

Offenses

*Satan's ultimate plan for destruction of
love, purpose, and your happiness*



by Amy Maryon

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What is offense?

King James Dictionary defines offense:

To displease to make angry to affront. It expresses rather less than make angry, and without any modifying word, it is nearly synonymous with displease. We are offended by rudeness, incivility and harsh language. Children offend their parents by disobedience, and parents offend their children by unreasonable austerity or restraint.

Vines expository dictionary definition:

To put a snare. Satan sets a trap with bait and wants you to take the offense. This will lead to a life of bitterness, anger, and resentment.

To put a stumbling block in the way. When we allow ourselves to be offended it causes a stumbling block in our walk with God.

People get offended about all kinds of things:

- We get offended when our husband don't recognize our need for a break.
- We get offended when someone at church doesn't talk to us.
- We get offended when someone else is chosen to lead a ministry.
- We get offended when we aren't invited to a ladies group.
- We get offended when our children don't do what we ask them.
- Some of us even get offended at God.

Yes, I did say that. How many of us complain when we don't get what WE want out of life? How many are angry at their situation? How many get mad because they are "stuck" with a no good husband? How

about angry that your van isn't as nice as your best friends? How about if you even get a little upset at God because He didn't answer your prayers the way you wanted?

One of the biggest stumbling blocks to being completely free in life is to not take offense.

Ohhh, those are touchy topics and sounds like a lot of negativity!!! It is hard to go through things and think it just isn't fair that you have to do them. I haven't gone through as much as some people have in life, but I have gone through trials. There were many times, I was angered at God and other people for my "lot" in life. But you know, none of that mattered. None of it hurt anyone but ME. I was the one that suffered with anger and built up frustration. It only led to me taking offense the next time I ran into someone and they said something that "rubbed me the wrong way." I just kept building little offenses over and over until they built into a big one and then some unfortunate person would get the brunt of it. Most of the time it was my husband and children. Then I would pray and ask God to help me rid myself of my anger, but it would keep coming back. What was I doing wrong??

The bible says in Matthew 5:24 that we are to leave our gifts at the altar and then go and be reconciled to our brothers FIRST and then come back and offer our gifts. Do you think God wants us to FIRST get rid of our offense so that we can worship Him freely? Yes He does. Then, He can accept our worship and listen to our prayers and answer them.

But what if you say that you don't actually "hate" someone you are just offended by them? You may be right. Offenses by themselves are generally not anger, hurt feelings, or resentment. But what happens is those annoyances and irritations have the unfortunate ability to build into grudges. These usually lead to sins that a person has allowed themselves to be led into. The sad part is that it is usually done by the persons own mind. After some time your heart has become hardened and anger takes root. You may not think of it as anger but that is what it is called.

And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

Matthew 24:10

This is a sign of the end times. It says that **MANY WILL BE OFFENDED**. They will distrust and desert those they should obey. They will stumble and fall away.

There is a greater attack from the enemy than any other time in history. If Satan can keep us angry, verse 12 of Matthew says that the **LOVE OF PEOPLE WILL GROW COLD**.

This is what we need to be on the watch for. Offenses are strings that add up over and over again. When we see someone whom we have offense at, we may not think that it doesn't matter, but what it is doing is causing our love to grow cold. It causes our hearts to shut out the goodness and blessing that God has for us. If we truly want to be

free and live the life to the fullest then we need to stop taking offense.

Types of offense

There are many ways that we can be offended. We are going to examine six of them.

- Offended by the truth
- Offended by God
- Offended by trouble/circumstances
- Offended by the holy spirit
- Offending ourselves
- Giving offenses to others

Offended by the truth

In John 8:32 it says: *Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free!!*

When you start reading scriptures or you hear a truth from God's word, if it doesn't line up with us and our flesh, we have to be careful not to take offense with this. We usually are quick to think it is not for us but for someone else. But God's word is for us. To help us be free in Him.

I remember very much when God's word—the truth---was teaching me how to change things about myself. I thought in my own mind that I was a pretty good person (smile) But I realized I had a lot of hidden attitudes and heart issues to work on. There was more than one time that I felt like I didn't want to do this. God was showing me how I had prideful, control issues. I wanted to take charge and fix things. I

wanted to do things my way, because I thought it was best (smile) He was showing me that I was a manipulator, and that I had to stop feeling sorry for myself. I had to let down my guard and humble myself before my family and God. It was tough. But I kept on it. It was stretching me. I don't know about you, but I know that when I am stretching it just doesn't feel comfortable. But just as a caterpillar stretches its way out of the cocoon and into a butterfly, that is the same metamorphosis that we go through. When we are stretched, it may feel a little uncomfortable but that is where we are able to push through and enter into the next level of what God has for us.

