

THE BAIT OF OFFENSE

LOF5

Today we're gonna talk about the subject of **OFFENSE** --- which is at the very core of the **Bait of Satan**,

It's often the most difficult obstacle any individual must face and overcome in life.

Let me give a bit of context of this conversation Jesus had with His disciples about overcoming OFFENSE.....

- *The disciples of Jesus witnessed many great and life-changing miracles.*
- *They watched as Jesus opened up the eyes of the blind man, raised the dead.*
- *They heard Jesus command the raging storm to stillness.*
- *They saw thousands fed by the miracle of multiplication of few loaves of bread and fishes.*

But then in **Luke 17** --- we see that something pushed the disciples to the Brink of **DOUBT**.

LUKE 17

V5 AND THE APOSTLES SAID TO THE LORD, "INCREASE OUR FAITH"

After being with Jesus doing life for some time, listening to His teaching daily and seeing Him perform miracles.....

But none of those miracles had caused them to cry out and said, *"GOD WE HAVE A LOT OF DOUBT.....AND WE NEED MORE FAITH!"*

What was it that caused these disciples to say, **"LORD INCREASE OUR FAITH!"???**

- These guys didn't just say Jesus please increase our faith.
- But they cried out of desperation.
- It was because of what Jesus said before this....

LUKE 17

V3 "TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES. IF YOUR BROTHER SINS AGAINST YOU, REBUKE HIM; AND IF HE REPENTS, FORGIVE HIM.

V4 AND IF HE SINS AGAINST YOU SEVEN TIMES A DAY, AND SEVEN TIMES IN A DAY RETURNS TO YOU, SAYING 'I REPENT', YOU SHALL FORGIVE HIM."

- And then the disciples cried out **"LORD INCREASE OUR FAITH!"**
- So the FAITH they asked was NOT about the Miracles....
- It was when Jesus simply said.... **WHENEVER YOUR BROTHER SINS AGAINST YOU.... YOU FORGIVE HIM!**

Now Jesus makes this statement in the first verse

Then He said to the disciples,

LUKE 17:1 - "IT IS IMPOSSIBLE THAT NO OFFENSES SHOULD COME..."

It is NOT a question of whether we will be offended..... but what our response will be.

OFFENSE

OFFENSE IN THE GREEK WORD: **SKANDALON**

AN OLD GREEK WORD TO DESCRIBE THE **BAIT STICK OF A TRAP** ---- THAT HUNTERS WOULD USE TO CATCH SMALL ANIMALS OR BIRDS IN.

- *The hunter would place the bait on the skandalon (the bait stick) --- the animal would take the bait --- the cage will close and either close to capture or either kill it.*

Thereby **AN OFFENSE IS THE BAIT OF SATAN**, to pull us the believers into his captivity.

Paul confirmed this when he wrote to Timothy.

2 TIMOTHY 2:24-26

And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, In humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, 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.

So Paul said, those who are OFFENDED by one another..... are TAKEN CAPTIVE of Satan to do his will.

The scary thing is,

- Most people that are in the trap of offense don't even know it.
- Because that's what Paul said "*that they come to their senses*"
- If they knew they were in devil's trap --- they wouldn't stay there.

A hunter in order to catch prey has to lay a SMART TRAP.

- If you make the trap obvious - you're not gonna catch anything.
- For a trap to be successful.....
 - It must be **HIDDEN**, in the hope that the animal will stumble upon it.
 - It must be **BAITED**, to lure the animal into the trap's deadly jaws.
- If you go down there and jump into the water with a hook in your hand, "*hey Fish, im gonna get you!*" He's not gonna pay any attention to you.
- The hook is definitely so well hidden under an attractive and yummy bait for the fish to come!

SATAN IS NO DIFFERENT. HE'S VERY CUNNING AND SHRUDE.

- And he knows that the very way he can get you into his captivity is not gonna be by obvious trap,
- It's gonna be by something very SUBTLE.....
- But if we are NOT trained by the Word of God to divide rightly between good and evil..... we won't recognise his traps for what they are.

- One of his most deceptive kinds of bait is what every Christian has encountered - **OFFENSE.**

Actually, the offense itself is NOT deadly.

But if we pick it up and consume it and feed on it in our hearts --- then we have become **OFFENDED AND HELD CAPTIVE --- THAT'S THE TRAP.**

OFFENDED PEOPLE PRODUCE MUCH FRUIT SUCH AS HURT, ANGER, OUTRAGE, JEALOUSY, RESENTMENT, STRIFE, BITTERNESS, HATRED AND ENVY.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF PICKING UP AND OFFENSE ARE INSULTS, ATTACKS, DIVISION, SEPARATION, BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS, BETRAYAL AND BACKSLIDING.

