

The Bait of Satan #4

Week 1 *It imprisons countless Christians, severs relationships and widens the existing breaches between us. It is the trap of offense.*

Week 2 *We must come to the place where we trust God and not flesh. Many give lip service to God as their source, yet they live as orphans. They take their own lives in their hands while they confess with their mouths, "He is my lord and God."*

Week 3 If you've been mistreated, **do you have the right to be offended?**

- To become **offended** would only **fulfill the enemy's purpose** of getting you out of **the will of God**.
 - **We must remember** that **nothing** can come against us **without the Lord's knowledge** of it before it ever happens.
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Week 4 Luke 17:1 - Jesus Warns of **Offenses** - Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no **offenses** (stumbling Blocks) should come, but woe to **him** through whom they do come!

1 Samuel 24:6-7 NKJV - ⁶ And he said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he *is* the anointed of the Lord."

⁷ So David restrained his servants with *these* words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And Saul got up from the cave and went on *his* way.

How Spiritual **Vagabonds** are born

(Vagabond - A person who wanders from place to place without a home or job)

In **I Samuel chapter 24**, we see how

David was mistreated by the man he had hoped would be his father.

- David kept trying to understand **where he had gone wrong**.
- What had he done **to turn Saul's heart against him**, and **how could he win it back**?
- He proved his loyalty by **sparing Saul's life** even though **Saul aggressively pursued his**.

1 Samuel 24:9-11 - NKJV ⁹ And David said to Saul: “Why do you listen to the words of men who say, ‘Indeed **David seeks your harm**’?”

¹⁰ Look, this day your eyes have seen that the Lord delivered you today into my hand in the cave, and someone urged me to kill you. But *my eye* spared you, and I said, ‘***I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord’s anointed.***’

¹¹ Moreover, my father, see! Yes, see the corner of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the corner of your robe, and did not kill you, know and ***see that there is neither evil nor rebellion in my hand, and I have not sinned against you.*** Yet you hunt my life to take it.

- He cried out to Saul with his head bowed to the ground, saying,
- “***See that there is neither evil nor rebellion in my hand, and I have not sinned against you.***” (1 Sam. 24:11)

Once David knew he had shown his loyalty to his leader, his mind was eased.

Later he learned more devastating news:

- Saul still desired to destroy him.
- David refused to raise a hand against the one who sought to take his life,
- Though God had put the army to sleep and had given him a companion who pleaded for permission to kill Saul.
- David somehow sensed that this sleeping army served another purpose—the testing of his very heart.

God wanted to see whether David would kill to establish his kingdom, after the order of Saul, or allow God to establish his throne in righteousness forever.

Romans 12:19 NKJV - ¹⁹ Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.

- It is righteous for God to avenge His servants.
- It is unrighteous for God’s servants to avenge themselves.
- Saul was a man who avenged himself.
- He chased **David, a man of honor**, for fourteen years and murdered the priests and their families.

As David stood over the sleeping Saul, he faced an important test.

- It would reveal whether David still had the noble heart of a shepherd
- Or the insecurity of another Saul.
- **Would he remain a man after God's heart?**

Initially it is so much easier when we take matters into our own hands, rather than waiting on a righteous God.

- **God tests His servants with obedience.**
- ***He deliberately places us in situations* where the standards of religion and society would appear to justify our actions.**
- ***He may even allow others, especially those close to us, to encourage us to protect ourselves.***

We may even think we would be noble and protect others by avenging ourselves.

- But **this is not God's way.**
 - It is the way of the world's wisdom.
 - It is **earthly and fleshly.**
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How Can God Use Corrupt Leaders

Many people ask, "Why does God put people under leaders who make serious mistakes and even some that are wicked?"

Look at **the childhood of Samuel (1 Samuel 2-5).**

God, not the devil, was the One who put this young man under the authority of a corrupt priest named Eli and his wicked sons, **Hophni and Phinehas,** who were priests as well.

- These men were **very wicked.**
- They took offerings by manipulation and force
- They **committed fornication** with the women in the church.

Can you imagine if you were serving a minister who lived this kind of life?

- A minister who was so insensitive to the things of the Spirit!
- So fleshly that he was grossly overweight.
- So **compromising** he did nothing about his sons.
- **Whom he had appointed as leaders,** who were committing fornication right in the church.

Most Christians today would be offended and search for another church

- Telling others of the **wicked lifestyle** of their **former pastor and his leaders**.

In the midst of such corruption, I love the report of **what young Samuel did**:

1 Samuel 3:1 - "Now the boy Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli"

But corruption took its toll: "And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation"

God seemed distant to the entire Hebrew community.

- The lamp of God was about to go out in the temple of the Lord.
- Yet did **Samuel** go look for another place to worship?
- Did he go to the elders **to expose the wickedness** of Eli and his sons?
- Did he form a committee **to put Eli and his sons out** of the pastorate?
- **No he ministered to the Lord!**

God had placed Samuel there, and **he was not responsible** for the behavior of Eli or his sons.

- He was put under them **not to judge them**, but **to serve them**.
- He knew Eli was God's servant, **not his**.
- He knew that **God was quite capable** of dealing with His own.

Children do not correct fathers.