God can use anyone in any situation that He wants. BUT how much greater of a way can God use us when we completely lay down all of our "stuff" and let Him take control of our lives?

When we hear the truth, for the most part it is hard on the flesh. We are sinful people and when we hear something that goes against what the world has taught us, then it is tough. But it reaps many good things, unlike the world. When we hear the truth and act upon it, it sets our present conditions into line with God and it prepares us for far greater blessings that we can imagine. We want to be moving forward in our walk with the Lord. We don't want to stay stagnant. How much better is a life that is lived to the fullest just by laying aside our pride and becoming meek and submissive to what God has for us? For most, they make excuses of why they don't want to change or don't want to hear that truth. All those excuses are doing nothing but preventing them from moving forward. We want to be FREE!!! We want to be free so that God can use us in a mighty way.

Offended by God

One look at the world and you can see how people take offense at God. Our society is offended by God. The ten commandments posted on a building offends people who look at it. Allowing students to pray in school causes offense to others. Why does this offend them? The ONLY reason it offends them is because THEY DO NOT WANT TO DO IT! They have rejected the One whom has created them, and therefore they reject anything about Him. It is called rebellion and our world is full of it. When you read the 10 commandments, I think almost everyone can agree that they are all good rules to live by. To not kill, not to covet, not to be adulterous are all things that benefit US. God is trying to show US how to have a better life. Everything He says is for our good. But as the bible says in the end times they will rebel and turn their hearts away from the truth.

Offended by trouble/circumstances

Mark 4:14-17

The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

This truth is an important one, you see it happening everyday especially in our churches. If someone is not deeply rooted in God's word, when trouble comes, they fall away. This is a big testimony that I know I

have encountered many times throughout my life. I see wives and teenagers that grew up in the church and when something happens badly in their lives, instead of digging deep into God's word and turning to Him for strength and guidance, they crumble and fade away. It is a sad reality. But God's word tells us about it so that we can be aware and be careful not to do it.

When we are faced with trials or bad situations they can either make us stronger or they will make us resentful. When bad things happen, if we take offense at the situation we start to blame others for it. We may blame God for disrupting our cushy lifestyles. We may even blame the devil---and that is rightly so. But we can also take offense at other people who seem to be more blessed than we are. Sometimes it is just resentment. That resentment takes root to form bitterness towards life and the situations that come our way. But we must be made aware of resentment. This is part of not taking offense.

When we are faced with these trials or bad situations we need to look at them from a whole new perspective. We need to think, that by going through this, it can actually help us get deeper and stronger roots in the Word. I know for myself, when I have gone through trials, the more I was alone and away from others I had only one person to hang onto, and that was God. But during those times is when my faith was strengthened. I realized that once I gave over my situations to Him, He could do far greater of a job than I could do. Then to watch it unfold, strengthened my faith hugely. Seeing His hand do the things that for years I tried to control and change.

When times of trial arise you can really see how faithful you truly are to God. You can see if you are more of an emotional person or if you

are truly committed to the faith. Emotional hearers of the word always fall apart during times of trial. You have seen people being unstable in times of trial. They get angry and make accusations against others, instead of rationally looking at the situation.. This is only a sign of spiritual immaturity. Not that you can't get emotional during times of trial---but what I am saying is that inside, your faith will help you stand the test of your trials. Knowing that God is in control of everything and that he will work ALL things out together for your good. Being careful to guard, to not let your emotions take charge of your faith.

As a side note, you want to avoid people in life that are given to change. However the wind blows through their life that is how they bend, sway, and react. These types of people you cannot count on. They usually have a bad influence and it is just better to stay away.

When bad things or situations happen in your life don't blame God. Lamentations 3:25-28 says that God lays the yoke of divine discipline on us for our benefits. Sometimes it is good for us to experience disappointment. We learn to just shake off the dirt, get back up and go on. We learn not to place our hope in things but to place our hope in God. When we don't get our way all of the time, we learn to appreciate things much more. We grow very thankful for the things that we do have. God is at work ALL OF THE TIME. Just like on a movie, we only see what is going on right here and now. But God is working behind the scenes and we know nothing about what He is doing behind the scenes. We must trust God and NEVER accuse Him of not caring for you. God is good all of the time---I like to say "no, God is GREAT!!"

