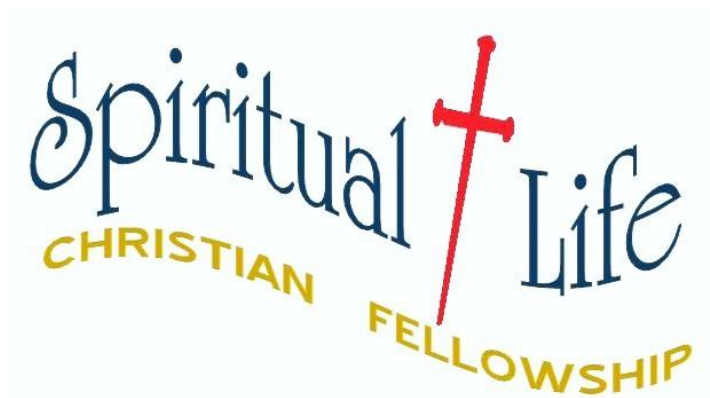


# The Trap of Offense



*Christ Centered, Holy Spirit Empowered, Love Focused*

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**Main Text: Luke 17:1**

(Note all scripture references are from the New King James version on the Bible)

1. **Luke 17:1** Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe *to him* through whom they do come!
  - a. Definition of the Greek word translated Offenses:
    - i. strictly, the movable bait stick or trigger in a trap *trap stick*; by synecdoche, the trap itself *snare*;
    - ii. metaphorically *trap*, i.e. *what causes a person to sin, cause of ruin, occasion of falling*;
    - iii. figuratively;
      1. as an *enticement* to sin or apostasy *temptation, offense*;
      2. as what gives offense or arouses opposition *stumbling block, offense*
  - b. With this meaning we see that offenses among Christians are actually traps, and since we know that God does not lay traps for us, we then know that offenses between Christians are the work of the enemy – the devil himself.
  - c. Jesus warned us that offenses would come.
  - d. Being offended in and of itself is not sin, but when we choose to carry an offense and walk in unforgiveness we then enter into sin.
  - e. The devil wants us to become entrapped in an offense as this stands in the way of the move of God as it breaks unity in the midst of the fellowship.
  
2. **2 Tim. 2:23-26** But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. <sup>24</sup>And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, <sup>25</sup>in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, <sup>26</sup>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.
  - a. When we get caught up in offenses we then begin to quarrel with one another.
  - b. It is easy for us to go and tell someone else how we got offended and even find sympathy and understanding from others.
  - c. But this is not Gods' will – Gods' will is for us to forgive one another even as Christ has forgiven us.
  - d. When we do otherwise we are submitting to the devils will and not to Gods' plan.
  - e. This is a dangerous position as we are walking in captivity and do not even know it.
  
3. Two ways people are offended:
  - a. First is the one who was actually treated unfairly
  - b. The other is one who believes they have been treated unfairly – but this belief is based upon inaccurate conclusions, false information, or a faulty assessment of the situation.
  - c. People in the second instance judge by assumption, appearance or hearsay
  - d. Both are just as bad if we choose to continue in unforgiveness.
  - e. The root of this sin in pride.

4. Deception is hard to spot in our own heart.
  - a. When we are deceived we believe we are right in how we feel and how we respond
  - b. We justify our actions and believe we are justified before God
  - c. We can even find scripture to back us up in our position – but scripture put into action without love is a destructive force.
    - i. (Knowledge without Godly love is deception)
  - d. We see our self as the victim and therefore believe we are right to retain the feelings.
  
5. What is Gods' answer
  - a. Jesus tells us in **Rev. 3:15-18** "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. <sup>16</sup>So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. <sup>17</sup>Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— <sup>18</sup>I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.
    - i. Jesus wants us to see that we need to see clearly with spiritual eyes instead of the eyes shadowed by deceit.
    - ii. When we walk around with spiritual blinders on – we are walking in lukewarm – ungodly love.
    - iii. Godly love is pure love and has no human equivalent outside of the power and forgiveness of God.
    - iv. If we obey scripture and love one another with the love of God then we walk in forgiveness no matter what the offense has been.
  
6. Deceit of offense breeds other sin in our heart.
  - a. Proverbs 18:19 A brother offended *is harder to win* than a strong city, And contentions *are* like the bars of a castle.
  - b. Sin of bitterness – in our attitude that transfers into all our relationships
  - c. Sin of Unforgiveness – that becomes habit in our life and thereby it becomes harder to forgive
  - d. Sin of Anger – we feel justified to react in anger to others when we feel a similar offense even if it is to a lesser degree than the original offense that entrapped us.
  - e. Sin of envy –
    - i. We feel that we are alone in how we are offended and envy the life of others who seemingly do not have people offending them.
    - ii. We envy the good that happens in the life of the one who offended us.
    - iii. We wonder how come God blesses the one who does such harm to us when we seem to just get more wrong done to us.
    - iv. Sin of Resentment –
      1. We resent others when good happens to them
      2. We resent God for not bring vengeance upon our foes

7. A vicious cycle:
  - a. Walking in sin makes it easier for us to be deceived
  - b. The devil owns a foothold and can cause us to trip easier and easier as time goes by
  
8. We need to own our own feelings and situation:
  - a. When we choose to carry an offense and not forgive
    - i. We choose to stay in the trap
    - ii. We choose to follow the will of Satan
    - iii. We bring more heartache into our life
    - iv. We hinder relationships with others
    - v. We protect our emotions and do not let others in – including God
    - vi. We are our own worst enemy
  
  - b. What is the solution
    - i. Repentance and forgiveness
      1. To truly repent we need to completely get over the offense
      2. We need to ask God to cleanse our heart and help us forgive
      3. We need to make restitution whenever possible
  
    - ii. Repentance will only come
      1. When we stop blaming others
      2. We stand accountable before God for our actions
  
    - iii. Our prayer:
      1. God open my eyes of understanding
      2. God help me see my true condition
      3. God make me free from every offense I carry
      4. God take away all my pride and help me be more Christ-like.
  
9. Remember:
  - a. A Christian is what he or she lives – not what he or she believes, teaches or preaches.