



OFFENSE

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Everyone at some point in time has experienced offense. Offense is something that, if not given to God quickly, can take firm root in our lives, growing and eventually destroying our hearts and even the likes of our ministry. What we must do is take constant inventory of our hearts to ensure that we are not being offended by those very people that we are leading.

Two scriptures that I want us to focus on in this article are Matthew 18:15-17 and James 1:19. Matthew 18:15-17 says this, "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. But 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. If 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." One thing is for certain when leading in some aspect of ministry, people are people and people are going to hurt you. It is really that simple. Some people are going to intentionally hurt you and some unintentionally. The key is guarding your heart and helping those you are leading to become aware without you becoming offended. That is why Jesus says in Matthew when someone does something to you go to them in PRIVATE and in LOVE and speak with them about it.

One of the hardest things I deal with is the practice of conflict resolution. I have always been someone who absolutely avoids conflict at all costs. This has caused problems for me in the past because avoiding conflict can be just as damaging as always being confrontational. Real love is going to that person whether you are comfortable or not and helping that person when they are offended. If you think about it God does it to us every time we fall into sin (conviction). It is something to be honest that I am constantly working on because it is hard for me. God does command us to go in love to those who have offended us and help them. If we don't do this we can actually hurt that person even more.

The Bible says in James 1:19, "Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger". When you do approach the person follow this verse. One of the faults I have in avoiding conflict is that I will let things roll off my shoulder and avoid and avoid and then the next thing you know that person will say something, and I approach them and let's just say not the way Jesus approaches me. Now don't take this out of context, I am not evil but sarcasm or the wrong tone will be in my voice. This is where I have taken James 1:19 into my life, being quick to hear, slow to speak and anger.

When you approach someone, you have to be willing to hear their point of view and be willing to search your heart from their point of view. Former President George Bush says, "Too often, we judge other groups by their worst examples while judging ourselves by our best intentions."

When we approach those who we are leading that have offended us or hurt us we have to go to them in love and be slow to speak, and quick to hear. When this happens God assuredly will move and bless.



I encourage you if you are struggling with offense, pray about it and study offense in the bible. Jesus is our greatest example of letting offense go. Jesus is there hanging on a cross after being betrayed by Judas, rejected by Peter, and the people He healed, restored, and feed and some of his final words on this earth is "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34) instead of Jesus being offend by those He was leading He decided to forgive and provide a way for those who have betrayed Him to be restored.