Offended by the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 4:30

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

The bible says do not offend the Holy Spirit.....who in their right mind would want to offend the Holy Spirit? Did you know that when we fight and do not get along with others we are offending the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is to be living inside of us. It is meant to guide us and direct us to the life that God has for us. God is a god of peace. The Holy Spirit living inside of you is to make your life peaceful. It is meant to help spread unity in our life and community. Where there is unity there is anointing and a blessing from God.

I know that for myself, I cannot carry offense towards someone or something and be anointed by God. It doesn't work that way. How can I go along and share the love of God with others when inside of my heart I am angered or bitter towards others. You can't mix those two together. I would not want to go about my day without the anointing of God in my life. Could you imagine driving down the road, going to the grocery store, or being MARRIED without the anointing? I know, because I lived without the anointing for many years and guess what? I did an awful lot of fighting with my husband. I also did some unkind things to others. I definitely did not reach out and do as God wanted me to do. I saw how if I just would of reacted differently to things, how much better situations would have turned out. I had to learn

things the wrong, hard way. It is so much easier to have the Holy Spirit living within you and helping guide you in your path of life. Once you start listening and stop rejecting, you will come to see all that God has for you just by you simply obeying .

How can we offend the Holy Spirit:

1. When we excuse away our sinfulness. The Holy Spirit is mean to be a source of conviction in our hearts. People use it to support ungodly behavior and to excuse away their sins.
2. When we go against the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit works hand in hand with God's word. It reveals to us the truth and to not lead us away from it.

We all need the presence of God in our lives. I would NEVER want to live without the presence of the Holy Spirit flowing in my life.

Offending ourselves

Did you know that you can offend yourself?

Matthew 18:8-9 says:

And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.

In these verses God is referring to "cutting out" and getting rid of the things that are causing you to stumble in your life. Having a guilty

conscience is a major problem in life. It causes you to shrink back in fear of people finding out your "hidden" sin. You will lack boldness to stand for things God wants you to stand for. When Jesus died on the cross He did it to set us free from condemnation and feelings of guilt. But it is our choice to make right decisions once we accept that He did that for us. We cannot continue to choose sinful behaviors and expect to receive the blessings and benefits of knowing Jesus. His blood bought our freedom. But if we remain in sin when we know that it is wrong, then we are not using the freedom He gave us.

How can we go about not offending ourselves? First we accept and call it what it is SIN. Stop excusing away your problems. State it and name it!!! Then avoid it. Stop participating in that which is causing you to sin. If your conscience condemns it then stay away. That can include;

- Magazines with immodestly dressed people.
- Movies that you would NOT sit with Jesus and watch.
- Dirty jokes, bad language, gossip with people.
- Music that does not have a positive message.
- Books that cause you to dream up images of sinful things.
- Friends that lead us to do things that are not godly.

There are so many different things that are stumbling blocks in our lives. We need to cut them out and throw them away. Some people have said that looking at things or listening to things that are NOT God honoring do not offend them. But what has happened is that they have become numb to the world. Their hearts have become so hardened that things don't even bother them anymore. That is a sad reality. I

don't want to be numb to things. We want to have our eyes open to see the realities of life, to help others, to live a life victorious in Christ.

Giving offense to others

2 Corinthians 6:3

We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry

Proverbs 18:19

A brother offended is more unyielding than a strong city, and quarreling is like the bars of a castle.

I like both of these verses. Not being an offense person is a HUGE way to share the testimony of Christ in your life. If we walk around with sinful behaviors, attitudes, and lifestyles how is anyone else whom has those same issues going to want to change things in their own life? Why would they want a "god" who doesn't even manifest himself in them? One who doesn't help them change from their wrong ways? People are looking for a way out. They want to get away from their worldly lifestyles and ways, if we can't show it to them, then why would they want to change?

Want to know the BEST way to AVOID giving offense to others??

Think before you do or say something!!!

If we were just to "think" a moment before we start to speak, we can usually avoid offending someone. The bible says it is hard to tame the tongue. For many of us, we just speak before we think!!! When our friends are sick with the flu for weeks on end and we start talking

about how we prayed and did not get that sickness---we are causing offense to someone. When we go minister in a low income area and we choose to wear expensive clothing or jewelry, we are probably going to cause some offense. If we know people are struggling with sin in their lives and we prance around dabbling in the sin—because we don't have issues with it, we are causing offense.

