

RIVERS CROSSING COMMUNITY CHURCH



Community Group Discussion Guide – Don't Drink The Poison Week #1

That Offends Me / February 7, 2021 / Pastor Paul Taylor

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Icebreaker Questions | Tell us a little bit about yourself...
 - a) What do you listen to while driving in the car?
 - AM/FM Radio
 - Streaming Music (ex: Spotify)
 - Satellite Radio
 - Podcasts
 - Audio Books
 - I Don't Listen to Anything
 - b) If you were to write a proverb (i.e. a simple saying that expresses a perceived truth based on common sense or experience) about relationships, what would it say?
2. Despite our best intentions, we can find ourselves predisposed to respond in a certain manner when offended. When you experience an offense, which of the following descriptions fit you the best?
 - You return tone for tone, passive aggression for passive aggression, or jab for jab
 - You restrain yourself externally, but only as a small volcano erupts inside of you
 - You quietly smolder, playing the incident on repeat the rest of the day

Luke 17:1 (HCSB) – He [Jesus] said to His disciples, “Offenses will certainly come, but woe to the one they come through!”
3. Pastor Paul laid out a two-part structure that occurs with every offense: the *feeling* of offense, and the *choice* of whether or not to live offended. Had you previously thought of offenses this way? Do you have a recent example where you wish you could've made a different choice in responding to an offense?

DIVING DEEPER

4. Read the following Bible passages. As you read, have each person circle or highlight where you see any points that reinforce Pastor Paul's sermon. Then discuss the following questions.

2 Timothy 2:22-26 (NLT) – ²²Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts. ²³Again I say, don't get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. ²⁴A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people. ²⁵Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will learn the truth. ²⁶Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.

Ephesians 4:26-32 (NLT) – ²⁶And “don't sin by letting anger control you.” Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷for anger gives a foothold to the devil. ²⁸If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. ²⁹Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. ³⁰And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. ³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. ³²Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

- a) What stood out to you from these instructions on Godly living?
 - b) What do you consider the most challenging aspect of these instructions?
 - c) How is responding to an offense in a way that honors God engaging in warfare against the devil?
5. Offenses come in a variety of degrees. Everything from normal life-in-a-fallen-world brokenness, to encounters with irritating people and provoking circumstances, to intentional insults and mean-spirited slander, to betrayal and abandonment, even to the deepest traumas like sexual abuse.

The book of Proverbs provides instruction to overlook offenses. In the New Testament, some of Jesus' strongest teachings are on God's commandment to forgive those who offend us. When you experience an offense – whether a new one or an old one you're still wrestling with – how can you discern whether to simply overlook it, or to engage in the deeper work of forgiving?

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

Matthew 6:14-15 (NLT) – ¹⁴If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. ¹⁵But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins."

6. When we experience an offense, our natural response is to focus on both the offense and the offender. It's as if we're operating with tunnel vision. The Apostle Peter, recognizing this, offered a simple, and yet profound, solution to this. We'll call it his advice for how to avoid "drinking the poison."

Read 1 Peter 2:19-25 together. While Peter's readers were dealing with offenses that many of us will never face – severe abuse, ridicule, and fiery trails – his advice to be *mindful of God* (verse 19) is one we can learn tremendously from when dealing with any size offense. As you read, circle or highlight the specific elements of God that Peter calls Christians to be mindful of.

1 Peter 2:19-25 (ESV) – ¹⁹For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. ²⁰For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. ²¹For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²²He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

- a) What elements of God do you see Peter calling Christians to remember in the midst of an offense?
- b) Which of these elements – if you brought it to memory more often – would have the greatest impact on how you deal with responding to an offense? Explain your answer.

TAKING IT HOME

7. Is there an offense you're currently struggling to overlook or forgive? If you're willing, share about that with the group. What barriers are preventing you from "pouring out of the poison" of this offense?

What next step do you believe God would have you take with this offense?

PRAYER REQUESTS

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RIVERS CROSSING – THINGS TO KNOW

1. Volunteer Opportunities | What we do as a church wouldn't be possible without our incredible volunteer teams. If you're looking to serve, get started by visiting <https://riverscrossing.com/get-involved/>. If you're unsure where to start, there's a great serving assessment at the top of that webpage.

If you're watching exclusively online and want to volunteer, consider joining our Online Host Team. If you think about our online ministry like our physical buildings, Hosts are like our welcome, next steps, and prayer teams—all in one. Reach out at <https://riverscrossing.wufoo.com/forms/q1wout2k1cx5poi/>.
2. Baby Dedication – Saturday March 20th | If you have a child 2 years old or younger, we'd love for you to participate in Baby Dedication! This experience will teach you how to lead your child in their faith, show you ways that Rivers Crossing will partner with you on this journey, and give you the opportunity to publicly dedicate your child. Learn more and register at <https://riverscrossing.com/baby-dedication/>.
3. Growth Track – Now Online | Looking to experience the extraordinary life found in Jesus? We've moved our Growth Track classes online so you can engage with them on your own schedule. Learn more and take the classes by visiting <https://riverscrossing.com/growth-track/>.