

A person's wisdom yields patience; it
is to one's glory to overlook an
offense. Proverbs 19:11

What is an offense? What does offense mean?

Strong's Concordance: The Greek word for offense:
skandalon: a stick for bait of a trap, snare, a stumbling block, an offense

HELPS Word-studies:

the trigger of a trap, the mechanism closing a trap down on the unsuspecting victim. An offense, putting a negative cause-and-effect relationship into motion.

A means of stumbling stressing the method of entrapment, how someone is caught by their own thinking.

The native rock rising up out of the earth which trips the traveler.

Thayer's Greek Lexicon:

The bait-stick of a trap. The stick in the trap that springs and closes the trap when the animal touches it.

A noose, a snare, the movable stick or trigger of a trap; any impediment placed in the way and causing one to stumble or fall.

A rock which is a cause of stumbling.

Metaphorically, any person or thing by which one is entrapped, drawn into the error of sin, to do that by which another is led into sin, R 14:13, Rev 2:14, Mt 18:7.

- Shake the bill. - (When you are offended, you hold the bill over the person, saying, "You owe me for this hurt!" Gospel: Jesus takes the bill and pays the price, even though it's not His offense.)

What does it look like to be offended?

Can be either perceived but not reality, or it can be reality.

Ps 55:12-14 If an enemy were insulting me,
I could endure it;

if a foe were rising against me,
I could hide.
But it is you, a person like myself,
my companion, my close friend,
with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship
at the house of God,
as we walked about
among the worshipers.

We went to _____
together! I was in
your group at
church! We were
close, you knew my
life and I knew
yours.

Feels like betrayal.

OFFENSE verses:

Mt 24:10-13

... many will fall away [stumble] and betray one another and hate one another.
Note the progression ... I've definitely seen emotions escalate like this.

Luke 17:1

Things that cause people to sin (offenses, stumbling blocks) are bound to come,
but woe to that person through whom they come.

Mark 4:16-17

(Seed sown on stony ground, then) with persecution or affliction, they become
offended

Did JESUS Offend PEOPLE?

Matthew 13:53-57 and Mark 6:3 - hometown crowd, family

53 Jesus ... moved on from there. **54** Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked. **55** "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? **56** Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" And they took **offense** at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home."

Matthew 17:27 - taxes!

"But so that we may not cause **offense**, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours."

Galatians 5:11 - cross

Brothers and sisters, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the **offense** of the cross has been abolished.

1 P 2:6-8 - Jesus is a rock of offense

6 For it stands in Scripture:

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious,
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

7 So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,
“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,”

8 and

“A stone of stumbling,
and a rock of offense.”

They stumble because they disobey the word

Mt 15:12 Pharisees offended by Jesus

John 6 Jesus' followers stumbles over His body/blood teachings

Mark 3:21, John 7:5 Jesus' family thought He was out of His mind

WE CAN BE STUMBLING BLOCKS TO OTHERS

Liberty/Freedom verses

R 14:13-22 “... **decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.** For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. **18** Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. **19** So then let us **pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.** **20** Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. **21 It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble.[c][Romans 14:21 Some manuscripts add or be hindered or be weakened]** **22** The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves.”

1 C 8:9 Don't let your liberty become a **stumbling block** for others

1 C 10:23-33 Try not to **offend**, in order that others might be saved.

When we are Offended

Our response to offense: gleaned from Bait of Satan

Internal responses: hurt, anger, outrage, jealousy, resentment, strife, bitterness, hatred, envy

External responses: insults, attacks, wounding, division, separation, broken relationships, betrayal, backsliding

Pride:

We answer offense with offense. “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. Just because you were mistreated, you do not have God’s permission to withhold forgiveness and hold on to an offense. Two wrongs do not make a right. p7

Remember: It is not **our** word of correction that is always needed; it is God’s. We are not the Holy Spirit sent to correct the other person.

We Build Walls

When we are offended, we build walls of protection around ourselves. These become a prison. p16. These become strongholds. Panic at the thought of not having them.

Offended people protect themselves in their isolation and feel safe in the walled-in controlled environment they create. They no longer have to confront their character flaws. R/th facing the difficulties, they try to escape the test, get a “persecution complex.” When we retain an offense in our hearts, we filter everything through it. p68
Offense becomes their glasses through which they see people, evaluate comments. p60,61.

We Run

Offended people often **react** rather than **act**. Outta here! Too hard, too hot, too scary, too dangerous. They may do something that looks right even though it’s not inspired by God. p56.

What can we do?

What’s typical:

I can either justify myself (no love, pride, legalism, high sense of offense, prickly)

or

I can repent of my unforgiveness and ask for more love, true life and love flowing from Jesus & the Spirit, through me, to the one who has offended me.

1. Calmness: Ecclesiastes 10:4

If a ruler’s anger rises against you, do not leave your post; calmness can lay great **offenses** to rest.

Don't over-react; stay calm, look for a chance to discuss in an even voice, "No, I think there's been a misunderstanding. I think you've been misinformed."

A person who is not stabilized or found on the Word of God is more likely to be moved along by the storm of offense. p80.

2. Challenge Pride with Agape Love

What is needed for change to occur: a supernatural softening of heart. We need to be healed of offense and bitterness before we move on, esp in relationships. Pattern. Love heals. "It is the decision to make another's well-being more important than your own, even when that person has brought you great sorrow." p.72

Pride cannot travel down this path; only humility can. This path leads to life.

