

Refusing to be Offended

“Great peace have they who love your law, nothing shall offend them or make them stumble.” Psalms 119:165 (AMP)

“Hatred stirs up quarrels, but love covers all offenses.” Proverbs 10:12 (NLB)

We, as brothers and sisters in Christ, can enforce a victory over Satan in our relationships with each other as we practice the scriptures telling us not to take offense.

Satan is trying hard to cause conflict between members of the human race, especially Christians. He fuels disagreements and misunderstandings. He distorts our interpretation of the actions and words of others. He puts inflammatory thoughts in our minds and then clouds our hearing and vision.

Many of us have dealt with major issues of unforgiveness and hurt feelings. This happens when we let an offense take root in our spirit. The pamphlet entitled Forgiving Others (Women's Ministries - Southland Christian Church) addresses this in detail, giving suggested steps to follow when forgiving others.

A more Godly approach is to refuse the offense when it first knocks on the door of our spirit. We are all in the fallen line of Adam and are born with sin in our nature. We are all the products of wounded, imperfect family lines, imperfect life histories, imperfect friends and imperfect relationships. We are all flawed! In addition we all have an enemy, Satan, roaring around like a lion, seeking those whom he can devour. I Peter 5:8 If we can get a clear, firm vision of Satan as the force behind our challenges with others we will be ready to walk away in victory as opportunities to take offense occur.

God is not through perfecting any of us until we exit this world. We are positionally made perfect at salvation when our “spirit” man is made alive in Christ. This has to be worked into our actions and behaviors as we are trained to recognize the difference between right and wrong and how to choose the right action. Hebrews 5:14 We need to pray for the ability to look at others through their set of wounds and immaturity so that we do not let offenses take root. *“See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.”* Hebrews 12:15 (NIV) As we see the arrow being shot at us by Satan we need to hold up our shield of faith and practice discerning Satan as the source behind the situation. We repel the attack when we speak the Word of God admonishing us not to take offense. We resist the temptation to see the problem as the person or people involved and so avoid getting into a fleshly “word or feeling” battle.

Ephesians 6:12 (NLB) states, *“For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood; but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world; against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world and against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms.”* We must recognize our enemy, Satan, and his appeal to our fleshly nature. ***We do not stay focused on Satan.*** We call to mind Colossians 2:15 (NLB) in speaking of Christ's victory on the cross. *“In this way, God disarmed the evil rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross of Christ.”* The NIV refers to the victory as *“Triumphing over them by the cross.”* We **turn to focus on Jesus** and the joy and rewards of living by His Kingdom's standards and not our fleshly nature.

Romans 8:37 (NIV) states *“No, in all these things (troubles) we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”* We encourage ourselves with Romans 8:31b. *“If God is for us, who can be against us?”* and II Corinthians 10:3-4 (NLB) *“We are human but, don't wage war with human plans and methods. We use God's mighty weapons, not mere worldly weapons, to knock down the Devil's strongholds.”*

We grow in our Christian life by encountering challenges. We meet them in the power of the Holy Spirit and with the love of the Father stretched forth from our heart to others. We yield to the crucifying (stripping off) of our fleshly nature. We choose to walk in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit and not by our natural (soulish) inclinations.

It will help us choose to obey scripture if we realize Satan is trying to poison our walk with the heavenly Father through our battles with others. This can lead to the bitterness that is our deadly enemy as roots start to grow that affect us spiritually, physically, mentally and emotionally. When we recognize the source of the temptation to embrace offense we can deal Satan a death blow in that situation. We can refuse to act on the temptation to be offended.

The practical working out of this does not mean we need to deny our feelings or emotions. We take those to the Lord in prayer after the immediate challenge to take offense is dealt with.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VICTORY

- 1.) We remind ourselves we have an enemy fueling the offense. We send up a prayer for help.
- 2.) We see the person involved through eyes of mercy and grace. We remind ourselves that none of us are perfect.
- 3.) We remember the scriptural instruction not to take offense and we forgive the person/persons involved by an act of our will.
- 4.) We draw on the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit to let the offense fall to the ground.
- 5.) We ask the Father to bless the person, touch them, meet their needs, heal their hurts and wounds. We pray for prosperity of spirit, soul, and body for the person involved.

6.) We go to our heavenly Father after the situation is over with any wounds that have been inflicted on us. We allow His healing to flow over us.

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." Ephesians 4:29-32 (NIV)

Our God shall cause us to triumph in Christ Jesus as we choose to call on the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit and let the offense find no lodging in our spirits. II Corinthians 2:14

There may be reoccurring instances that will have to be dealt with openly with the person involved. It should always be done with love and gentleness, without anger or malice. Seek God's wisdom and guidance first.

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