

## The Bait of Satan - #1

### Luke 17 - False Teaching, Forgiveness, Faith and Service

*The 1st aspect of discipleship* here is expressed in a warning not to be a cause of sin (vs 1-3).

- It is inevitable that sin will come through false teaching.
- But woe to that person who brings it.
- **The offense** Jesus discusses here is probably serious sin that **causes stumbling and a fall from faith**.

*So the warning addresses teaching* that leads to a loss of faith and a life of sin. God's concern for his children is seen in Jesus' characterization of them as **little ones**.

In fact, *those who lead others into error* are at risk before God.

### Luke 17:1 - Jesus Warns of Offenses

**17** Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe *to him* through whom they do come!

- **Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come!!!!**

It is one of the enemy's most deadly and deceptive traps.

- It imprisons countless Christians,
- Severs relationships and widens the existing breaches between us.

**It is the trap of offense**

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### Psalm 55:12-14 NKJV - David laments,

12 "For it is not an enemy who reproaches me; then I could bear it. Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me; then I could hide from him.

13 **But it was you, a man my equal, my companion and my acquaintance.**

14 We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in the throng."

### Nothing hurts more than a wound from a friend

- At times friends may need to lovingly confront you in order to help you.
- But **Betrayal** truly hurts!
- **Betrayal** by a friend caused **David great anguish...**
- **Don't betray those you love.**

**They are those whom** we sit with and sing alongside, or perhaps it is the one who is delivering the sermon.

- We **spend** holidays, **attend** social functions, and **share** offices with them.
- Or **perhaps it is closer**.
- We grow up with, confided in, and sleep next to them.
- **The closer the relationship**, the more **severe** the offense!
- You find the greatest hatred among people who were **once close**.

### **Selfishness** reigns in our society

- Men and women today look out for themselves to the **neglect and hurt of those around them**.
- This should **not** surprise us.

**The Bible is very clear** that in the last days men will be ***“lovers of themselves”***

### Difficult times for Christian service;

**2 Timothy 3:1-2 NIV** – But know this, that **in the last days** perilous times will come: <sup>2</sup> **For men will be lovers of** themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

**We expect this in unbelievers, but Paul was not referring to those outside the church.**

- He was talking about **those within it**.
- **Many** are wounded, hurt, and bitter.
- **They are offended!!!!**
- But **they do not realize** that they have **fallen into Satan's trap**.

Is it **our** fault?????

**Jesus made it very clear** that it is impossible to live in this world and not have the opportunity to **become offended**.

- Yet most Christians are *shocked, bewildered, and amazed* when it happens.
- We believe *we are the only ones* who have been *wronged*.
- This response leaves us **vulnerable** to a ***root of bitterness***.

Paul's reference to the "*last days*" reveals his sense of urgency.

- **Remember *you represent Christ!***
- **Guard** your heart, mind, and words.

We must be ***prepared and armed*** for offenses, because our response **determines our future**.

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### **The Deceptive Trap**

The Greek word for "offend" in Luke 17:1 comes from the word skandalon.

This word originally referred to the part of the trap to ***which the bait was attached***.

- Hence the word signifies **laying a trap** in someone's way.
- In *the New Testament* it often describes an entrapment used by the enemy.
- **Offense is a tool of the Devil** to bring people into captivity.

**2 Timothy 2:24-26 NKJV - Paul instructed Timothy** - <sup>24</sup> And a servant of the Lord **must not quarrel** but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, <sup>25</sup> in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, <sup>26</sup> and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.

Those who are in **quarrels or opposition** fall into a trap and are held prisoner to do the devil's will.

- Even more alarming, they're unaware of their captivity!
- Like the prodigal they must ***come to themselves by awakening*** to their true condition.

They **do not realize** that they are spewing out bitter waters rather than pure.

**James 3:9-11 NKJV** – <sup>9</sup> With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness. <sup>10</sup> Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. <sup>11</sup> **Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?**

- Our own ***contradictory speech*** often puzzles us!
- **Sometimes** our words are good and pleasing to God,
- But at **other times** they are hurtful and destructive.
- **The tongue** is a constant reminder of our sinful nature.

***When a person is deceived, they believe they are right even though they are not.***

No matter what the scenario is,

**We can divide all offended people into two major categories:**

- Those **who have been** treated unjustly
- Those **who believe they have been** treated unjustly.

**People in the second category believe** with all their hearts that they have been wronged.

- Often their conclusions are drawn from **inaccurate information**.
  - Or their information is accurate, but **their conclusion is distorted**.
  - Either way **they hurt**, and their **understanding is darkened**.
  - **They judge by assumption, appearance, and hearsay**.
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### **The Heart’s True Condition**

One way **the enemy** keeps a person in an offended state is **to keep the offense hidden**, cloaked with pride.

