

Nothing Shall Offend Them

Psalm 119: 165, "Great Peace Have They Which Love Your Law; And Nothing Shall Offend Them."

By B. D. Tate

Wouldn't it be wonderful if you and I never became offended again? Furthermore, that we would never offend anyone else ever again; surely, you would agree that would be heaven ...For without offenses in our lives there would be great peace.

We are all looking for peace: peace of mind; peace in our souls; peace in our bodies from sickness and disease; peace in our world from war, conflicts, violence, and crime.

Psalm 119: 165 says, "*Great peace have they which love your law; and nothing shall offend them.*"

It is not God's will for offenses to come into our lives:

Matthew 18:7, "*Woe to the world because of offenses! **For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!***"

It is God's intention that offenses, offenders, and the **offended be removed from the earth!** In the parable of the weeds and the wheat, Jesus told us that there is coming a day when the end of the harvest will separate them. The weeds will be burned, but the wheat will remain. The weeds, he said, were the sons of the wicked one, but the wheat, they were the sons of the kingdom. Matthew 13:41, "*The Son of man will send out His angels and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness!*"

I don't believe it is too difficult to understand that God is going to remove offenders from the earth—those who practice lawlessness; **but what about those who so often get offended?** I use to think that only the offenders are wrong; however, I want to show you that those who become offended are off on their own thing, going in their own way, and that God's will is not in agreement with it. Offenses will come, and woes to those by which they do come ... but, listen, take heed that you take no record of wrongs!

I Corinthians 13:5, *"Love ... does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, **does not take into account a wrong suffered.**"*

Love does not keep a record of offenses but releases them. We must remember that we all offend in many ways, in word or deed. Consequently, we all fall into the same temptations, (offenses) which are common to all. I need forbearance, you need forbearance, and we are being tempted to take offense—**it is a common problem.**

I Corinthians 10: 13, *"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it "*

Let me try to explain something about offenses. There are several words in the Hebrew and in the Greek, which deal with the area of offenses. The definitions can be summarized in the following way:

Offend: to stumble, to entice, to ruin, a stumbling block.

Offend: to entrap, to trip-up, and to entice to sin.

Offend: a trap-stick, snare, and the thing that offends

a) Offend: To be "offensive" to someone else is to make them stumble, to fall, and to ruin their attitude, their day,

etc...This way of being offensive isn't necessarily on purpose, but is the nature of sin manifesting in a person's way of being, usually unknown to them--a blind spot, unintentionally.

b) Offend: To be an "offender" is someone who wants to entrap, to trip-up another person by enticing them to sin. This is a person practicing lawlessness and aware of it - intentionally.

c) Offend: To be "offended" is someone who has tripped the trap stick, becoming ensnared by the trap. This person has taken the bait set by the trapper and has become trapped. Considered the victim, this person reacts and finds him/her in a state of anger, bitterness, and misery.

We have more of a choice in this matter than we realize and/or admit to. We do not have to be offended, to become entrapped, and play the victim's role... when we become offended...

Proverbs 18: 19, "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and their contentions separate them like the bars a/a castle."

Furthermore, there is great danger and detriment to a believer when he/she becomes offended. **Offenses are traps set for us along the path of life.** Jesus said they must come, but woe to that person by which they do come. These traps are here because sinners are here. These traps are here because evil is present in this world. These traps are not here because God wants them here, nor are they here to bring life to us; but rather, they are here to steal, kill, and destroy life (John 10: 10).

The simple fact is that if someone or something offends us, we are ensnared and trapped by it. **There is always the temptation to react to offenses by feeling we need to defend and protect our rights.** We have a right to be angry, to lash back at the offender ... after all, it wasn't our fault we are the victims!

There is an illusion that by taking on an offense that we are being strong and that we are defending our honor and showing self respect. Anyone with any pride will defend him/her self against stupidity, arrogance, and offenses coming their way, and so we react. What could possibly be the harm? What danger awaits us? What detriment?

Ask yourself "What animal caught in a trap believes that it is in their best interest?" All animals want to get out of a trap as soon as possible; and in most cases it leads to their death for getting caught.

The harm of not staying away from or keeping ourselves free from offenses is the same harm that befalls an animal caught in a trap. Hunters use traps to capture animals; **who do you think is hunting after you?**

*I Peter 5:8 "Be a/sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, **the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.**"*

The truth is that we are not wrestling against the flesh:

Ephesians 6: 12, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."

It is Satan's desire and goal to entrap us in an offense knowing that it will steal, kill, and destroy us in our faithfulness as a believer. **When we take the bait by becoming offended, we are no longer in contention against the kingdom of darkness.** Why because we are in contention with another person--flesh and blood. Furthermore, we are contenting against God and His wisdom. If we continue to maintain our **offendedness, we will find ourselves on the wrong side of the truth.**

In the parable of the Sower and the Seed (Mark 4), the sower sows the seed upon different soils. One of the soils is stony

ground. In this condition, the word was received gladly, but took no root. Those whose hearts are represented by this condition, grow for a little while, but afterward due to tribulation, temptation, and struggle, and are choked out and away from the Word of God in their lives. **An application is that those who become offended have the Word of God choked out of their lives and the end result is fruitlessness and unproductiveness.**

What is the harm of becoming offended? Offended people are **disqualified** people who bear no fruit. Offended people have stony hearts that cannot root deep enough to produce good fruit. Offended people have a shallow faith. According to Psalm 119: 165, they are people who do not fully love the law of God.

