

# OVERCOMING OFFENCE!

We all have been offended by someone and we all have offended someone.

Offences can be unintentional and genuine misunderstandings. They can also be intentional and malicious.

Offences can damage relationships.

*Proverbs 18:19 (tlb) It is harder to win back the friendship of an offended brother than to capture a fortified city. His anger shuts you out like iron bars.*

Greek word for offence is *skandalon*. It means a trap or a snare that causes someone to stumble - a “stumbling block”.

Offences creates a scandal, a hindrance or a obstacle causing one to stumble into sin, hurt, bitterness, rage, self-doubt, withdrawal and isolation etc.

## COMMON CAUSES OF OFFENCE

- **Careless Words**

**No one is perfect.**

*James 3:2b (erv) ...A person who never said anything wrong would be perfect...*

**Our words can be used rightly or wrongly.**

*Proverbs 18:21 (msg) Words kill, words give life; they're either poison or fruit - you choose.*

**Careless words can hurt and injure people.**

*James 3:8-9a (erv) No one can control the tongue. It is wild and evil, full of deadly poison.<sup>9</sup> We use our tongues to praise our Lord and Father, but then we curse people...*

- **Unforgiveness**

The best safeguard against carrying an offence is to be willing to forgive quickly.

*Ephesians 4:32 (niv) Be kind to one another, tender hearted, **forgiving one another**, just as God in Christ also forgave you.*

- **Overly Sensitive**

It is good to be sensitive, but not so sensitive that we are overly suspicious, critical, or moody.

We can be oversensitive because of our past or unhealed hurt.

*Psalms 34:18a (niv) The Lord is close to the brokenhearted...*

*Psalms 147:3 (niv) He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.*

- **Insensitivity**

People can be insensitive to the feelings of others, lack tact and be rude. God's kind of love "*does not behave rudely*" (1 Cor 13:5).

## **HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND WHEN WE ARE OFFENDED?**

Own it! Embrace the fact that you have been offended. Don't be in denial.

Embracing offence is the first step to dealing with it in our heart. Otherwise it will live in our spirit, mind and potentially destroy relationships.

## **4 STEPS TO OVERCOMING OFFENCE**

*Matthew 18:15 (tlb) If a brother sins against you, go to him privately and confront him with his fault. If he listens and confesses it, you have won back a brother.*

**Step 1: Determine whether or not an offence has occurred.**

*"IF a brother sins against you..."*

**Step 2: If an offence has occurred, privately speak with the person.**

*"Go to him privately and confront him with his fault".*

### **Step 3: Earnestly desire reconciliation.**

*“If he listens and confesses it, you have **won** back a brother.”*

Carefully examine our hearts and motives before we attempt to approach the person.

### **Step 4: Make things right if we have offended someone.**

*Matthew 5:23-24 (nlt) If you ... suddenly remember that someone has something against you ... **go and be reconciled** to that person.*

Take the initiative to go to that person we have offended and seek reconciliation through forgiveness.

**C.S. Lewis** said; *“We all agree that forgiveness is a beautiful idea until we have to practice it.”*

*Matthew 18:21-22 (niv) Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, **how many times** shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”<sup>22</sup> Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but **seventy-seven times**.”*

**Jesus encouraged Peter to develop the habit of forgiveness.**

**Forgiveness is not an occasional act; it is a permanent attitude.**

*Mark 11:25 (nlt) But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too.*

*Colossians 3:13 (nlt) You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.*

- . What is your attitude?**
- . Do you occasionally forgive?**
- . Find it hard to forgive?**
- . Do you live in an attitude of forgiveness?**