

Bill Johnson: How God Uses Offense to Fulfill His Plans for You

The extent of a person's influence and leadership can often be measured by what it takes to offend them. While I don't like it when people use this excuse to be rude and abrasive, the point remains, and it remains true. True leaders—those who have embraced their promotions well—are not easily offended. But those who live a life of entitlement through their promotions often express drama when things don't go their way.

You've heard the phrase: "drama queen." Often when people become rich and famous, they become overly dramatic about the slightest wrongs in their lives. They become connoisseurs of personal pleasure and can easily "taste" when someone has altered their "recipe" for an entitled lifestyle.

They become outraged over an improperly cooked steak or the slightest shade difference in the color a room is being painted. I love excellence and strive for this in every possible place in my life. But excellence never requires us to sacrifice the dignity of another person to obtain what we want.

Jesus Insults

Sometimes, however, our own dignity may seemingly be compromised for God's plans to be fulfilled. If this were not true, why did Jesus insult some who came to Him for help? He must have had a higher purpose in mind. Let's look at one example from the Scriptures.

A woman who was not a Jew came to Jesus for a miracle. Her daughter was tormented and sick and was in great need of deliverance. The mother came to Jesus, but He didn't want to

pray for her little girl.

“But after hearing of Him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately came and fell at His feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of the Syrophoenician race. And she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. And He was saying to her, ‘Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.’ But she answered and said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children’s crumbs.’ And He said to her, ‘Because of this answer go; the demon has gone out of your daughter.’ And going back to her home, she found the child lying on the bed, the demon having left” (Mark 7:25-30, NASB).

First of all, it says, “she kept asking,” implying that He ignored her for quite a while. Then He answered in a way that would seem inappropriate by our standards. If this story were to happen today, there would be outrage over His seemingly racist remarks. In appearance, He preferred His race over hers. Then He called her people “dogs.” It doesn’t help that the word “dogs” can be translated “puppies.” Churches have split over less.

Of course, we now understand that Jesus had to fulfill His commission by ministering to the Jews first, but was He compelled to put the woman off simply because she was not a Jew? And was name-calling a necessary part of her experience with Him? I believe so.

God prepares us for increase by seeing what measure of rejection we can handle. The strength to carry promotion well is proven by how we respond to rejection and accusation. If my strength is questionable in this phase, my increase will be measured accordingly.

The Syrophoenician woman needed a hurdle to go over that she might break into the reality of the kingdom for her daughter’s

miracle. The kingdom of God is often on the other side of offense. Leaping over this hurdle brought her into the realm of miracles.

She successfully passed the test, revealing her resolve not to take offense for the sake of her daughter. And that was a kingdom perspective coming from one who seemingly didn't qualify, as she was a non-Jew. Her answer came from her perception of Jesus' nature and process, and it positioned her for a breakthrough. {eoa}

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