



Part 7: No Offense

Developing an Unoffendable Heart

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Everyone around us saw we were bypassed. We were embarrassed and offended. But my wife wisely observed that we could allow this thing to hurt us or we could see it as an investment in sensitivity toward other people's feelings. The offense taught us how others feel when they are ignored. Do you see this? You must make that offense become an opportunity to become more Christ-like. The occasions for taking offense are practically endless. Indeed, we are daily given the opportunity to either be offended by something or to possess an unoffendable heart. – Francis Frangipane

1. There are always opportunities to be offended.

2. Offense is the ultimate Christian-killer.

You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.

"Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will **betray and hate each other**, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, **the love of most will grow cold**, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved." – *Matthew 24:6-13*

3. There is a difference between being wounded and being offended.

The difference between:

- a. A bee sting and leaving the stinger in (it festers...)
- b. Anger and resentment (...over time)

4. If you allow a wound to become an offense, the offense will become your God.

5. Spiritual maturity involves developing an unoffendable heart.

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. – *Ezekiel 36:26*

(Continues on back)

Four Keys to Resilience

1. Separate who you are from what others think or do. (Colossians 3:3-4)
2. Respond to injury appropriately.
 - a. Directly (Matthew 8:15; Matthew 5:23-23)
 - b. Kindly (Matthew 5:11-16)
 - c. Quickly (Matthew 4:26-27)

Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it stands than to anything on which it is poured. – Mahatma Gandhi
 - d. Thoughtfully (Proverbs 5:15)
3. Develop and maintain your emotional defenses. (Proverbs 25:28)
 - a. Take firm control of your responses
 - b. Do not borrow an offense
 - c. Carefully manage expectations
 - d. Do not confuse problems with facts of life
 - e. Be careful how you categorize others
 - f. Role-play scenarios to be ready
4. Leave it in God's hands. (Romans 12:19)

Of the seven deadly sins, anger is possibly the most fun. To lick your wounds, to smack your lips over grievances long past, to roll over your tongue the prospect of bitter confrontation to come – to savor the last toothsome morsel of both the pain you are giving and the pain you are getting back, in many ways it is a feast fit for a king. The chief drawback is that what you are wolfing down is yourself. The skeleton at the feast is you. – Frederick Buechner

*Those who love Thy law have great peace, and nothing causes them to stumble.
– Psalm 119:165*

Next Steps

1. Choose one of the four gospels and read the story of Jesus again, particularly focusing on the unfairness he endured.
2. Create a journal page with these headings: Hurt, Severity, Timeline. Fill in this page. Make this page your prayer list for the next thirty days.
3. Watch the movie Hurricane, starring Denzel Washington. Say "Amen" when Ruben "Hurricane" Carter says, "Hate put me in prison. Love's gonna bust me out."

Small Group Questions

1. Does it seem realistic that you could go the rest of your life and not be offended? Why or why not? Have you ever set such an ambitious goal for your spirit?
2. What past hurt makes you sometimes think, "This has gone on way too long?"
3. Read Ephesians 4:1-5:1 out loud. What jumps out at you from this section of scripture?
4. How can we pray for each other, particularly when it comes to offense?