

Bait05 – **Hiding From Reality – 2 Timothy 3:7**

I used to do an M.I.P. for every msg
Well – HERE is Today's M.I.P.

Justifying being offended prevents us from seeing what God wants to do in us – because we are so focused on blaming the other person

We're working thru **my take** on the book "**The Bait of Satan**" – by **John Bevere** - & today's msg comes from **CH 6**

& I **LOVE** the **title** of this particular Ch – **Hiding From Reality**

With that **title** in mind – **listen again** to Today's M.I.P.

Justifying being offended prevents us from seeing what God wants to do in us – because we are so focused on blaming the other person

This is our **5th msg** – in the "**Bait of Satan**" series

& **ALL** these msg's are **meant**
to be taken **VERY PERSONALLY**

But **this one** might take some **additional courage** (on our part)
to **allow** the **Holy Spirit** to **SPEAK *this truth*** into our lives

So – Let's Pray that He would

In **2 Tim Ch 3** – **Paul** is speaking
of **those** who are easily **led astray**

& he says in - 2 Timothy 3:7 (ESV)

7 (they are) always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.

These people are always listening to teaching – but they are never able to APPLY the truth to their OWN lives

& THAT is the **DANGER** of our msg today

It takes **COURAGE** –
to **Truly APPLY** this Truth – to **OUR OWN LIVES**

BUT - God's **TRUTH**
Must be applied to **OUR LIVES** – **Personally!**

If we are **EVER going** to be "**Truly Changed**" by God

We **can't just Listen** to God's Word

We've **GOT** to **Actually Apply** it - to **OUR OWN LIVES**

So – **Let's START** today

with **One** of the **Enemy's** Most **Successful TACTICS**
to **Damage People** AND **Churches**

This “BAIT of SATAN” - is getting people to WRONGLY LEAVE
a church – when they FEEL OFFENDED

& then **getting** them – To **HOLD ON** to that **Offense**

As **they continue** to do **Damage**
AS they go – From Church to Church

Now - **Visiting Churches** & taking **time** to **see** if a church
is **where** God has **called** you – is GREAT (*& you should do that*)

BUT – **Once** we **come** to believe
that God has **PLANTED US** in a Church

WHY – **When** we are **Offended** . . .

are we **SO QUICK** to **LEAVE** that church?
(*& usually with a Critical Spirit*)

What Happened to Us **Believing**
that **GOD PLANTED US** in that Church?

Does the fact – that We TOOK the Bait of Offense
MEAN that **God no longer wants** us in that church?

What if **THAT Event** – **where** we became **OFFENDED**

Was **actually meant** BY **God** - to **MATURE US**
& to **TRANSFORM US** - **THRU that Offense**

**WHAT IF – IN that Offense
God wanted to HEAL something in US**

RIGHT in that church where we were Offended ?

**& what if we DON'T STAY
& ALLOW God to MATURE us thru that Offense?**

**Is there a chance – that we'll just face a SIMILAR Offense
in the next Church we go to?**

Now - **God DOES call us to MOVE from one church to another –
(*I'm not saying he doesn't do that*)**

BUT – Our Question for today is

**How can you KNOW if you're leaving a church
BECAUSE you have taken the BAIT of OFFENSE?**

**OR – if you are leaving a church
BECAUSE God is truly LEADING you to Leave?**

To Know which one it is

**You have to BE HONEST with yourself
& you have to BE HONEST with the Holy Spirit**

**AND - If you will NOT HIDE
from the REALITY of your own heart condition**

God actually makes it Really EASY to know

**Whether you are leaving a church
because you are Holding an OFFENSE**

**& if you are leaving - because the Holy Spirit
is truly doing something GOOD in you**

**As a TEST for deciding to leave a church
John Bevere uses Isaiah 55:12**

Isaiah 55:12 (NKJV)

12 “For you shall go out with joy, And be led out with peace; The mountains and the hills Shall break forth into singing before you .

..

Guys – we have to be honest with ourselves & ask

is THAT truly how I am “going out” of one church family
& “going into” another?

Am I going out with JOY?

Am I being Led out with PEACE?

