

Five Reasons to Let Go of Offenses

Lesson 02 of the series: "No Offense"

"Take offense" = to become angry or upset by something that another person has said or done

A. We live in a fallen world where we are guaranteed to be offended.

"Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."
John 16:33b (NLT)

"God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers." Matthew 5:11 (NLT)

B. Five reasons we need to let go of offenses:

"A person with good sense is patient, and it is to his credit that he overlooks an offense."

Proverbs 19:11 (GWT)

1. Anger is a very powerful emotion that can easily get out of control.

"Stop being angry! Turn from your rage! Do not lose your temper—it only leads to harm."

Psalms 37:8 (NLT)

"Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires." James 1:20 (NLT)

"You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.' But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell." Matthew 5:21-22 (NLT)

2. We make bad decisions when we are angry or upset.

"Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools." Ecclesiastes 7:9 (NIV)

"Fools vent their anger, but the wise quietly hold it back." Proverbs 29:11 (NLT)

"Those who control their anger have great understanding; those with a hasty temper will make mistakes." Proverbs 14:29 (NLT)

Note: We make more bad decisions when we stay upset.

"And 'don't sin by letting anger control you.' Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil." Ephesians 4:26-27 (NLT)

"Hot-tempered people must pay the penalty. If you rescue them once, you will have to do it again."

Proverbs 19:19 (NLT)

3. We're not nearly as objective as we think.

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death." Proverbs 14:12 (NLT)

"The first *one* to plead his cause seems right, until his neighbor comes and examines him."

Proverbs 18:17 (NKJV)

4. We don't understand other people's motivations as well as we think.

"Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged." Matthew 7:1-2 (NLT)

Note: We don't understand our own motivations as well as we think.

"The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?" Jeremiah 17:9 (NLT)

"Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned

you?' 'No one, sir,' she said. 'Then neither do I condemn you,' Jesus declared. 'Go now and leave your life of sin.'" John 8:5-11 (NIV)

5. We can't solve problems or even have civil discourse if we're always offended.

"Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you." Ephesians 4:31-32 (NLT)

"Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry." James 1:19 (NLT)

"Again I say, don't get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people. Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will learn the truth." 2 Timothy 2:23-25 (NLT)

Good News! "God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him."

Philippians 2:13 (NLT)

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Connect Group questions

1. Without naming names, share something that someone said or did that offended you this week (news story, social media post, the neighbor's dog pooped on your lawn again, etc.). How did you respond?
2. In John 16:33 Jesus told his disciples, "Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world." Yet, when someone offends us we often say, "Can you believe he said/did that?" Why are we surprised?
3. Solomon said, "A person with good sense is patient, and it is to his credit that he overlooks an offense." (Proverbs 19:11) If this is true, how much good sense do you have?
4. Discuss the following five reasons we need to let go of offenses:
 - Anger is a very powerful emotion that can easily get out of control. (Psalm 37:7-8, Matthew 5:21-22, James 1:20)
 - We make bad decisions when we are angry or upset. (Ecclesiastes 7:9, Proverbs 29:11)
 - We're not nearly as objective as we think. (Proverbs 14:12, 18:17)
 - We don't understand other people's motivations as well as we think. (Matthew 7:1-2)
 - We can't solve problems or even have civil discourse if we're always offended. (James 1:19, 2 Timothy 2:23-25)
5. How does the Holy Spirit help us deal with offenses? (Philippians 2:13)
6. Spend some time as a group praying for our church as well as Christians across America. Ask God to help us become "unoffendable."

Great Resource: "Unoffendable: How Just One Change Can Make All of Life Better," by Brant Hansen, W Publishing Group, 2015.