
TALK IT OVER

Freedom from Offense

The Awesome Power of Vision – Part 6

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Open your group in prayer, and remember that this is only a guide. Feel free to discuss each of the provided questions in the message notes, or simply dive deeper into just one. Before you close with prayer, take a few minutes to look over the Three Essential Questions towards the end of the document.

Message Notes

Not taking offense:

- Doesn't mean you swallow the truth.
- Doesn't mean you minimize the offense.
- Doesn't mean you let someone keep hurting you.
- Doesn't mean a disagreement or misunderstanding.

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"So then let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another." Romans 14:19 (NASB)

"Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior." Ephesians 4:31 (NLT)

Question 1

According to Romans 14:19 above, how can we grow in freedom from offense? On the other hand, what "evil" behaviors mentioned in Ephesians 4:31 do we indulge in that make it harder to not take offense? Not taking offense *doesn't mean* what four things listed above?

How do you not take an offense?

- Ask God to reveal the hurts in your heart.

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"O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me." Psalm 139:1 (NLT)

Question 2

Holding on to hurts can lead to unhealthy bitterness in our hearts. Read Psalm 139:1 aloud. How can an awareness that God already knows everything about us make it easier to bring our hurts to God for healing and freedom from offense?

- **Ask God to forgive you for the ways you have offended others.**

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"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139:23-24 (NIV)

"Forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us." Matthew 6:12 (NLT)

Question 3

How does the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:12 above show a direct correlation between how we forgive others and how we take in God's forgiveness for us at the cross of Christ? Read Psalm 139:23-24 aloud and ask God to forgive you for the ways you have offended others. Who can you forgive today so that you can live in more of the security of God's forgiveness for you?

- **Forgive the one who offended you.**

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"Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others." Colossians 3:13 (NLT)

Forgiveness of an offense:

- **You ALWAYS release it to God.**

- **You SOMETIMES overlook the offense.**

"A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense." Proverbs 19:11 (NIV)

- **You SOMETIMES point out the offense.**

"If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back." Matthew 18:15 (NLT)

- **You ALWAYS refuse to take revenge.**

"Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, 'I will take revenge; I will pay them back,' says the LORD." Romans 12:19 (NLT)

"Human anger does not achieve God's righteous purpose." James 1:20 (TEV)

"Even if that person wrongs you seven times a day and each time turns again and asks forgiveness, you must forgive." Luke 17:4 (NLT)

Question 4

There are two Greek words in the New Testament for forgive: one means to "offer a gift of grace"; the other means to "release or set free." This is where the freedom comes; this is where you get out of the prison of bitterness! However, it's difficult to overlook an offense and to forgive the one who offended you. Discuss what forgiving an offense means according to the verses above. According to Colossians 3:13, where does the power to forgive come from?

- **Pray for the one who offended you.**

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"But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!" Matthew 5:44 (NLT)

Question 5

This command from Jesus is so well known that many non-Christian are familiar with it. Yet it is so difficult to do! Jesus says to *"love your enemies and pray for anyone who mistreats you (CEV) or "spitefully uses" you (NKJV)*. God often gives us freedom from offense when we pray for those who offend us. Discuss tips or examples which give us encouragement that we can use to find the power to pray for those who have offended us.

- **Remember that God's plan for you is greater than their offense.**

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"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." Genesis 50:20 (NIV)

Question 6

Read Genesis 50:20 above. God gave Joseph freedom from the bitterness of being sold into slavery as he saw the big picture of God's plan to save many lives through his brothers' offense! As Romans 8:28 (NIV) says, *"We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."* Give examples of how God's purpose and plan for your life have proven bigger than the offenses of others as they were in Joseph's case.

The Power of the Cross

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"Christ carried our sins in his body on the cross so we would stop living for sin and start living for what is right. And you are healed because of his wounds." 1 Peter 2:24 (NCV)

"Christ brought us together through his death on the Cross." Ephesians 2:16a (MSG)

Question 7

It's through the power of Christ's death on the cross that you are forgiven of your sins. But God also gives us the power to forgive others at the cross! According to the verses above, how can Christ's death on the cross empower you to find freedom from holding others' offenses against them? As appropriate, share an unforgiven offense and pray for God's power to leave it at the cross right now.

Three Essential Questions

The following questions are intended to be open-ended and encourage members to consider how they felt and what they, or the group, can do as a result of hearing the message!

1. **What did you hear?** *What point in this message was most impactful for you?*
2. **What do you think?** *How did this message challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?*
3. **What will you do?** *How will you or your group put into practice what you've learned today*