How many church **SPLIT, DIVISION**..... Happens starting from offense.....

- the person feels offended, they got in the trap of the enemy and breeds to bigger repercussion.

How many **SEPARATION, BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS**..... happens from offense....

- saying the wrong thing, they got hurt, resenting the person, and feeling betrayed.

How many **BACKSLIDINGS**..... *(I don't want to come to this church anymore, I'm leaving this connect group, I don't want to serve anymore.....i don't believe in God, I lose faith in Christians)*..... Happen because they got offended.....

- You think you've done your best, but they still criticized and offended you.....
- After all the sacrifice, you have served them.....
- You feel betrayed by the very people that we should we can trust.....

HOW MANY BLESSINGS, POTENTIALS, PURPOSE OF GOD.....killed, robbed away..... Because people fail to overlook and overcome an OFFENSE that come their way??

- Most people that are offended don't even realise that they're offended and trapped.
- They are blinded to their condition because **THEY ARE SO FOCUSED ON THE WRONG THAT WAS DONE TO THEM AND IN DENIAL.**
- The most effective way for the enemy to blind us is **TO CAUSE US TO FOCUS ON OURSELVES.**

And Jesus did warn us the believers that this OFFENSE is going intense in the last days.....

MATTHEW 24

- Jesus was speaking about the last days.
- How many of you believe we're living in the last days?
- Disciples said to Jesus.....
- *What's gonna be the sign of the second coming?*
- *The evidence that You're really coming back?*
- And Jesus began to list certain things that were going to happen in the earth.....
- Among God's people.....

- And one of the signs that he listed that is interesting is found in the 10th verse

MATTHEW 24:10

"AND THEN MANY WILL BE **OFFENDED**, WILL **BETRAY** ONE ANOTHER, AND WILL **HATE** ONE ANOTHER."

GREEK WORD FOR MANY: **POLUS - MUCH, MANY, GREAT**

- This word in no way imply a few or some. It means a very large part of something.
- What he is indicating here it's going to be a very large amount of people.

- **MANY WILL BE OFFENDED - WILL BETRAY ONE ANOTHER - WILL HATE ONE ANOTHER.**

OFFENSE >> BETRAYAL >> HATRED

- THIS IS A PROGRESSION
- AN OFFENSE WILL LEAD TO A BETRAYAL
- AND A BETRAYAL IF ITS NOT DEALT WITH, WILL ULTIMATELY LEAD TO HATRED.

PROVERBS 18:19

A brother **offended** *is harder to win than a strong city, And contentions are like the bars of a castle.*

IN THE DAYS OF SOLOMON WHO WROTE THE BOOK OF PROVERBS....

- What did strong cities have around them? **WALLS**.
- What were walls built for? **PROTECTION**.
- Those walls were built to keep out those people you thought were against you.
- They were also built to allow those people that you thought were for you in.

A BROTHER OFFENDED HAS BUILT WALLS.

NEW TESTAMENT DOES NOT CALL THEM WALLS - NT CALLS THEM **STRONGHOLDS**.

2 CORINTHIANS 10:3

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.

For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal (fleshly) but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down **arguments** and every **high thing** that exalts itself against the **knowledge** of God, bringing every **thought** into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

Casting down EVERY **IMAGINATION** AND **REASONING**.

WHERE DO REASONING OCCUR? IN OUR HEAD.

STRONGHOLDS ARE REASONINGS, THOUGHT PROCESSES THAT ARE CONTRARY TO THE WORD OF GOD.

- One thing we discover....
- **THE PERSON WHO CAN HURT YOU THE MOST, IS THE PERSON THAT IS CLOSEST TO YOU**

- Why is that?
- **BECAUSE OUR EXPECTATION IS HIGHER UPON THEM.**

If we set up expectations on people, then if they don't meet them --- they've offended me.

That is why **the one who can hurt you the most** is NOT a stranger, the people out there you barely know, the unbeliever, the sinner ---

- But somebody that's in the church, even more so..... a husband / wife, our family, or pastor..... because our expectation is higher.

DAVID SAYS IT THIS SAY IN

PSALM 55: 12-14

*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.
But it was you, a man my equal, My companion and my acquaintance.
We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in the throng.*

- David's kinda saying This is the guy that
- We went to the church together I sat next to you,
- We listen to the word of God together.
- He was my brother,
- I could have handled it easier if it's somebody else in the world.
- It would be easier if it's my enemy.

BECAUSE THE ONE WHO CAN HURT YOU THE MOST IS THE ONE WHO'S CLOSEST TO YOU -
BECAUSE YOUR EXPECTATION IS HIGHER.

