

The Bait of Satan - #6

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.*

Week 5 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.

- *If you truly love and believe on Him, you will fight to stay free from offense, realizing His ways are always higher than yours.*
- *Jesus offended some people by obeying his father, but he never caused an offense in order to assert his own rights.*

Escaping the Trap—Revenge

Acts 24:16 NKJV - *This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.*

KJV - And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void to offense toward God, and toward men.

The Greek word in Acts 24:16 for exercise is askeo.

- Vine's Expository Dictionary defines exercise as "to take pains, endeavor, exercise by training or discipline."

Sometimes others offend us, and it is not hard to forgive.

- We have exercised our hearts so they are in condition to **handle the offense**; therefore, no injury or permanent damage results.

Some offenses will be more challenging than those for which we've been trained.

- This extra strain **may cause a wound or injury** after which we will have to exercise spiritually to be free and healed again.
 - But the result will be worth the effort.
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Maturing Through Hardships - We grow in the tough times, not the easy times.

- **Hard places** will always come in our journey with the Lord.
- We **cannot** escape them -
- WE need to face them -
- They are part of the process of becoming perfect in Him.
- If you choose to run from them, **you will seriously hinder your growth**.

As you overcome different obstacles, you become stronger and more compassionate.

- You will fall more **in love with Jesus**.
- If you have come out of hardships and **do not** feel this way,
- You have probably **not recovered** from the offense.
- Recovery is your choice.
- Some people get hurt and **never recover**.
- As cruel as this may sound, it was their choice.

Maturity does not come easily.

- If it did all would attain it.
- **Few reach this level** of life because of the resistance they face.

There's resistance **because the course of our society is not godly, but selfish**.

As a result, to enter into ***the maturity of Christ*** –
There will be hardships that come from ***standing against the flow of selfishness.***

Paul had returned to three cities where he birthed churches.

- His purpose was to strengthen the souls of the disciples.
- However, it is interesting to see **how he strengthened them.**

Acts 14:21-22 NKJV - Strengthening the Converts

²¹ And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, ²² strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and saying, ***“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”***

- He **encouraged them by:** exhorting them to **continue in the faith**, and saying, ***“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”***
- He did not promise them *a life of ease*.
- He did not promise them success according to the world’s standards.
- He showed them that *if they were going to finish their course with joy* they were going to meet up with much resistance which he called **tribulation**.

If you are **rowing on a river** against the current,

- You will have to **row continuously** in order to progress against the flow of the river.
- If you **stop rowing** and relax, you will eventually **flow with the current**.
- When we are **determined to go God’s way** we will meet up with **many tribulations**.
- The trials will all show the answer to one main question.
- Are you going to **look out for yourself** as the world does,
- Or are you going to **live a self-denied life?**

Peter put is so well: 1 Peter 4:12-13 - Suffering for God’s Glory

¹² Beloved, do not think it strange concerning **the fiery trial which is to try you**, as though some strange thing happened to you;

¹³ but **rejoice** to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be **glad with exceeding joy**.

Notice that he compares the extent of **suffering** to the extent of **rejoicing**.

- How can you **rejoice** to that extent?
 - When **His glory** is revealed, you will be **glorified with Him**.
 - This glorifying is to the degree that **you allow Him to perfect His character within you**.
 - So **don't look at the offense**.
 - Look at **the coming glory**. **Hallelujah!**
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Reconciliation

Matthew 5:21-24 NKJV - Murder Begins in the Heart

²¹ “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘***You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.***’

²² But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.

²³ Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. **First be reconciled** to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Jesus continues this comparison throughout this portion of His message.

- First He quotes the law that regulates our outward actions.
- Then He shows its fulfillment by bringing it into the heart.

So in God's eyes a murderer is not limited to the one who commits murder;

- He is also the one who **hates his brother**.
- **What you are in your heart is how you really are!**

Jesus clearly describes the consequences of offense in this portion of His sermon.

- He illustrates the severity of **holding anger** or **bitter offense**.
- If one is **angry with his brother without a cause**, **he is in danger of judgment**.
- He is in danger of the council **if that anger bears fruit** and he **calls his brother “Raca!”**

The word *raca* means “empty-headed,” or fool.