& is God Paving my way – with REJOICING?

& Listen guys – **Being HONEST** with **ourselves**
About **WHAT** is **IN our Heart** – is the **HARD PART**

Most **OFFENDED CHRISTIANS**

HIDE from the **Reality**
of the **SINS OF THE FLESH** in their **own lives**

By **FOCUSING** on **BLAMING** the **PERSON** (or church)
They **FEEL** has **OFFENDED** them

Let me repeat that

When it **comes** to “**Taking** this **Bait of Offense”**

Most **OFFENDED CHRISTIANS**

HIDE from the **Reality**
of the **SINS OF THE FLESH** in their **own lives**

By **FOCUSING** on **BLAMING** the **PERSON** (or church)
They **FEEL** has **OFFENDED** them

& THAT is the problem

We are **ACTING** like **Good Christians**

But **we** are **HIDING** from the **Reality**
of our own **HEART CONDITION**

But listen please

The Holy Spirit has already revealed to us

whether our FEELINGS & our ACTIONS

Are being Driven BY the Works of the FLESH
Or by the Fruit of the HOLY SPIRIT

God has made it SO EASY to know

that he put it in TWO lists for us – Right in the Word of God

We just have to be courageous enough to APPLY the lists
to our own hearts - & our own lives

THIS is the REALITY, that MANY of us are HIDING FROM

Turn over to Galatians Ch 5

On the back table we have a few printed copies of a msg I did some
time ago called "Spirit or Flesh"

& if this Msg Hits Home to you today

You can pick up one of the printed msgs on the way out

You can also find the msg on the website

by searching "Spirit or Flesh" – in the "Search Media" box
at the top of all our messages

But – for today – I want to stay focused on the fact

that we are often - HIDING From The REALITY

That it is Our OWN Sin Nature

that is FUELING the FIRE of Offense in our hearts

So, Let's look at - Galatians 5:19-20 (NLT)

19 When you follow the desires of your sinful nature (your flesh), the results are very clear . . . (then, skip down a few words, to (in v.20)) hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, (& in v.21) envy . . .

Very, very SELDOM – do WE

As Good church-going Christians

Admit – even to ourselves - the REALITY

that we are struggling with these inner feelings of

*Hostility - - quarreling - - jealousy - - outbursts of anger
selfish ambition - - dissension - - division - - envy*

Guys – in as much LOVE & GENTLENESS as I can Muster
Please Hear me when I say

When we Take Up an Offense in the church

We are Generally STRUGGLING

with OUR OWN FLESH - in some way

I just don't like that person (Hostility)
they're wrong - & I wish I could tell them to their face (quarreling)
I kinda feel JEALOUS of their position in the church
I'd like to give them a piece of my mind (anger)
I could do a better job if I was in their position (selfish ambition)
I just have to talk to my friends about them, for prayer (dissenting)
I can't help it if my friends feel the same way as me (division)
I wish the leadership would listen to me (envy)

Often - When we take up an Offense in the church

We are **HIDING** from the **REALITY**
That **these sins** of the **Flesh** – Are **IN OUR HEART**

& **we** get **really good** at **covering up** these **sins**
By **ACTING** very **spiritual**

BUT – **When** we are **able** to **CRUCIFY**
these **Works of the flesh** - in our **hearts**

Then we will begin to SEE

the **Fruit of the Spirit** come out of us
INSTEAD of the **Sins of the Flesh**

& the **Fruit of the Spirit** is **listed** in the very **NEXT Vs**

Galatians 5:22–23 (NLT) → →

Galatians 5:22–23 (NLT)

***22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love,
joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
23 gentleness, and self-control . . .***

**If we will REFUSE to HIDE from the Reality
of the CONDITION of Our OWN HEART**

**Then - We can Honestly APPLY both these LISTS
To our HEART - & our ACTIONS**

**& WHEN we do
it won't be hard for us to Determine**

if we are being Controlled

By the Sins of the Flesh – or
By the Fruit of the Spirit

**God WANTS to TRANSFORM us & MATURE us
THRU the Offense we have taken up in the church**

**ALL we have to do – is BE HONEST
- with ourselves - & with God**

About HOW MUCH – Our FLESH is DRIVING
Our FEELINGS, & Our ACTIONS

& THEN - once we stop - HIDING from that REALITY

We can Begin FOCUSING
on God USING this OFFENSE

To TRANSFORM US - & to MATURE US

BUT - THERE IS a False Sense of SELF-PROTECTION
In us holding onto an offense – isn't there?