--- DIFFERENT LEVEL EXPECTATION ON THE WORLD / CHRISTIANS / HUSBAND & WIFE / PASTOR ---

If somebody only does this much - he's been a blessing to you because he's exceeding your expectation.

If they are short of your expectations by that much - he's already offended you that much!

Most offended (bitter) people today in the church, backsliding believers.....what they say,

- *"The world treats me better than most Christians."*
- They're nice to me.... Because we have lower expectations in them.

A person that now has the Walls up is A PERFECT CANDIDATE FOR BETRAYAL.

- When people hear the word betrayal - they think Judas.
- **BETRAYAL = WHEN I SEEK MY PROTECTION / BENEFIT AT ANOTHER'S EXPENSE. (of one I have relationship with)**
- The ultimate abandonment of a relationship.
- And if betrayal is not repented, it would completely sabotage the relationships.

- I have built walls. If situations get a little rough --- I'm gonna seek to protect myself, i don't care at the expense of who else

PROVERBS 18:1

A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; He rages against all wise judgment.

He will betray when things get rough, and gets cornered.
There is a betrayal in relationship, it will ultimately lead to hatred.

The bible says..... YOU HATE YOUR BROTHER - YOU'RE A MURDERER

1 JOHN 3:15

Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

HATRED = LOVE LESS, HAVE NO LOVE

THE VOID OF HAVING THE LOVE OF GOD.

- In the last days...massive offense will happen also in the church (*not just society*)
- The love of many is gonna grow cold. The fiery passionate love of God in your heart is gonna become cold. It's a gradual thing.
- **When the love of God begins to grow cold - it's growing, not instant.**
- You don't notice it.
- **KEEP YOURSELF FROM OFFENSE.**
- It might seem **small, subtle**.....but its **potent** and **deadly** as it grows.
Our heart gets **hardened** and **colder** by day when we choose to keep offense.
- **It builds up WALLS for the Word of God to bear fruits.**
It drives the love of God out from our hearts.
- And Jesus said.....*"And it will occur massively in the last days."*
- That's why the Word of God is here to remind and protect you.

ALL OF US NEED TO EXCEL IN IS **THE LOVE OF GOD.**

WE NEED TO BE DRAWN, IT IS THE POWERFUL FORCE IN THE WHOLE UNIVERSE.

I AM CONVINCED THAT **THE CHURCH OF GOD** IS CALLED TO BE **A CHURCH OF EXCEPTIONAL, AND EXTRAVAGANT LOVE OF GOD : AGAPE**

- THE LOVE OF GOD, THE WORLD DOES NOT HAVE IT.
- THIS IS THE LOVE THE WORLD CANNOT RECEIVE, THE LOVE THAT WERE GIVEN TO BELIEVERS HEART WHEN WE ARE BORN AGAIN AND FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7 (NLT)

"LOVE IS PATIENT AND KIND. LOVE IS NOT JEALOUS OR BOASTFUL OR PROUD OR RUDE. IT DOES NOT DEMAND ITS OWN WAY. IT IS NOT IRRITABLE, AND IT KEEPS NO RECORD OF BEING WRONGED. IT DOES NOT REJOICE ABOUT INJUSTICE BUT REJOICES WHENEVER THE TRUTH WINS OUT. LOVE NEVER GIVES UP, NEVER LOSES FAITH, IS ALWAYS HOPEFUL, AND ENDURES THROUGH EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE."

- Opportunities to give in to offense will present themselves to everyone of us, at one time or another. No one is exempted from it.

▪ OFFENSE IS THE ENEMY'S STRATEGY TO KEEP US FROM FULFILLING GOD'S WILL AND ULTIMATELY DESTROY US.

- Certainly, people can yield to Satan and cause problems. But the root of our problems in life is the devil, NOT people.
- We all must continually GUARD OUR HEARTS AGAINST THE TEMPTATION TO BECOME OFFENDED AND HARBOR GRUDGES AND OTHER NEGATIVE EMOTIONS.
- Today, as we expose this deadly trap of this enemy --- Let's look at how to escape the grip of the enemy and stay free from it.

HOW???

1. ABIDE IN THE WORD

- One step we can take to defend ourselves against offense is to CONTINUALLY ABIDE IN THE WORD.

Psalm 119:165 (NKJV) "Great peace have those who love Your law [Word], and nothing causes them to stumble."

- This verse is talking about loving God's Word. When we do that, nothing can make us stumble and fall away from it—nothing!

Verse 105 of the same psalm reads, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." When the Word of God is in our hearts, we can see where we're going so that we won't stumble.

- As we keep a firm hold on God's Word in our hearts, we'll see where we're going and recognize offense when it comes.

