

## The Bait of Satan #5

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!

**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 lord."*

**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.

**Week 4** *Offended Christians also cut off their own ability to produce fruit. 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.*

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1 Peter 2:6-8 NKJV –

6 "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."

7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,"

8 and "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

Today, the meaning of the word believe has been weakened.

- In the eyes of most it has become a mere acknowledgment of a certain fact.
- To many it has nothing to do with obedience.
- But in the passage above, the words believe and disobedient are represented as opposites.

**John 3:16 NKJV** – For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes** in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

**As a result** of the way we view the word **believe**, many think that all they are required to do is **believe** that Jesus existed and died on Calvary, and **they are in good standing with God.**

- The word, **believe**, has more meaning in the scriptures than acknowledging existence of or just mentally assenting to a fact.
- Remaining true to the context of the verse above, we can say that the main element of **believing is obedience.**

**We could read it this way:**

- ***“Therefore, to you who obey, He is precious;***
- ***But to those who are disobedient -***
- ***The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone***
- ***And A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.***

***It is not difficult to obey*** when you know the character and love of the one to whom you are submitting.

- **Love is the bottom line** in our relationship with the Lord—
- **Not** love of principles or teachings
- But **love** for the Person of Jesus Christ.
- If that love is **not firmly in place** –
- ***We are susceptible to offense and stumbling.***

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### **Jesus and Offenses**

**In Sunday school**, Jesus is often presented as the shepherd carrying the lost lamb on His shoulders back to the fold.

- Or perhaps **He had His arms around** the little children while blessing them or was smiling and saying, **“I love you.”**
- ***These accounts are all true***, but they **do not** give the whole picture.
- ***This same Jesus denounced the Pharisees for their self-righteousness:***

**Matthew 23:33 NKJV - *Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?***

**John 2:13-22** - He turned over the tables of the money changers in the temple and ran them out.

**Luke 9:59-60 NKJV –**

<sup>59</sup> Then He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.”

- **He told the man who wanted to bury his father before following Him -**  
<sup>60</sup> **Jesus said to him**, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.”

A close look at the ministry of Jesus reveals a man who **offended many** while He ministered. **Let’s look at a few examples.**

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### **Jesus Offended the Pharisees**

On many occasions **Jesus confronted and offended** these leaders. ***Because they were offended***, they sent Him to the cross. They hated Him.

**But Jesus loved them enough to speak the truth: Matthew 15:7-9 NKJV**

<sup>7</sup> Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

<sup>8</sup> ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with *their* lips, But their heart is far from Me.

<sup>9</sup> And in vain they worship Me, Teaching *as* doctrines the commandments of men.’ ”

- This statement **offended** them.

***Notice what Jesus’ disciples asked Him immediately afterward: Matt. 15:12 -***

***Then His disciples came and said to Him, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?”***

**Matt. 15:13-14 –** **13 *But He answered and said,*** Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. **14** Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.

**Jesus showed that offenses will actually purge those who are not truly planted by His Father.**

Some people may join churches or ministry teams but ***have not been*** sent by God or ***are not of God***.

- ***The offense*** that comes when truth is preached **reveals their true motives** and causes them to uproot themselves.

There have been many cases in which ***pastors grieve*** over people who have left –

- Whether from the staff or the congregation.
- In most instances those people were upset because truth was preached
- And ***it confronted their lifestyles***.

For pastors to hold on to everyone who comes through their doors, **they will eventually have to compromise truth**.

If you preach the truth,

- You will offend people, and **they will be uprooted and leave**.
- **Do not grieve over them** –
- **But** rather continue to feed and nurture **those God has sent you**.

Some leaders avoid confrontation, afraid of losing people.

- Some are especially ***hesitant because those who need confronting*** are the big givers or influential in the church or community.
  - Others are afraid of ***hurting the feelings*** of someone who may have been with them a long time.
  - As a result ***the pastors lose the God-given authority*** to protect and feed the sheep entrusted to them.
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### Jesus Offended Those of His Own Hometown

Jesus had come to His own hometown to minister.