- **Pride will keep you from admitting your true condition**

**Pride keeps you from dealing with truth**

- It **distorts** your vision.
- You **never change** when you think everything is fine.
- **Pride hardens your heart** and dims the eyes of **your understanding**.

**It keeps you from the change of heart—repentance—which will set you free...**

**2 Timothy 2:24-26 NKJV** - And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, <sup>25</sup> in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, <sup>26</sup> and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.

### **Pride causes you to view yourself as a victim**

- Your attitude becomes, “I was mistreated and misjudged -
- Therefore I am justified in my behavior.”
- Because you believe you are innocent and falsely accused -
- **You hold back forgiveness.**

Though your true heart condition is hidden from you - It is **not** hidden from God.

- Just because you were mistreated, you do not have permission to hold on to an offense.
  - **Two wrongs do not make a right!**
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### **The Cure**

In the book of Revelation Jesus addressed the church of Laodicea by first telling them how they saw themselves as - - -

- Rich, wealthy, and having need of nothing
- Then by exposing their true condition—
- **“wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked”** (Revelation 3:14-20).
- They had mistaken their financial strength for spiritual strength.
- **Pride hid their true condition.**

Jesus told the Laodiceans how to get out of their deception:

- To buy God's gold and to see their true condition.
- Jesus' first instruction for **breaking free from deception** –
- Was to **“buy from Me gold refined in the fire”** (Revelation 3:18).

Refined gold is soft and pliable -

- Free from corrosion or other substances.
- It is **when gold is mixed** with other metals (copper, iron, nickel, and so on) **that it becomes hard, less pliable, and more corrosive.**
- This mixture is called **an alloy.**

**The higher the percentage of foreign metals, the harder the gold becomes.**  
Immediately we see the parallel:

***A pure heart is like pure gold*—soft, tender, and pliable.**

**Hebrews 3:13 states, that *hearts are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin!***

**If we do not deal with an offense –**

**It will produce more fruit of sin, such as bitterness, anger, and resentment.**

- This added substance **hardens our hearts** just as alloys harden gold.
- **This reduces or removes tenderness, creating a loss of sensitivity.**
- We are **hindered in our ability** to hear God's voice.
- Our accuracy to see is **darkened**.
- **This is a perfect setting for deception.**

**The first step in refining gold is grinding it into powder.**

- **Then mixing it** with a substance called flux.
- Then the mixture is placed in a furnace and **melted by intense heat**.
- The alloys and impurities are drawn to the flux and rise to the surface.
- **The gold** (which is heavier) remains at the bottom.
- **The impurities** (such as copper, iron, and zinc, combined with flux) is then removed, yielding a pure metal.

**Now look at what God says: Isaiah 48:10 NKJV - <sup>10</sup> Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.**

- ***When your life becomes difficult, does complaining come naturally???***
- ***This verse shows us plainly that God test's us in the "furnace of affliction."***
- ***Without testing, we would never learn to trust God, nor would we grow.***

**And again: 1 Peter 1:6-7 NKJV - <sup>6</sup> In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, <sup>7</sup> that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, **though it is tested by fire**, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,**

- Peter mentions **trials and suffering** several times in this letter.
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***CLOSE: God refines*** with afflictions, trials, and tribulations, the heat of which separates impurities such as unforgiveness, strife, bitterness, anger, envy, and so forth from the nature of God in our lives.

Sin easily hides where there is no heat of trials and afflictions.

- All believers face such trials when they let their light shine into darkness...
- We must ***accept trials as part of the refining process*** it burns up impurities.
- Under the heat of trials, however, the ***impurities surface***.

### **See Your True Condition**

***Jesus said our ability to see correctly*** is another key to being freed from deception.

- Often when we are offended we ***see ourselves as victims!!!***
- And ***we blame*** those who have hurt us.
- ***We justify our*** bitterness, unforgiveness, anger, envy, and resentment ***as they surface***.

Sometimes we even resent those who remind us of others who have hurt us.

### **PRAISE TEAM:**

**Revelation 3:18** - For this reason Jesus counseled, ***“Anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see”***.

- ***See what? Your true condition!!!! SEE THE TRUTH!!!!***
- Christ was showing the Laodiceans that ***true value is not in material possessions*** but in a right relationship with God.
- You’ll only repent when you stop blaming other people.

When we blame others and defend our own position, we are blind.

- We struggle to remove the speck out of our brother’s eye while there is a log in ours.
- It is ***the revelation of truth*** that brings freedom to us.
- ***When*** the Spirit of God shows us our sin,
- He always does it in such a way that ***it seems separate*** from us.
- This brings ***conviction, not condemnation***.