We have friends that dress more modestly than we do, whenever we go visit with them, I make sure to dress as modest as they would out of respect to them. If you know someone does something, don't go against the grain and be disrespectful. If your friend struggles with food, don't eat something that you know causes them to crave it in front of them. Help them, encourage them.

If you are in a disagreement with someone, the best thing you can do is stay calm. Allow others to have their way in the conflict. By choosing to remain calm and not be part of the disagreement puts a quick end to the anger and will stop the offense. Being part of foolish and dumb arguments are NOT a sign of a believer. God wants us to be the peacemakers, helping others to learn to have self control in their lives.

Be considerate of others and think how they feel in their own situation. The saying "put yourself in someone else's shoes" is a huge reminder of how we are to walk around in love and not in offense.

What offense does to us

When we go about our life and someone or something comes our way that "hits a nerve" and then bam!!! We are offended!!! It happens suddenly, it doesn't usually take time to sink in, we are either easily offended or not. It is like a wound that refuses to get better. It festers, continues to open, reddens, and gets infected. It hurts and keeps infecting our life with anger, bitterness, un-forgiveness, sickness, and strife. It will rob us of so many good things that God has for us.

For most people, it is hard to forgive. They might get to the point of forgiveness but they don't usually forget. Satan knows if we don't forgive and forget then he can bring that offense up over and over again. He will use it as a tool against us to keep opening that wound and digger deeper, to cause bitterness in our soul. He LOVES to see us miserable and so loathed in our own self pity. He is sick soul.

Ephesians 6:12

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

We have to remember that we are not striving against people, but against demonic forces that are trying to oppress us. When we allow ourselves to get offended it is like stepping into that trap. Remember the definition from the beginning? Offense is a snare set by Satan. We cannot get out until we forgive and release the other person from the offense.

Holding onto bitterness and anger only causes us to be affected physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Physically it will create stress in the body, as the body no longer can function doing the natural processes of day to day. It has to work hard to help ward off the excess pumping of the heart due to stress and anger. This causes a weakness in the body, which in turn can lead to sickness, tiredness, and more stress on our heart. Repeated anger over the years leads to a multitude of health problems as in high blood pressure and heart conditions. How easy it sounds to take care of our bodies physically by not taking offense at things?

Emotionally is a big one. How many of you deal with depression and sadness in your life? I know I did for years even after I was a believer. I would let offenses eat at me for days on end. I let Satan beat me down and make me believe I was not worth something. But let me tell you, the day I stopped believing in all that garbage was the day I was set free from my sin and bondage. It was, and is the best decisions I have ever had. DO NOT let Satan work on you through offenses and make you believe you are not someone highly favored by the Lord. Our minds are a delicate thing, when offense comes your way DON'T TAKE IT.

Spiritually, offenses will not allow us to move to that next level that God has for us. We all work towards a greater goal in life. We want to strive to keep working towards learning and experiencing a greater level of spiritual-ness that can only come from God. Most people never get to experience this awesomeness from the Lord. They are so stuck in bondage of sin and it happens because of their own selfish choices and choosing to take offense at things.

We may get offended that the pastor speaks on giving and tithing. Even when they share the blessings of seed sowing and all that God has done, we get offended. We may remember hearing a story of someone who has abused this principle and now we reject hearing the words of the Lord. We think all he wants is our money so we reject the principal and choose not to experience the blessing.

We may get offended because they didn't choose us to be the new Sunday school teacher. We stop going to church because we are offended by that. This ONLY hurts us spiritually and we miss out on the blessings God has for it. How do we know what God is going to work out in our lives if we get offended over things that WE THINK need to happen? We have to start believing God and let Him work in our lives.

Why we should not take offense

Offense is a stumbling block in our life. It doesn't have to be this way. Usually it is the little things that annoy us. We all have pet peeves in life. We get offended by the government, in stores, traffic, by our pastor, by people we don't want to hear, and we get offended by God. We get offended that God didn't answer our prayer. Maybe our life isn't going a certain way so we get mad. This in turn goes hand in hand with how we react and respond in life. We get offended so we stop doing something. We may stop giving to church, we may stop attending church or a group, we may even stop praying. We sit and hurt and seethe. All this does nothing but hurt us. We make "think" we are punishing the other person, but we are only hurting us. Life still goes on, just with us not in it. Now we are alone. Alone with our thoughts of self-pity and hurt. We sit and think things through more than we should. Satan has set the trap and has us caught!!

