

“THE BELIEVER’S STD’S”

Text: Hebrews 12:15

Subject: How to keep a good attitude when you don’t get your own way!

Introduction

1. Hebrews 12:15 (in my opinion) is the greatest healing verse in all of scripture.
2. It’s a revelation of how God wants you to be whole.
3. It’s a diagnosis, prognosis and a prescription all in one.
4. It’s the answer for anyone who has ever been offended in the past (or ever will be offended in the future).

Question: How many of you have ever been offended?

Question: How many of you have ever been mistreated, misunderstood, criticized, disappointed or embarrassed by someone?

Question: How many of you have ever heard someone gossip, whisper, slander or share an evil report about someone else?

Question: How many of you have ever observed someone disrespect delegated authority in the home, on the job, in school, on TV or in the church?

Question: How many of you have ever met someone with a scowl on their face, anger in their heart or poison on their lips?

In Hebrews 12:15...

- How to live with an “offended free” heart and enjoy the journey.

I. The “Reality” Of Offense (Or what is an offense?) Luke 17:1

“Then said he unto the disciples, it is impossible but that offenses will come.” (Luke 17:1)

- ◆ The word “offend” comes from the Greek word SKANDALON.
- ◆ The word SKANDALON refers to the part of a trap where bait was attached to allure it’s victim.
- ◆ It describes a trap used by Satan to bring people into **captivity**.

In other words

1. Jesus said it is impossible to live in this world and not have the opportunity to become offended (and)
2. Becoming offended is a trap (or tool) of satan to bring people into bondage and captivity to destroy their health, peace, relationships and future.

In other words

Satan blinds us to this one central truth – what is it?

- That just because you’ve been mistreated or misjudged and feel justified in withholding forgiveness – you never have permission to hold on to an offense. (Why not?)
- Because **two wrongs** do not make a right!

(So in reality)

1. It is impossible to live on earth with imperfect people and not be offended!

2. It is satan's will (and trap) for you to view yourself as a victim – to justify withholding forgiveness!
3. It is death to the soul to hold on to an offense:

James 1:20

“For the anger of man prevents the righteous character of God from being formed in your life.”

In other words

Whenever I'm offended (and allow it to turn into anger) I dam up the grace of God and prevent God from going deeper in my life!!!

II. The Reason For Offense (Or what causes someone to be offended?) John 13:2

“And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, to betray Jesus.”

Question: What did Judas do?

Answer: He betrayed his loyalty to Jesus.

Question: Why did Judas betray the Lord?

Answer: Because he was offended!

Question: Why was Judas offended?

Answer: Because in John 12:3-7 he **disagreed** with a decision Jesus made over the pound of spikenard that Mary poured on Jesus' feet.

- Judas said it was a waste of money and took issue with Jesus about it.
- Jesus said to Judas, *“Leave Mary alone.”* (And allowed Mary to continue on.)
- John 13:2 says, *“And supper being ended, the devil having **now** put into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray him.”*

In other words

- Satan trapped Judas when he disagreed with Jesus.

Because

- Judas became offended with Jesus over the spikenard of Mary.

In other words

- The reason Judas became offended is clear:
 1. He disagreed with Jesus' decision about Mary's offering and,
 2. He was told by Jesus to leave Mary alone.

And it was at this moment of disagreement

- That satan found an **open door** into the heart of Judas.

In other words

- Instead of letting go of the disagreement and moving on to something good...
- Judas took offense because he didn't get his way and became toxic with negative emotions like anger, resentment and bitterness (because of an un-crucified self-life).

Question: How do you respond when someone disagrees with you?

Question: How do you process it when you don't get your own way?

Question: How easy is it for you to get offended or resist those you disagree with?

Question: How long does it take you to “get over” your feelings of being hurt?

Question: How happy are you when you lose your temper, avoid those closest to you or realize you can’t control everybody else?

III. **“Removal” Of Offense** (Or what makes it possible to live offense free?)

Hebrews 12:15

“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you and thereby many be defiled.”

Question: What is the truth about offense or bitterness that frees us to live a healthy life?

Answer: It’s all wrapped up in six words found in Hebrews 12:15:

#1. **“Looking Diligently”**

- This phrase comes from the Greek word EPISKOPOS
- The word EPISKOPOS means four things: to watch, to look carefully, to take oversight, to see to it.
- It means to carefully take oversight of what goes on in our heart.
- It means we are responsible for what develops in our spirit, emotions and reactions.
- It means we can never **blame** our attitude or bitterness on somebody else.
- It means you and I are the only ones who can give **permission** to destructive seeds to grow inside of us.

In other words

- You are the only one with the authority to decide what you hold on to (or release) inside your spirit.

In plain vanilla

1. God will hold others responsible for what they do to us (and God will hold us responsible for what we allow to grow in our minds and spirits).
2. We are not responsible to answer for the actions of other people (we are responsible for our inward response to what others have done to us).

Question: How many of you want to take responsibility for your own actions?

#2. **“Root”**

- The word “root” comes from the Greek word RIDZO.
- The word RIDZO refers to a root that goes down and is deeply embedded in the soil of the heart.
- It means that the longer I wait, the more deeply a mental stronghold becomes **fixed** inside me.

In other words

- God is saying – the longer we tolerate offended attitudes, the more deeply the root is allowed to grow.
- The longer I **resist** the calling voice of God, the harder it becomes to hear that voice again and,
- The longer I **stay** where I do not belong, the harder it becomes to exit that place!

