

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THIS?

What Does the Bible Say About Being Offended?

Luke 17:1-6

Offense is Inevitable

Luke 17:1-4 (KJV) *Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! 2 It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.*

- Jesus said to His disciples it is impossible (inevitable), but offenses *will* come
- The word *offense* comes from the Greek word “skandalon”, where we get our English word “scandal”
 - The word offense means to be ensnared by a trap, to cause to stumble, or be a stumbling block
- The *source* of offense can be:
 - The devil who uses offense to divide
 - The words and actions of people – when people say and do hurtful things
 - Our expectations – when people don’t the way we think they should
- Jesus is acknowledging offenses are inevitable because we live in a fallen world
- Common offenses we may struggle with:
 - Harsh Words or Criticism
 - Broken Trust
 - Unmet Expectations
 - Unfair Treatment
 - Church Hurts
 - Family Conflicts
 - Social Media & Culture
- Jesus warns about being the person that causes others to stumble or be trapped by offense; **“better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.”**
 - This shows that leading others into sin or discouragement carries grave spiritual consequences
- The little ones Jesus is concerned about are:
 - New believers
 - Children and youth
 - Struggling or discouraged believers
 - Those seeking God or recovering from past hurt
- The spirit of offense is one of Satan’s most effective traps.
- What’s the impact of offense?

What Happens When I’m Offended?

Proverbs 18:19 (KJV) *A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.*

- Offenses not only hurt people, it hurts relationships and makes reconciliations difficult
- **“A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city”**

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- When someone we care about is hurt or offended, restoring the relationship is extremely difficult, often harder than conquering a fortified city.
- **“Their contentions are like the bars of a castle”**
 - Once offended, people often protect themselves with walls—emotionally and spiritually.
 - Offense triggers emotional and spiritual defenses.
- The “walls” we build are ways to protect ourselves from being hurt again, but they often trap us instead of helping us.
- Some common ways we build walls include:
 - Emotional Withdrawal
 - Bitterness and Resentment
 - Unforgiveness
 - Critical or Defensive Attitude
 - Isolation
 - Projection or Blame
- Once walls are built, reconciliation becomes hard because:
 - Trust Is Broken
 - Emotions Are Strong
 - Fear of Being Hurt Again
 - Pride or Ego
 - Repeated Offenses
 - Spiritual Roots
- Offense not only hurts the relationship, but it hinders ministry, fellowship, and spiritual growth.
- Walls are designed to protect us from being hurt again, but they become prisons when offense is not dealt with
- **Luke 17:3–4** teaches us to confront gently, forgive repeatedly, and rely on God's strength to restore relationships.

Confront, Forgive and Forgive and Forgive and

[3] Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. [4] And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

- Jesus shifts focus: not only must we avoid *causing offense*, we must also learn how to handle *being offended*
- Jesus tells the disciples to beware, be watchful, be alert
- Jesus says, take heed to yourselves; watch your *own* heart.
 - Don't hold grudges.
- We must realize although a person has offended us, they are still a brother/sister in Christ; they are still connected to us
- The text tells us to *rebuke* them, which means to confront the issue, but it is done with *love* and *compassion* for the person ***Ephesians 4:15 (KJV) “But speaking the truth in love, ...”***

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- It does not mean you have license to “go off” on them because you are offended
- Before you confront anyone remember:
 1. Prayer is essential before you confront a person
 2. Confront the issue without being judgmental
 3. Remind yourself as you confront others, you’ve offended people in the past, too
- Going directly to the person with the issue is designed to keep the circle of knowledge about the offense very small
- Jesus says if they *repent*, forgive them; case closed
 - When the person who offended you repents, you must forgive them
- You are also freed from trap of unforgiveness, resentment and bitterness
- The objective is to *restore* the relationship
- We are to forgive the person even if they sin against us seven times in a day
- We may feel the person is not being sincere, but Jesus still commands us to forgive

Faith to Forgive

5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. 6 And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

- As soon as the disciples heard Jesus’ teaching on forgiveness, they said, “Lord, Increase our faith!”
- The disciples realized forgiving like Jesus commanded was *humanly impossible*
 - Forgiveness is not natural, it is supernatural.
- But Jesus says all you need is faith the size of a mustard seed
- The smallest amount of genuine faith can do the impossible
- Jesus says, if you have genuine faith, you can say to a sycamine tree be plucked up by the root and be planted by the sea, and it shall obey you
- Jesus used the sycamine tree as an illustration of unforgiveness because of its long life (600 years or more), deep roots, its bitter fruit, and because it’s wood was used to make caskets
- But you must have the faith to *speak to* the spirit of offense
- You have to *speak to* your emotions or they will speak *for you*
- Jesus wants us to take every wrong attitude, belief, feelings we have and cast them into the sea
 - Why the sea?
 - The sea is made of salt water, salt water will not allow plants to grow, it would kill the roots
- Jesus said by faith we can cast our sycamine tree of offense and unforgiveness into the sea and it would obey us
- By faith, every attitude, feeling of resentment, offense and unforgiveness has died in the sea never to return so that you can be free to live the life God has called you to live

Breaking Free from Offense

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1. Recognize you're in a trap and you took the bait
2. Go directly to the person and work things out **Matthew 18:15 (KJV)** *Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*
3. Forgive
4. Pray for those that have offended you
5. Choose not to be offended **Psalm 119:165 (KJV)** *Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.*
 - **Anchor yourself in Scripture:** Regularly meditate on God's Word to develop stability.
 - **Guard your heart:** Offense cannot take root if your identity is in Christ, not in what others do or say.
 - **Respond with grace:** Even when hurt, your reaction is shaped by God's Word, not emotions.
 - **Teach others:** Encourage those around you to build resilience against offense through Scripture.
- Offense is inevitable, but through forgiveness and faith, we can break free and live in relational and spiritual freedom