The less offense we take the happier we will have and the more peace we will have in our life. When our hearts are free and there is no offense than we can just love people. When you are free to love people without offense that is the biggest thing in life. We will get the most reward by taking this approach.

1 Philippians 9-10

I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding. For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return.

He prays this so that love would abound more and more in our hearts. We will have love in our hearts and will not take offense or give offense to others because the first thing that flows out of our lives is love. Let love at all times keep you in a place where you can just love others.

The more that you get your mind off of yourself,
the happier you will be.

People think that by living a life of a Christian is hard work. We may think it is hard, but it is nothing compared to the life of a sinner. It is hard work to be a sinner and live a life of hopelessness. Having no one or way to turn to in life and just going about in our own sinful desires is hard. People of the world when in times of need or desperation have no where to turn. They give into Satan and let him destroy them. They may "think" that they need no God to help them in life, but trials and tribulations WILL COME. Woe to the man who does not put his trust in God almighty.

Another reason of why we should not take offense is because it is NOT always about ME!! Yes, I said it. We think that everything in life is about US. When someone is angry and retaliates against us, we take it personally. The majority of the time, it is about that other person and their own issues they are working out. When someone says something mean and condescending it is usually their own securities in life and

they are speaking them out in hopes of sounding better themselves. We have to be on guard and be smarter than they are.

Stop living irrationally or so self-absorbed in life. This causes so much needless suffering. A person being inconsiderate about missing an important date or being spiteful in some remark is a direct reflect of a fault in them not you. This fault in the other person does not need to become part of any of your problems ---so don't take them!!!

Personal testimony.....

I remember before I was saved, how hard it was to feel accepted and loved by anyone. My husband would say something and I would take offense at it. My friends would say some comment that I took to heart and I would think on it over and over again. I felt like I never measured up to what the world says I was to be. Even as a teenager, I felt like I had to be this slim, perfect looking girl with zero flaws. I went around pretending like the rest of the world with my mask on. But deep down I just had wounds and offenses that tore away at my heart. I was good to keep them oppressed for some time, but then when my life hit a downward spiral, Satan had me so ashamed of myself and I felt like I was worth nothing. He played over and over in my head how no one loved me and how I was a complete screw up. He made sure to put people in my life that were to magnify and relay that message to me again and again. Even as an unsaved teenager, I remember the few people that God would bring into my life that tried to encourage me and set me on a path of righteousness. I unfortunately did not listen, but I do remember them. Satan had me so bound in my own offenses that I

took towards everyone else that I had lost hope and happiness towards life.

I remember the night that I tried to end my life. When I was depressed, which was often, I would write down my feelings into journals. Almost as if I were writing letters to someone. I only wished someone would reach out and read those letters and give me hope to my situation. I remember the daze and confusion I felt from taking too many pills and I remember my brain going through wrestling with my past and all of my bad memories. It was like a storm was brewing in my mind and I was reliving it over and over. Satan was taking me and all of my misery to hell. He was showing me all of the bad things I had done in my life. He was showing me all of the things that I did that were unkind and mean towards others. He was revealing all of my sins to reinforce to me why I deserved to die. "You are a worthless girl!" "Shame on you for putting your family through this!" "Life is going to be much better with you not in it!"

He had me. I remember feeling and seeing a thunderstorm raging in my mind and all of this going on, then I fell asleep.

By God's grace, my parent found me and took me to the ER. I remember hearing the sneers from the nurses and even family members that this was a stupid choice to do. In the midst of them trying to pump my stomach and save me from my foolish choices, I was still being taunted by the devil. I remember one older nurse who would just smile as she went about her job. She showed compassion and love and kept telling me that I was going to be all right. I know that she was a Christian, because she was the only one that acted differently

than the other nurses. God gave me a glimmer of hope, even though I did not deserve any of it and I was not looking for Him at all.

It took time to heal. That was definitely a turning point in my life. I started going to church, but not having a relationship with Jesus. I still felt empty, but I was still searching for that hope. It came one day while watching television and it was a Billy Graham commercial for Power for Living. You could call and request a free packet. I did!!! I received my packet and devoured it. I could not believe that I finally had the answer I was looking for in life!!