Mt 5:44-47: Even tax collectors love those who love and reward them. We Christians, instead, should be filled with radical *agape* love. p15.

Pride: crucify it

Because you believe you are innocent and falsely accused, you hold back forgiveness. Just because you were mistreated, you do not have permission to withhold forgiveness and hold on to an offense. Two wrongs do not make a right. p7

I will not allow pride to hold back my willingness to forgive those who may have hurt me. p11

Mark 11:24-26

Pray ... forgive, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Also Matthew 6:12-15; Luke 6:37.

3. Reality: we are in a purifying fire

We think we're fine, but we are Rev 3:14-20. Buy Jesus' gold—be soft, pliable, pure, refined by the fire of affliction and trial. **Sin easily hides where there is no refining fire.** p9.

Trials and tests locate a person. p86. They indicate where you are spiritually. Jesus often asked **questions** to help us know the true condition of our hearts and minds. p77.

4. Humility: befriend it

A person who cannot forgive has forgotten how great a debt God has forgiven them. p134, Bait.

Example of the basketball court: we're ALL out of bounds

5. Walls: Tear them down

It is inappropriate for Christians to live within their own walls. We live with wisdom, humility, and the power of Christ, with a sound mind, discipline, and the joy of the Holy Spirit. There is a beautiful openness to that.

2 C 10:4,5:

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. **4** For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. **5** We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ...

6. Stop Running, Get Planted

They may run from a situation or relationship; but God may have put us there to refine us. We are to be **planted** by streams of living water (Psalm 1, Jer 17). The Holy Spirit provides the nourishment we need to bear fruit in every season - even in the adversity of drought, they will bear fruit.

Psalm 1:1-3

Blessed is the godly person
 who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
 nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
but his delight is in the law of the Lord,
 and on his law he meditates day and night.
He is like a tree
 planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
 and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.

I refuse to run; I refuse to be offended and flee. p61.

7. Persist

Proverbs 18:19

An offended person is harder to win than a fortified city.

It is not failure when the other person does not love us back, does not return our love. That's between them and God. We are called to love and forgive in the Name and through His power.

(Repeat) **Matthew 5:44:**

“I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you , do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.”

Holy Spirit, fill my spirit daily so that I will love those who mistreat or reject me. Fill me so that I will never grow weary of doing good. p21.

8. Expectations

Agree on them.

I will not allow my foolish expectations of others to disappoint me and cause me to stumble in offense.

9. Steady Yourself

If God reveals something to me, I'm not likely to be offended if others disagree.

Ps 119:165

Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble.

HOW DOES GOD FORGIVE?

Look at the cross: It's costly.

Forgiveness is a momentary choice and a process: like an onion, peel the layers back; like an ascending spiral, keep doing the work. (Similar to grieving.)

- Throw the rocks -

Forgiveness takes us on a **journey**:

Name the offense, the hurt, the harm, the stumbling block —> feel it, don't deny your emotions —> temporary lodging:

**cesspool of bitterness, an acidic place that eats up and degrades souls

**pit of depression

**dark forest of harm, even suicide

—>chose/decide to LIVE

—do the work of forgiveness by following Jesus' example

The hurt stops with you. You absorb the pain, the cost, the hurt, the harm, in the Name of Jesus and through His power. The sin stops here! Forgiveness is a choice to NOT retaliate, to NOT make them pay their debt to you. You cancel what they owe you in the Name of Jesus, knowing He has paid the debt in full on the cross ... for both of you.

FORGIVENESS VS RECONCILIATION VS TRUST (LEARNED FROM MARIA DELONG)

Forgiveness: one person

Reconciliation: two or more in agreement, walking in the truth

Trust: earned over time in the small things

GOD TAKES OUR OFFENSES AGAINST HIM SERIOUSLY:

Ezekiel 39:24

I dealt with them according to their uncleanness and their **offenses**, and I hid my face from them.

Amos 5:12

For I know how many are your **offenses** and how great your sins. There are those who oppress the innocent and take bribes and deprive the poor of justice in the courts.

GOD MAKES A WAY FOR FORGIVENESS:

Isaiah 44:21-23

“Remember these things, _____,
for you, _____, are My servant.
I have made you, you are My servant;
_____, I will not forget you.
I have swept away your offenses like a cloud,
your sins like the morning mist.
Return to me,
for I have redeemed you.”
Sing for joy, you heavens, for the Lord has done this;
shout aloud, you earth beneath.
Burst into song, you mountains,
you forests and all your trees,
for the Lord has redeemed _____,
he displays his glory in _____.

When you see how God has treated you, you are motivated to treat others with His same love, grace, and truth. This is how He wins your heart, and how He becomes attractive to others. It's through you, doing the hard thing, the beautiful thing, the impossible thing.

SCRIPTURE

Colossians 3:12-14

12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has **forgiven** you, so you also must **forgive**. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Matthew 26:28

For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the **forgiveness** of sins.

The Lord's Prayer

In Jesus' miracles, forgiveness and healing are linked.

Proverbs 19:11

A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.

Hebrews 9:14

The blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences ... so that we may serve the living God!

Hebrews 10:19

We have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place, the place of intimacy, by the blood of Jesus.

Romans 6:2,6,11

We died to sin, our old self is crucified with Christ; count ourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.