

Living Victoriously Over The Temptations of Offense

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John 17:13–23 (ESV)¹³But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. ²⁰“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²²The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

Luke 17:1–4 (ESV)¹And he said to his disciples, “Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! ²It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin. ³Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, ⁴and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”⁵The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”⁶And the Lord said, “If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.

Temptations to sin are sure to come. The word that the KJV uses is “offenses”.

The word in the Greek is “scandalon” - **σκάνδαλον** offense, *stumbling, cause of stumbling or thing which leads one to sin, a snare*.

Matthew 24:10–14 (ESV)⁰And then many will **fall (skandalizo) away** and betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹²And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

σκανδαλίζω (*skandalizō*). vb. **to cause to stumble, to give offence, to fall away**. *Refers to the experience of being offended or tripped up that could cause falling away from the right path.*¹

John Bevere’s book, **The Bait of Satan**. Bevere says: “One of the most deceptive and insidious kinds of bait is something every Christian has encountered – offense. Actually offence itself is not deadly – if it stays in the trap. But if we pick it up and consume it and feed on it in our hearts, then we have become offended. Offended people produce much fruit, such as a hurt, anger, outrage, jealousy, resentment, strife, bitterness, hatred and envy.” “Often those who are offended do not even realize they are trapped. They are oblivious to their condition because they are so focused on the wrong that was done to them. They are often in denial. The most effective way for the enemy to blind us is to cause us to focus on ourselves”.

Proverbs 18:19 (ESV)¹⁹A brother offended is more unyielding than a strong city, and quarreling is like the bars of a castle.

¹ Michael R. Jones, “**Apostasy**,” in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, ed. Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

Proverbs 19:11 (ESV)¹¹Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.

Ecclesiastes 7:9 (ESV)⁹Be not quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the heart of fools.

Romans 12:19–21 (ESV)¹⁹Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”²⁰To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.”²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

How to best respond when offense comes:

1. Choose to honor God in your response. Don’t pick up the bait, understand that an offense most likely is attached to snatching jaws designed to hinder, trap or hurt us.
2. Matt 18 gives us a process to follow... the goal is not getting even or hurting someone, but reconciliation: Matthew 18:15–17 (ESV)¹⁵“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.
3. Forgive. Forgive as God has forgiven you.

Ephesians 4:32 (ESV)³²Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Matthew 6:14–15 (ESV)¹⁴For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Luke 6:37–38 (ESV)³⁷“Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.” Mark 11:24–25 (ESV)

4. Humility unto the Lord and others. Consider Joseph and Jesus as our examples.

Application: Is there someone that you need to forgive, or to meet with for the purpose of reconciliation? With God’s help, and for the sake of unity, please follow through.