It has been years since my conversion, 15 to be exact. God took me on a crash course in "living the life of a Christian." He gave me some wonderful individuals that really helped me deal with issues that were preventing me from moving to those next levels in life. I am thankful for all of them. I feel like in such a short amount of time, I had learned so much. He was prepping me for my purpose because I had slacked for so many years. All I had to do was listen. I could have chosen the easy route and just got by, by doing the minimal. But I have already lived that life of self loathing unrighteousness. I don't want any part of it. I want to experience the best!! I want to do all that God has for me. I messed up an awful lot and I know I missed out on great blessings in my life because I did not listen. No more of that!! No more of Satan's control and taunting. He no longer can jeer and snide that pitiful, little broken girl who was a mess.

As a child, who was abused by sick adults, he just waited for that day when I decided to eat those pills. After I made wrong decisions over and over again, blaming it on my abuse as a child he knew I would crack. Replaying over and over in my mind how I was worthless and wouldn't

amount to anything. He loved every moment of it. He had my hooked. He was glorifying in all of his sickness. He was thinking he won. But as Satan looks upon me now, he knows that I have a voice. He has NOT won me over. God is victorious above all and He will stomp out that devil and bring you to a place where you deserve to be!!! For someone who never deserved anything in life, I am thankful that God has given me so much. I could never have imagined all that God could do from a former person who walked away from Him. For someone whom took offense at Him, He still wants you to goto Him. That is unconditional love. No matter WHAT you go through or WHAT you do, know that God is standing there waiting for you to turn to Him. He is good, and we can know how GOOD He is by laying aside offenses and turning towards Him for awesomeness!!!!

Why not to give offense

2 Corinthians 6:3

We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry

Our ministry is related to our relationship with Jesus Christ. If we walk around causing offense to others, than people are going to find fault with us. This will in turn cause them not to accept the faith. We need to be careful, praying that ALL of our life, motives, and thoughts are pure.

A study of Paul's life epitomizes the declaration of giving no offense in anything. A study of the life of Paul shows his self-denial and sacrifice. He sacrificed a great deal to become a Christian. He gave up even more to preach the gospel. In all of this he followed the example of Christ, who gave the most of all.

He expresses his willingness to sacrifice his rights in many ways. He said that he would be willing to forego the eating of meats if that would cause his brother to stumble. How many of us choose to not do something especially if it causes others to stumble. Do you enable others to continue in sin because you can "handle" things and they cannot? We must be careful in what we choose to do, as to not cause our brother/sister to stumble.

Paul subjected himself as a servant to others. Why would Paul want to live his life in such a way? Paul was motivated because his priorities were lined up with God's. He was not materialistic, worldly, or selfish. He would have been willing to sacrifice for anyone or anything else. Paul

knew that by his conduct and attitude it could discredit the gospel and his preaching of it. Many were offended and turned away not by the truth of the gospel but by the attitude or conduct of the one preaching it. How true this is in today's society as well. We shouldn't preach to offend others. We need to be preaching in a compassionate manner. Being gentle and mild. Present the truth, don't water it down, but do it with no offense in your heart. This is the only way to share God's love without being guilty of giving offense. If it is rejected, then you know it wasn't you that kept them from salvation but their own self.

We also need to take an inventory of our life. Just as important as presenting the gospel to others, people usually change due to example. They want to see why this God is so great. They want to see the blessings that flow out of your life because of you making the decision. If you are struggling in areas and not willing to give them over to God and be honest about them—why would they need to change? How sad to think that one thoughtless action might cancel all the many positive efforts put forth in the cause for Christ. One major blow up and loss of self control could be the basis for someone choosing not to follow Christ. We need to be careful when walking our walk.

Proverbs 4:23

Keep and guard your heart with all diligence above all that you guard, for out of it flow the springs of life.

We are a walking example of Christ.

When to deal with offense?

When is the best time to deal with offense?? The moment it happens.

1 Peter 5:8

Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

We need to RESIST the devil at his onset. He is looking for a door to enter. DO NOT let him get into yours.

