

How Harboring Offense Can Keep You From Your Kingdom Destiny

Note: For part one of this article, [click here](#).

When God teaches you an important lesson, it is seldom for you alone. He will almost always give you opportunities to share what you've learned with others.

After the Lord showed me how to deal with critics, I've been able to help and encourage other leaders who have faced similar situations. One of these leaders was Shaun, a friend in Australia who was connected with our ministry. Our parent organization had ordained him as a missionary and he had returned to his native country. He and his wife had started a small Bible study that grew into a multiethnic group of several hundred.

One day when I was visiting him, he told me how the pastor of one of the largest churches in his city was publicly railing against him and his small congregation. My friend was pretty distraught, as you might imagine, and he was initially skeptical of the advice I gave him.

"You need to take the high road," I said. "This defining moment will either limit or expand the future of your ministry. In fact, in addition to forgiving him, you need to start praying blessings over him. Let God vindicate you."

"Doug, you don't get this," he replied. "This man has a lot of influence, and he is speaking against me to anyone who will listen. He's undermining both me and my ministry."

At that point, I shared with my friend a powerful principle that I learned in David Wilkerson's book *Have You Felt Like*

Giving Up Lately? Wilkerson pointed out that it's always the wrong person on the cross.

For example, Jesus was completely innocent and without sin, yet He was the one who had to bear the sins of others. Wilkerson also noted that if we hold on to the sins of other people, we will in essence hang on the cross, feeling miserable, bitter and wounded, while the other people go about their business. But if we make a decision to release and forgive those who say or do things against us, we are set free, once again able to fulfill God's purposes for our lives.

We all have faced injustice or unfair criticism at some point on our journeys, so we all must learn this vital lesson. Look at what the apostle Paul says concerning this:

"Repay no one evil for evil. Commend what is honest in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as it depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to God's wrath, for it is written: 'Vengeance is Mine. I will repay,' says the Lord. Therefore, 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in doing so you will heap coals of fire on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:17-21).

As you allow these verses to sink in, I encourage you to pause for a moment to allow the Lord to search your heart. Is there someone you need to forgive and release? Are you willing to allow the Lord to be your avenger and healer, even if you have been deeply hurt? Even in your pain, will you reach out to them in love and kindness and bless them in any way you can?

Taking the High Road

My friend, Shaun, had a chance to act upon these verses in very practical ways. While I was still visiting him, he received some startling news: Serious sins had been discovered in the life of the pastor who had been so critical. He was

publicly humiliated and had to step down from leadership in his church.

At first, my friend was tempted to gloat. "Well, see what I'm talking about, Doug?" he told me. "He's finally getting what he deserves."

"Oh, no, no, no!" I responded. "Remember, we were just talking about taking the high road." I encouraged him to reach out and give the man a call to find out if he was genuinely broken.

"Doug," he protested. "Don't you realize what he has done to me? And on top of that, he hates me, and there's no way he'll listen to anything I say."

"Take the high road," I insisted. "Reach out to him. You're not responsible for how he responds but how you respond."

Although he was mad at me for giving him such difficult advice, he later reached out to the pastor and called him. Rather than reject this overture, the pastor was so moved that he and his family sat under my friend's ministry for two years. He was ultimately restored to ministry and went on to pastor another church.

Meanwhile, God blessed Shaun in amazing ways. At the time of my visit, he had several hundred members, but his congregation numbers grew to around 3,000, and the impact of his life and ministry has expanded around the globe.

I'm convinced that the outcome would have been much different if Shaun had chosen to hold on to his offense. That pastor probably wouldn't have been restored to ministry, and Shaun's church would never have grown past 300 people. Thank God he took the high road!

Provoke a Thought

"Critics and criticism will come and go, but Christlike character with commitment, consistency and courage will

outlast them all.”

“Discouragement and disappointment bring disillusionment, which then breeds compromise and distracts us from our intended destination or our destinies.”

“Allowing the offenses of others to keep us wounded can hinder us from accomplishing God’s intended purpose and destiny in our lives.” {eoa}

(This article is extrapolated from the book Leadership Awakening: Foundational Principles for Lasting Success by Doug Stringer.)

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