- But it is the duty of fathers to **train and correct** the children.
- We are to **deal with and confront** those whom **God has given us** to train.
- This is our responsibility.
- Those on our own level **we are to encourage** and **exhort** as brothers.

But in this lesson we are dealing with our response to those in authority over us.

Samuel served God's appointed minister the best he could, without the pressure to judge him or correct him.

The only time Samuel spoke a word of correction was when Eli came to Samuel and asked him what prophecy God had given him the night before.

But even then *it was not a word of correction* from Samuel, *but from God*.
If more people would *get hold of this truth*, our churches would be different.

Churches Aren't Cafeterias

Today men and women leave churches - if they *see something wrong* in the leadership.

- Perhaps it is the way the pastor takes offerings.
- Maybe it is the way the money is spent.
- If they don't like what the pastor preaches, they leave.
- He is either not approachable, or he is too familiar.
- **This list doesn't end.**
- **Rather than face the difficulties and maintain hope -**
- **They run to where there appears to be no conflict.**

Let's face it: Jesus is the only perfect pastor.

So why do we run from difficulties instead of facing them and working through them?

- When we *don't hit these conflicts head on*, we usually *leave offended*.
We then *go from church to church* looking for a place *with flawless leadership*.

Most do not leave this way.

Many think churches are like cafeterias:

- They can pick and choose what they like!
- They feel the freedom to stay as long as there are no problems.

But this does not agree at all with *what the Bible teaches*.

- **You are not the one who chooses where you go to church.**
- **God does!**

The Bible does not say, "God has set the members, each one of them in the body *just as they please*" Rather it says,

1 Cor. 12:18 NKJV - ¹⁸ But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body *just as He pleased*.

Remember that, ***if you're in the place where God wants you, the devil will try to offend you*** to get you out.

- He wants to uproot men and women -
- From the place **where God plants them.**
- If he can get you out, **he has been successful.**
- **If you will not budge, even in the midst of great conflict -**
- **You will spoil his plans.**

The Critical Deception

Offended people react to the situation and do things that appear right even though God does not inspire them. We are not called to react but to act.

If we are obedient to God and have sought Him, and He is not speaking, **then do you know what the answer is????**

He is probably saying, ***"Stay right where you are. Don't change a thing."***

God puts us in these very uncomfortable situations to mature, refine, and strengthen, not to destroy us!

The Planted Flourish

Psalm 92:13 NKJV - Those who are planted in the house of the Lord Shall flourish in the courts of our God.

Notice that those who flourish are "planted" in the house of the Lord.

- What happens to ***a plant if you transplant it every three weeks?***
- **Most of you know** that its root system will diminish –
- **It will not blossom or prosper.**
- **If you keep transplanting it, the plant will die of shock?**

Many people go from church to church, ministry team to ministry team, trying to develop their ministry.

If they don't agree with the way something is done, they are offended and go.

- They then leave, ***blaming*** the leadership.
- They are ***blind*** to any of ***their own character flaws***
- ***They do not realize God wanted to refine and mature them***
- ***Through the pressure*** they were under.

Once you leave the place God has chosen for you, your root system begins to dwarf.

- ***The next time it will be easier for you to flee from adversity -***
- Because you have been careful ***not to root yourself*** deeply.
- You end up coming to the place where ***you have little or no strength***
- To endure ***hardship or persecution***.

You then become a spiritual vagabond

- ***Wandering*** from place to place
- ***Suspicious and afraid*** that ***others will mistreat you***.
- ***Crippled and hindered*** in ***your ability to produce*** true spiritual fruit,
- You struggle in ***a self-centered life*** -
- ***Eating the remains*** of ***the fruit of others***.

CLOSE:

Offended Christians also cut off their own ability to produce fruit.

Jesus compared the heart with soil in the parable of the sower.

Just as Cain's fields were barren, ***the soil of an offended heart is barren***,

- ***Poisoned by bitterness***.
- ***Offended people*** still may experience
- ***Miracles, words of utterance, strong preaching and healing in their lives***.

But these are ***gifts of the Spirit***, ***not fruits***.

- We will be judged ***according to fruit***, ***not gifting***.
- ***A gift is given***.
- ***Fruit is cultivated***.

Notice that God said Cain would become a fugitive and a vagabond as a result of his actions.

There are numerous spiritual fugitives and vagabonds in our churches today.

- Their gifts of singing, preaching, prophesying are not received by the leadership in their previous church, so off they go.
- They are running aimlessly and carry an offense, looking for that perfect church that will receive their gift and heal their hurts.

They feel beat up and persecuted.

- They feel as if they are modern-day Jeremiahs.
- It is “just them and God,” with everyone else out to get them.
- They become **un-teachable**.
- They get a persecution complex: “**Everyone is out to get me.**”

They comfort themselves that they are just a persecuted saint of God.

They are suspicious of everyone.

PRAISE TEAM:

God never created us to live separately and independently of each other.

He likes it when His children care for and nurture each other.

He is frustrated when we sulk and feel sorry for ourselves, making everyone else responsible for our happiness.

He wants us to be active members of the family.

He wants us to get our life from Him.

An isolated person seeks only his own desire, not God's.

He receives no counsel and sets himself up for deception.