If someone has offended you or something has happened between you, do as it says in Matthew 18:15:

If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back

It says to privately win back your brother, you are to follow this pattern. If you continue reading to the next verse it states that you are to do this first and if they do not listen, take 2-3 people with you to confront. How many times do we just skip this part of the verse and go to someone else for "advice?" Don't go with an attitude of anger or righteousness. Go and say, "I am sorry the devil is messing with me on this so I need to say something".....or you can say..."maybe you meant nothing by this, but I felt offended because..." Maybe the person didn't even think about what they said---that is usually the case. But go about it the right way. You can avoid all kinds of trouble by following the principles God has laid out for us. We can get into all heaps of offenses by going to the wrong people---go to the one that offended and state your case peacefully.

Love covers a multitude of sins.

In Genesis 9:22 the story of Noah explains covering a multitude of sins. After the ark was docked, they planted some vineyards and Noah got drunk and lay naked in his tent. Isn't the bible pretty graphic on some things? In verse 21-23 Ham, the son of Noah saw that his Dad was in there naked, and he told his brothers to come check this out. He was probably laughing, thinking it was funny. Nakedness represents wrong doing in the bible. Well instead of the brothers following along and laughing away the Dad's sin, the bible says that Shem took a garment and went backwards into the tent to cover his Father.

If you continue reading you will notice that even though one son uncovered the sin and blabbed it to others. He had a curse put on his life for his disobedience. But the two that covered him in love were both individually blessed by their father.

We can be blessed by God if we don't always blab what other people do. We need to pray for them and ask God to cover their offenses.

If you are guilty of uncovering a sin of others, ask for forgiveness. Pray that God will forgive you for uncovering your brother or sisters weakness and for telling their secrets of what they have done. Stop doing it and give yourself a brand new start. This is important!! We get a big kick out of telling others about each other's sins. Think about that the next time you get together with your girlfriends. How many times does this enter the conversation....."You won't believe....." "Can you believe....." "You are NOT going to believe this....." I know that I am guilty of doing this many times in my life. We need to stop

spreading other's weaknesses and do as the bible says.....love covers a multitude of sins.

Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.

1 Peter 4:8

This is all about going higher in life. For myself I WANT every blessing that God has for me in my life. We need more and more of his grace so that we can handle situations with people in a godly way not in a carnal way. Can you imagine someone saying..."I am so grateful that you brought that up because I did not even know I was doing that." How much better could a situation go instead of spitefulness?

God sent his Son so that we can live a life full of His love. We want to abound with his greatness. I love a word that will propel me to a higher level. Love covers a multitude of sins.

Offense will keep us from loving people. When we have unforgiveness and don't deal with the little stuff, it grows. It is not our job to take offense. It is our job from God to act without defense. Jesus did not take offense. Here is a man who was rejected, abused, and he even had his friends go to sleep on Him when he asked them to pray. Why didn't he take offense?? Because he knew WHERE HE CAME FROM AND WHERE HE WAS GOING! If anyone can know that, then they can have victory in their life.

Your value is NOT determined by how someone has treated you.
KNOW WHO YOU ARE!!

How to deal with offense?

Need a great biblical example of someone who dealt with not taking offense? Take David as an example. When God told Samuel to go and choose a boy who would be the next king of Israel, he looked through the 7 brothers all lined up and ready to be chosen. But he did not choose any of them and so he asked if he had anymore? David's dad responds with "well, yeah there is David out in the field." Now if you wanted to take offense, that would have been a good time to take it!! Can you imagine if your brothers were all lined up to be chosen to be king and your dad didn't even bother to even get you to be considered?? Talk about wanting to take offense!!! But David did not complain, and what did God do? He had the prophet choose him right in front of his brothers. Can you imagine? If your brothers were all lined up assuming they would be chosen and here comes the most unlikely person----you. I am sure his brothers were complaining and seething!!!

As we continue on with the story of David, he doesn't get why any of these soldiers did not want to fight Goliath. The reason David wanted to fight is because he KNEW God would fight with him. Why was he so sure that God would be with him? Because he KNEW God. He spent most of his day alone with his sheep. This enabled him much quiet time with the Lord. When you get lonely, don't ever get mad at God, take it and use it as a time with Him.

After God had moved us 700 miles from all we have ever known, I went through a quiet time in my life. I didn't know anyone, we hadn't found a

church yet, and I had much spare time on my hands. But instead of using that time to mope and complain that God had moved me away from my friends and things I knew, I used it as a time to grow in the Lord. He used that time to really speak to me about what He was going to do. He was strengthening me, equipping me, and helping my faith grow deep. I am truly thankful that I did not take that time to even doubt what God was going to do. I am excited for all that He has done in my life and I look forward to more and more of His blessings.