Because - If we can stay consumed
with what someone else has Supposedly Done To US

We will never have to DEAL
with our OWN Sin Nature

We'll never have to face our ROLE in the situation
Or face our own Spiritual Immaturity – in handling it

& IF we DO THAT - we will completely MISS

God ever Transforming US – or Maturing US –
Thru that OFFENSE

& we will completely MISS – the Opportunity to learn

HOW to Walk in the SPIRIT
instead of the FLESH

& Please Believe Me when I say

**IF we take that way out – if we MISS the opportunity for God to
Transform US in an OFFENSE**

**we may very-well LIVE in a NEVER-ENDING Cycle
of Being Offended & Leaving Churches**

**BECAUSE – When we HOLD ON to an OFFENSE
& Leave a church WITH that Offense**

we WILL TAKE that OFFENSE with us
INTO the Next church we enter - & the next church - & the next . . .

There's a STORY of an OLD ELDER – In a small town church

**Who made a POINT of meeting every new family
that would come to Visit the church**

& inevitably – the visiting family would ask the Old Elder
what the people in the church were like

& he would always answer them with a Question
What were the people like in the last church you were in?

& some would say, ***“the church we came from was full of
hypocrisy & back-biting & in-fighting, & cliques”***

& the OLD ELDER would say, ***“This church will be the same as the
one you left”*** - & those people would quickly move on

& when the Elder would ask some families

What were the people like in the last church you were in?

& they would say. *“our last church was wonderful, we loved the people, and we loved the church, & we saw God Work there”*

Then the OLD ELDER would answer with the SAME Answer,
“This church will be the same as the one you left”

Sometimes - We FAIL to understand –

that the Church becomes (to us) - just what we MAKE IT

& Sometimes – We FAIL to take responsibility

for OUR PART – in what WE have MADE the Church to BE

IF we respond to the BAIT of OFFENSE – IN THE FLESH

Then the church will BE – what we have MADE IT

& IF we respond to the BAIT of OFFENSE – IN THE SPIRIT

Then the Church will BE – What we have MADE IT

God’s REFINING of US

ALWAYS includes Difficulties & Trials

Because Difficulties & Trials - is what BRINGS OUT

the things God wants to TRANSFORM in us

BUT – if we make our OFFENSE

ALL about the OTHER Person’s fault - (or ALL the church’s fault)

**We will never FACE – or DEAL WITH
Our OWN Sin Nature – in this AREA**

consider - James 1:2–4 (NLT)

2 Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.

3 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.

4 So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect (mature) and complete, needing nothing.

The **Lord WANTS to HEAL** our **Wounds**
in the **area** of **OFFENSE** in the **church**

But – **too often** we **REFUSE** to **join him**
& we **run away bitter** & **angry** instead

The **road to HEALING** –
And to NOT taking this **“BAIT of SATAN”**

is a **road** of **HUMILITY**
& of **CONFESSION** of our **OWN Sin Nature**

PRIDE Cannot Travel this Road
Our **PRIDE** in this **area** - must be **CRUSHED**

THEN we will be **able** to be **used by God**
For **PEACE** & **UNITY**

Instead of being **used by the Enemy**
For **DISSENTION** & **DIVISION**

One last encouragement today

On HOW we are called to HANDLE –
The BAIT of OFFENSE

Colossians 3:12–13 (NLT)

12 Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

13 Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

Don't Take the Bait of Satan

& Don't RUN from God's Opportunity
To TRANSFORM YOU - & MATURE YOU

& let me say – THIS Process BEGINS

By You GOING TO

that person who has Offended you

& in HUMILITY – Asking what their intentions were
In their actions that caused you Offense

& then Asking them to FORGIVE YOU
For Being Offended – BY their Actions

Let's Pray