Question: Is the enemy trying to plant a root within your heart?

Question: Is there anything below the surface, hidden from others that is preventing you from growing stronger in the Lord?

#3. “**Bitterness**”

- The word “bitterness” comes from the Greek word PIKRIA which refers to an inward attitude that produces a scowl on someone’s face.
- The word PIKRIA describes an acid to the soul that begins to surface.
- What surfaces is a fruit that is sour, sharp, critical, scornful, sarcastic and bitter.
- This fruit looks for **negative** things to say about someone who has offended you.

Question: Do you have negative feelings towards anyone who has offended you or anyone you have disagreed with?

Question: Are you willing to give God permission to extract this contaminating root?

Question: Have words from your lips revealed there is pain in your heart that God wants to deal with?

#4. “**Springing Up**”

- The phrase “springing up” comes from the Greek word PHUOO.
- The word PHUOO refers to a small plant that is just breaking through the soil.
- It means there is a seed hidden in the soil that is producing fruit above ground.

In other words

- What is little will **grow** unless we deal with it!
- What is left alone will surface and **surprise** us one day!
- What is allowed to stay “covered up” will one day **blow** up and hurt other people.
- What we refuse to weed out will defile us and lead to something worse.

Question: Are there any visible emotions that reveal an unhealthy seed below the surface?

Question: Notice anything “springing up” in your spirit that alarms you?

Question: Any little inconsistencies that are trying to grow bigger and control you?

#5. “**Trouble You**”

- The words “trouble you” come from the Greek word ENOCHLEO which means to trouble, harass or annoy you.
- It refers to something (or someone) that bothers you and upsets your peace.
- It means to be emotionally **agitated** by negative thoughts about someone that festers and follows you wherever you go.

Question: Do you have a grudge against anybody in the world?

Question: Do negative thoughts bother you when you think of them?

Question: Do you say derogatory remarks about someone who offended you sometime in your past?

Question: Do you ever wonder how God can bless someone who’s been ugly or hurtful to you?

#6. “**Defiled**”

- The word “defiled” comes from the Greek word MIAINI and means to spill, spot or to stain.
- It means - anyone who is inwardly upset with someone and doesn’t deal with their raw emotions will soon verbalize their inward feelings and defile other people.

In other words

- If we don't get **healed** from our injuries, we will **injure** or stain others.

It's either or

- We either take our pain to the cross and be healed or,
- We spill and spot and stain everybody else with our pain, poison and toxic communication.

In other words

- We forgive and are healed or we retain and then stain those we touch.

Only two choices!

Question: Is all of this in Hebrews 12:15 that important?

Answer: Notice the phrase "**Lest any man (or woman) fail of the grace of God.**"

Question: What does it mean to "**fail of the grace of God?**"

Answer: It means it's possible to fail in two ways:

1. We can fail to receive God's grace and forgiveness for ourselves and,
2. We can fail to grant grace and forgiveness to those who offend us like we offended God.

In other words

- ◆ Forgiveness for us was undeserved, but God still gave it to us in Christ.
- ◆ Forgiveness from us to others may be undeserved as well – but we still give it.

Why?

- ◆ Because we received it from God when we didn't deserve it!

"Lest anyone fail of the grace of God" means:

1. It's possible to reject God's offer of forgiveness for yourself. (**And that produces guilt**).
2. It's possible to reject forgiving others for what they've done to you. (**And that produces bitterness**).
3. It's possible to "put things off" to a later date that we know we should address today. (**That produces hardness of heart** and wasting of time.)

Conclusion/Altar Call

Question: Preacher, what do I do?

1. You accept responsibility for what is inside you!
2. You humble yourself before God and let the truth set you free from yourself!
3. You give God permission to extract anything (small or great) that is growing and sprouting that defiles you.
4. You make no excuses, blame no one else, stop justifying your right to be offended and experience Romans 5:20...

"For where sin abounds, grace much more abounds."

“LIVING OFFENSE FREE”

1. Refusing to deal with an offense will forfeit your potential and keep you living in the **past!**
2. Offended people **stain** everything that filters through their life!
3. Offended people refuse access to people who are believed to be in debt to them - they build **walls** instead of bridges!
4. An offended heart produces bitterness and bitterness grows to the degree that our revenge is not **satisfied!**
5. When we blame other people for our own toxic attitudes, we've become **blind** to our own faults and shortcomings!
6. Harboring an offense keeps you from seeing **yourself** – because blame is deferred to another!
7. Offended Christians live suspicious and afraid that others will **mistreat** them!
8. Your response to an offense determines your attitude and your **future!**
9. Offended people distance themselves from others because of **insecurity.**
10. Humility is the key that frees you from the **prison** of offense!
11. If ever you believe that God has cheated you, you have served Him for the **wrong** reasons!
12. Anyone who cannot forgive has forgotten how great a debt God has forgiven them - because pride views itself as a **victim** and therefore cannot offer forgiveness to another!

“Bitterness is unfulfilled revenge.” (Francis Frangipane)

Ten Fruits of Unaddressed Offenses

◆Anger ◆Resentment ◆Bitterness ◆Jealousy ◆Envy ◆Self-pity ◆Strife
◆Hatred ◆Slander ◆Discord

Nuf Sed!
Bill Kirk