- It was a **term of reproach** used among the Jews in the time of Christ.
- **If that anger** reaches the point where he calls a brother a fool, **he is in danger of hell.**
- The word *fool* means *to be godless*.
- **The fool says in his heart** *there is no God* (see Psalm 14:1).
- In those days *to call a brother a fool* was quite a serious accusation.
- ***No one would say such a thing*** unless the anger they bore had turned to hatred.
- ***Today it would be comparable to telling a brother, “Go to hell,” and meaning it.***

Jesus was showing them that not dealing with anger can lead to hatred.

- Hatred not dealt with would put them in danger of hell.
- Then He said that if they remembered **their brother *was offended*** with them,
- They were to make it top priority to *find him and seek* to be reconciled.

Why should we seek with such urgency to be reconciled—for *our sake* or for *our brother’s sake*?

- **We should go for his sake -**
- That we might be a catalyst to help him out of *the offense*.
- **Even if we are not *offended*** with him,
- **The love of God *does not*** let him remain angry without attempting to *reach out and restore*.
- We may have *done nothing wrong*.
- ***Right or wrong doesn’t matter.***
- **It is more important for us to *help this stumbling brother* than *to prove ourselves correct*.**

Asking forgiveness of one who is offended

The Apostle Paul said: Romans 14:19 NKJV- Therefore let us pursue the things *which make* for peace and the things by which one may edify another.

- This shows us ***how to approach a person we have offended***.
- If we go with an ***attitude of frustration*** we will not promote peace.
- We will only ***make it difficult*** for ***the one who is hurt***.

Approaching someone who has offended you

Now that we have discussed ***what to do when we offend*** our brother, ***let's consider what to do if our brother offends us***.

Matthew 18:15 NKJV - Dealing with a Sinning Brother

“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

- Many people ***apply this scripture verse in a different attitude*** from the ***one Jesus was intending***.
- ***If they have been hurt***, they will go and ***confront the offender*** in a spirit of ***revenge and anger***.

But they are ***missing the whole reason*** Jesus instructed us to go to one another.

- It is ***not for condemnation*** but ***for reconciliation***.
- ***He does not*** want us to tell our brother ***how rotten he has been to us***.
- We are to go to ***remove the breach preventing the restoration*** of our relationship.

II Corinthians 5:18-20 NKJV –

¹⁸ Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

The word of reconciliation begins on the ***common ground*** that we ***all have sinned against God***.

We do not desire *reconciliation or salvation unless we know there is a separation*.

Since we are to imitate God (Eph. 5:1), we are to **extend reconciliation** to a brother ***who sins against us.***

Jesus established this pattern:

Go to him and show him his sin, not to condemn him but to remove anything that lies between the two of you and thus be reconciled and restored.

What happens if we have the right attitude and attempt to reconcile with someone who has sinned against us, but he or she won't listen?

Matthew 18:16-17 NKJV - ¹⁶ But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'

¹⁷ And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

CLOSE:

The bottom line

If we keep the love of God as our motivation, we will not fail.

- Love never fails.
- When we love others the way Jesus loves us,
- **We will be free** even if the other person **chooses not to be reconciled** to us.

Look carefully at the following scripture verse.

- God's wisdom is available for all situations.

Romans 12:18 NKJV – If it is possible, **as much as depends on you**, ***live peaceably with all men.***

He says, **"If it is possible..."** because **there are times when others will refuse to be at peace with us.**

- Or there may be **those who conditions for reconciliation would compromise our relationship with the Lord.**
- In either case **it is not possible** to **restore that relationship.**

PRAISE TEAM:

God is this way with mankind.

- He is not willing that any should perish.
- But He will not compromise truth for a relationship.
- He seeks reconciliation with true commitment, not on superficial terms.
- This develops a bond of love that no evil can sever.
- He has laid His life down for us.
- We can only do likewise.

Remember that the bottom line is the love of God.

1 Corinthians 13:5 - ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;

- It **never** fails, never fades, and never comes to an end.
- It seeks **not its own**. It is not easily *offended*.

The love of God is the key to freedom from the baited trap of offense.

- This must be an **abounding love**,
- A love that continually grows and is *strengthened in our hearts*.

So many in our society today are deceived by a superficial love, a love that talks but does not act.

- **The love that will keep us from stumbling** lays down its life selflessly—
- even for the good of an enemy.
- **When we walk in this kind of love, we cannot *be seduced into taking the bait of Satan*.**