When we are offended, another harmful result is that our eyes get taken off of Jesus, and onto the cares of this world. We begin to focus not on God's Word, but on our rights, on the offense, and on other people. When we are offended, we are taking ourselves out of God's **hands and taking matters into our own.** We have decided to become our own defender, to seek our own rights and revenge for the wrong done. We have become our own protector and keeper and ultimately the one who is in charge of our own lives.

We must recognize our weakness to temptations in becoming offended. We are commanded to love, to forgive, to forbear, to release those who have trespassed against us. When we are offended we are *back under the law* which means that since we are not forgiving the one we are offended at, we will not be forgiven *in this realm either.*

*Mark 11:25,26, "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. **But, if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.**"*

God's grace **will never lead us to judge anyone according to the flesh (to become offended)**; furthermore, *grace will keep us* from being offended by realizing that in Christ we are forgiven. Under grace we forgive because we have been forgiven:

Eph 4:32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, **forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.**

Col 3:13 bearing with one another, and **forgiving one another**, if anyone has a complaint against another; **even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.**

Why must we forgive? It is because we are no longer under the law but under His grace:

Rom. 6:14 **For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.**

Resist temptations, resist offenses, do not take them, and do not become entrapped by them. **We must fight not to become offended, by faith deny them, pray through them, and cast them down in the Lord's name (stay grace minded).** We cannot afford to become offended. **We cannot afford to be led by them,** to make decisions based upon them. **God is not leading us by offenses, but by His Spirit.** When we live and move in and around being offended we are in the flesh, not the Spirit.

We are not hearing God's voice when we are offended. **Offended people are in unforgiveness fueled by a judgmental spirit.** Offended people are keeping a record of wrongs, hardening their hearts, and most importantly living without God's peace. Instead of peace there is turmoil, bitterness, anger, resentment, and a vengeful spirit.

Let us continue to grow up into God's love and maturing grace; and keep from becoming offended by God's mercy. Offenses, offenders, and the offended have no future with God.

Our future will be tainted, confused, derailed, and entrapped if we become offended. What we must do is forgive, forbear, have biblical understanding that all are sinners; **it is only by the grace of God that I am not doing what others are doing.** Jesus said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing."

Warning! Don't be caught up in blind pride saying, "I'd never do that." Or "I could never be that way." **These judgmental statements are common among people; these statements really indicate a lack of understanding.**

Epilogue: Did Jesus ever become offended?

-Matthew 21 describes how Jesus cleansed the Temple of the market place where buying and selling was taking place.

-Matthew 23 describes how Jesus confronted the Scribes and Pharisees calling them hypocrites, white washed tombs, and a brood of vipers...

In my opinion Jesus never crossed the line from judging behavior to judging people. In these cases, within Jesus a righteous anger arose in his heart and he took righteous action because of it. Jesus was stating facts and directed his anger towards their unbelief, attitudes, and behaviors.

Remember why Jesus came:

John 3: 17 "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through Him."

We too should exhibit righteous anger and use it as a force within to confront unrighteousness.

A COMPARISON OF BEING OFFENDED VERSUS HAVING RIGHTEOUS ANGER

<u>Being Offended</u>	vs.	<u>Righteous Anger</u>
Has to do with the person.		Has to do with the sin itself

Is unforgiving trying to hurt to get back at them and set them straight.

Produces a loss of inner peace

In condemnation of the person.

Is an act of personal pride.

Is a reaction to a sinner.

Is judgmental of the person.

Is rejection of the person who wronged us.

It traps us in bitterness, resentment, and pain. We have something against another person.

Is being led by the flesh, the “old” nature, revenge is mine.

This is man’s anger which does not Fulfill God’s will.

Is about setting things person, straight or establishing God’s Kingdom on earth.

Is an act of true peace between us, God and the person. Reconciliation between God and us.

Is condemnation of the sin.

Is humility before God being used as a vessel of righteousness in the world.

Is an action against sin.

Is judgmental of the sin that is wrong.

Is rejection of the wrong itself.

It frees us from the sin and delivers from compromise and accepting unrighteousness.

Is led by the Spirit in the inner man. This is not revenge, it is justice, an Action to establish righteousness.

This anger is righteous and keeps God’s Will. It is a force for the truth.

This causes us to sin.

This delivers us from sinning.

(Matt. 18:7; Matt. 13:41; Matt. 18:31-35; Matt. 21 & 23; Eph. 4:26) (Ps. 119:165; Matt. 11:6; Eph. 6:12; Prov. 18:19; Mark 11:25,26)