The quieter you become, the better you can hear
God.

More and more as we read David's story we see how his brothers tried to diminish him. They didn't want him to think that he had any value. They were angered and jealous within themselves so they took their frustration out on him. They would condescend him. But he was used to it and so he responded by turning away. He knew not to take offense. Don't let anyone diminish what you do or make you feel belittled. Any job that God has given you to do, is a job that is important. If you are "just" a stay at home mom---thank the Lord that you are willing to raise up mighty warriors. If you "just" clean houses, thank God for a person willing to be a servant for another. God cares ONLY about the part He has asked you to do. Your job as a CEO of a company is just as important a job in the kingdom of heaven as being a stay at home mom. We all have roles and purposes to fulfill here on this earth, we do them to the best of our ability and wait for the blessings to flow.

David was out doing what God wanted him to do. He was out tending the sheep in the field. Doesn't sound like much of a noble job, but he was doing what he was supposed to be doing and low and behold God came and plucked him out from his place. He then placed him in a position to be king!!! When you are doing what you are supposed to do you never know when God will nab you to do something greater.

David was a great example of not taking offense, I encourage you to read the entire context in 1 Samuel.

Why is all this not taking offense so important? All of this centers around how this anger affects our prayers. If you are going to pray for something, you ought to pray for prayers that are going to get answered.

Then Jesus said to the disciples, "Have faith in God. I tell you the truth, you can say to this mountain, May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea, and it will happen. But you must really believe it will happen and have no doubt in your heart. I tell you, you can pray for anything, and if you believe that you've received it, it will be yours. 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.

Mark 11:22-25

If you are going to complain about something, don't bother to pray about it. God doesn't answer complaints, he answers prayers. God says that whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone first forgive before you pray. This includes any offenses against your neighbor, your husband, the lady at the store, a friend, etc. Any type of offense no matter how big or small WILL hinder your ability to have prayer answered.

leave it and let it go!

If we want to be truly free in Christ then we need to not take offense. We need to be modeling our life more and more after Christ Jesus. Jesus tells us to love one another. Love IS NOT touchy, fretful, or resentful. Love is patient and kind. Hmmm sounds like a verse 😊

Remember that people who are easily offended are selfish. They are an easy mark for Satan, he sets the bait and they take it. Misery loves company. This is so true. A negative person always believes the worst over the best. Most of the time it is just an insecurity. The person taking the offenses love tank is empty. They feel rejected by all that is going on around them.

All this just hinders God's ultimate plan for our life. We can't go forward, we stay stagnant. Do you know what a body of water looks like that is stagnant and doesn't move? It is nasty, it starts to grow algae and forms green scum all over the top of it. It smells badly too. We want a life that is free to flow Christ through us. We want to move out of that stagnant pond out to the living flowing waters that Jesus has for us.

Taking offense is useless. We pay a high price for something that is useless. If we are going to be victorious in life than we need to refuse to be offended.

As a personal note, this is the BEST advice that my pastor gave me in my life. I thought they were "exaggerating" when they said, "Amy,

learn to not take offense." I had to think about it for a little bit, but then realized that this is the WISEST advice ever. If we don't take offense, then things can't build up and fester. Relationships with our husbands will be able to grow positively because we both aren't taking offense in things. Usually if one person starts to do something it is much easier for the other person to follow suit. You can't start an argument if the other person refuses to participate. This helps the other person work on anger issues very quickly. If you don't feed into what Satan is trying to do, then God can grow you. In a marriage it is good to grow together, instead of apart.

If we don't get offended at the decision our church makes when "we" think it should be different, then God knows that we are humble enough to do His plan. He will make things work out for His glory. Usually these plans are a much greater plan than what we "thought" we wanted. Plus it does not cause division within the church. God's home. Who wants strife and bitterness in their home?? Not me!!

If we don't take offense at remarks made by friends then our relationships are able to continually grow so that we can encourage one another and lift each other up. God gives us friends so that we can have an accountability partner. He also does it so that we can share and encourage one another in life. Doesn't everyone like encouragement when going through trials? It is much better to NOT be alone when trials come. But if we take offense at things, we might not turn to that person when we need them. We will miss out on the blessings and encouragement that God can work through them to us.

Love is the ultimate cure for offenses. It will destroy self-centeredness that thrives on its own self-seeking interest and rights.

It will forgive those who disappoint us. Love WILL cover a multitude of sins.