2. CULTIVATE THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

A second step we can take to build a good defense against Satan's offense is to **DEVELOP THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IN OUR LIVES.**

GALATIANS 5:22-23

**22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.**

- The last part of this passage says, "Against such [against these fruits of the Spirit] there is no law."
- In other words, when God in you has control of your life, Satan cannot gain control!
- You would have to give up your position for the enemy to get a foothold and make you stumble.
- When you're walking in the fruit of the Spirit, you're **MANIFESTING THE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ----- THE CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD.**
- And you will not be easily swayed when the temptation to sin comes.

Here's the principle.

- It's a **SPIRITUAL WARFARE** --- the way we fight it by feeding and strengthening GOD'S SPIRIT WITHIN US.
- *Let LOVE be stronger than all the HURT, ANGER*
- *Let HUMILITY be stronger than any PRIDE that creates walls in us.*
- *Let PATIENCE, GENTLENESS overpower all kinds of STRIFE and RESENTMENT.*

That's how we will overcome this bait of the enemy like Offense.

3. CHOOSE YOUR TEAMMATES WISELY

- A third step we can take to become good "defensive players" in the game of life is **TO USE WISDOM IN CHOOSING OUR TEAMMATES.**

1 Corinthians 15:33 (NIV) "Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character.' "

Proverbs 13:20 (NIV) carries the same idea

"Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm."

- The Bible is clear on this point: **THE COMPANY WE KEEP WILL INFLUENCE US FOR GOOD OR FOR EVIL.**
- When I talk about being influenced by people we associate with, I mean taking on **CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THEIR CHARACTER** and even **some of their opinions and viewpoints.**
- That's fine if the people we're around love God and base their lives on His Word.

- But it's NOT fine if those people are CRITICAL OF OTHERS and are CONTINUALLY OFFENDED.
 - Why? Because over time—little by little—we'll begin thinking the same bitter thoughts.
 - We'll develop an intolerant, critical attitude.
 - And we'll find ourselves becoming offended.
- Just as the Word says, the "bad company" we keep will corrupt our minds, emotions, and actions.
 - That's why it's so important to choose our teammates wisely.

4. KEEP A CLEAR CONSCIENCE

A fourth step we can take to defend ourselves against offense is **TO KEEP OUR CONSCIENCES CLEAR.**

- Look at what the Apostle Paul said in the Book of Acts:

ACTS 24:16 (Amplified)

16 Therefore I always exercise and discipline myself [mortifying my body, deadening my carnal affections, bodily appetites, and worldly desires, endeavoring in all respects] to have a clear (unshaken, blameless) conscience, void of offense toward God and toward men.

- Paul endeavoured to keep his conscience clear before God and man.
- He diligently kept his flesh under the control of his spirit by disciplining himself in spiritual things.
- Like Paul, we can develop ourselves to instantly recognize and avoid things that cause us to sin and grieve the heart of God.
- We can get to the place where we hear something ungodly, such as gossip or slander..... and an "alarm" will go off in our spirits warning us NOT to listen.
- **AS WE TRAIN OURSELVES IN THE WORD, WE'LL BECOME SPIRITUALLY SENSITIVE.**
 - *If someone says something we shouldn't listen to, our consciences will know it and caution us.*
 - *If we start to say something we shouldn't say, that voice will witness to us that we should keep quiet instead.*
- This will help us avoid the sin of offense.
- As opportunities to become offended arise over the days ahead, remember to keep your defence strong.

James 4:7 says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

- When you yield to offense, you are yielding to the devil's influence, and you certainly don't have him on the run. Instead, he has you on the run.

- But if you build a good defence, resisting the devil and refusing to become offended, you are yielding to God's influence. And the Bible says that when you do that, you will run the devil off every time!
- IN THE END, THE BEST WEAPON & CURE IS **THE LOVE OF GOD.**
LOVE ALWAYS WINS.
- GO BACK AGAIN TO THE HEART BEHIND IT - IT SHOULD BE GOD'S LOVE TO DRIVE US AND EMPOWER US TO LOVE PEOPLE, TO SERVE PEOPLE.
- THEN WE WILL HAVE THE POWER TO RESIST AND BE SET FREE FROM THE TRAP OF OFFENSE.

DISCUSSION GUIDELINE:

- NOW THAT YOU KNOW THAT OFFENSE IS THE BAIT OF SATAN TO KEEP US FROM FULFILLING GOD'S WILL IN OUR LIFE --- HOW DIFFERENTLY WOULD YOU VIEW AND HANDLE IT?
- WHAT OFFENSE / TRAP YOU HAVE (CONSCIOUSLY OR UNCONCIOUSLY) TAKEN AND NEED TO LET GO TODAY?
RELEASE IT SO GOD CAN SET YOU FREE TO FULFILL HIS PURPOSE AND BLESSINGS TO FLOW.