossip. Instead, they get up in the morning and show up for their assignment, making the world a better place, where they are, with whatever they have.

I think a lot about the fact that God so loved the world that he set about enacting a plan that was all about healing, transforming, liberating and empowering those whom he loved. I think about how different things would have been if God just sat on some judge's bench, somewhere in the heavenlies, booming out his criticisms and complaints.

I think a lot about the ways in which God extends love and care to us, even

while we are oblivious to those ways or even running away from that love. I stand amazed before the fact that it is love that changes us, and not criticism and condemnation.

I think a lot, as well, about how I shut down and clam up when all I hear is how bad things are or how wrong I am, and I wonder if other people are like me. I've never, ever gotten "better" under constant carping, but I have been healed and transformed by love.

I know for sure that stating and re-stating a problem does not solve the problem and, in fact, seems to perpetuate and enlarge the problem.

Talk is cheap.

Action is hard.

Love is costly.

I suppose that is why there is so much talk.

Jeanie Miley is an author and columnist and a retreat and workshop leader. She is married to Martus Miley, pastor of River Oaks Baptist Church in Houston, and they have three adult daughters. Got feedback? Write her at Writer2530@aol.com.

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