

**Primary Text:** Hebrews 12:14-15 - "See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many."

**Introduction:** Jesus taught that offences are unavoidable. The question is not whether we will be offended, but whether we will live offended. Offence often begins in our thoughts, grows into bitterness, damages relationships, and ultimately affects our walk with God. This study will help us identify the trap of offence and discover God's pathway to freedom through forgiveness and reconciliation.

### **1: Offence Begins in the Mind**

**Proverbs 18:19** - "An offended friend is harder to win back than a fortified city."

**2 Corinthians 10:5** - "Taking captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

**1 Samuel 18:8-9** - "So from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David."

#### **Discussion Questions**

1. Why do you think many offences continue long after the original event has passed?  
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2. What does Paul mean when he says we should "take captive every thought," and how does this apply to offence? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Looking at Saul's response to David, how did insecurity contribute to Saul's offence and eventual downfall? \_\_\_\_\_

### **2: Offence Grows into Bitterness and Strongholds**

**Hebrews 12:15** - "See to it that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many."

**Luke 15:28** - "The older brother became angry and refused to go in."

#### **Discussion Questions**

1. Why does Scripture compare bitterness to a root?  
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2. How did bitterness affect Absalom and the older brother differently, yet produce similar results?  
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3. Have you ever seen bitterness damage a family, friendship, workplace, or church? What were the consequences? \_\_\_\_\_

### 3: Freedom Comes Through Forgiveness

**Ephesians 4:31-32** - "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

**Luke 23:34** - "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

#### Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between forgiveness and excusing wrongdoing?  
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2. Why is Jesus the ultimate example of forgiveness?  
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3. How does remembering God's forgiveness toward us help us forgive others?  
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### 4: Practical Steps for Overcoming Offence

**Proverbs 19:11** - "It is to one's glory to overlook an offence."

**Phil 4:8** - "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure.. think about such things."

**Ephesians 4:26-27** - "Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry."

#### Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important to give people the benefit of the doubt?  
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2. How does replaying an offence strengthen its hold on our minds?  
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3. What practical habits can help us forgive more quickly?  
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This week, practice replacing offended thoughts with prayer and Scripture whenever hurtful memories return.

## 5: Following Jesus' Pattern of Reconciliation

**Matt 18:15** - "If your brother or sister sins against you, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you."

**Romans 12:18** - "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

**Ephesians 4:15** - "Speaking the truth in love."

### Discussion Questions

1. Why do people often talk about an offence to others before speaking to the person involved?

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2. What does Jesus teach us about taking the first step toward reconciliation?

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3. Why is restoration a better goal than vindication?

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### Three Responses to the Message

#### 1. Ask God to Reveal Any Unresolved Offence - Psalm 139:23-24

**Application** - Spend time this week in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal any hidden bitterness, resentment, or offence that you may be carrying.

#### 2. Choose to Forgive Someone Today - Ephesians 4:32

**Application** - Make a deliberate decision to forgive someone, even if your feelings have not yet caught up with your decision.

#### 3. Take the First Step Toward Reconciliation - Romans 12:18

**Application** - Contact someone with whom there is unresolved tension and take one practical step toward healing the relationship.