But ***He was unable*** to bring them the liberty and healing He had brought to so many others. **Look at what they said:**

**Matthew 13:55-57 NKJV -**

<sup>55</sup> Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?

<sup>56</sup> And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this *Man* get all these things?" <sup>57</sup> So they were offended at Him. **But Jesus said to them,** "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house."

- **Jesus didn't compromise truth** in order to keep them from being **offended**.
  - **The townspeople were so angry** that **they tried to kill Him** by pushing Him off a cliff (Luke 4:28-30).
  - Even when **His life was in danger** he continued to **to speak the truth**.
  - How **we need more men and women like that today!**
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### Jesus Offended His Own Staff

#### John 6:60-61 NKJV - Many Disciples Turn Away

<sup>60</sup> Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this*, said, "This is a hard (or difficult) saying; who can understand it?"

<sup>61</sup> When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained (grumbled) about this, He said to them, "**Does this offend you?** (Make you stumble)

**John 6:66** –

From that *time* **many of His disciples went back** and **walked with Him no more**.

- Things were **already tough enough** as it was.
  - The **religious leaders** were **plotting His death**.
  - His own **hometown** **rejected Him**.
  - **His family** thought He was **out of His mind**.
  - **To add more pressure**, many of **His own staff members left offended**.
  - But **Jesus still did not compromise**.
  - He told those who were left, **they were also free to go** if they wanted to.
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### Jesus Offended John the Baptist

#### Luke 7:18-19 -

Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things. And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to Jesus, saying, "**Are you the coming one, or do we look for another?**"

**Why is he asking, “Is Jesus the Messiah, or do we look for another?”**

**Put yourself in his place.**

- You have been the man on the cutting edge of what God is doing.
- Multitudes upon multitudes of people have received ministry from you.
- You have the most talked about outreach ministry in the nation.
- You have **lived a life of self-denial.**
- You **haven’t married** in order to maximize the full potential of your call.
- You have ***lived in the desert*** eating locusts and wild honey and fasted often.
- You have ***fought the Pharisees*** and been accused of demon possession.
- ***Your whole life is spent*** preparing the way for this **coming Messiah.**

**Now you’re in prison.**

- You have been **locked up** for quite some time.
- Very few people are coming **to visit** you –
- Because the attention of the people you prepared is now **turned to Jesus.**
- Even your own disciples have joined this man.

**Only a few are left to serve you.**

- ***When they come to see you,*** they bring stories of how this man and His disciples live a very different life from yours.
- They eat and drink ***with tax collectors and sinners.***
- They **break the Sabbath** and **don’t even fast.**

**The temptation to become offended** grows greater the longer you’re in prison.

- **This man** for whom I have spent my life preparing the way for –
- **Has not** even come and visited me in jail!
- **How can this be?**
- ***If*** He is the Messiah, **why doesn’t He** get me out of this prison?
- **I’ve done no wrong.**”

**So you send two of your faithful disciples to question Jesus.**

- **“Are you the coming one, or do we look for another?”**

**Let’s look at Jesus response to John:**

### **Luke 7:21-23 NKJV -**

And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight. Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them. ***And blessed is he who is not offended because of me.***"

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### **CLOSE:**

#### **Offense without Apology**

Even if you are trained in many of God's ways, as John was, ***you are still likely to have an opportunity to be offended with Jesus.***

***If you truly love and believe on Him, you will fight to stay free from offense, realizing His ways are always higher than yours.***

**Some will not understand you as you move with the Spirit.**

- Don't allow their unpleasant response to deter you -
- From what you know in your heart is true.
- Don't abort the flow of the Spirit for the desires of men.

### **PRAISE TEAM**

***When you live for the will of God, you will not fulfill the desires of men.***

- As a result, you will suffer in the flesh.
- Jesus suffered His greatest opposition from the religious leaders.

If anyone challenges the truth of the gospel, ***it is the time to be offensive without apology.***

We must determine in our hearts that **we will obey the Spirit of God** no matter what the cost.

**Then we will not have to make the choice under pressure because it will have been made.**

***Jesus offended some people by obeying his father, but he never caused an offense in order to assert his own rights.***