

How to Identify the Spirit of Offense and Move Toward Healing

Offense is like an automatic weapon. Once you pull the trigger, it keeps firing.

Unless properly identified and repentance and change come forth, the spirit of offense will continue to cause chaos and destroy relationships. The spirit of offense has infiltrated our churches and causes division, dissension, strife, hurt and pain. As offense infiltrates our churches and annihilates the peace and unity what can we do as Christians to root this out?

We must self-examine, searching within ourselves to see when and if offense arises. If a person easily shuts down when people speak truth into their lives or make a suggestion and they automatically think the other person is wrong, this could be offense.

It is at the least a crucial warning to self-evaluate and try to discover why the person so quickly withdrew from the correction or suggestion given. Often their thoughts will lead to, "they are out to get me." Thoughts like those lead to an unhealthy and unproductive road of emotional turmoil. Offense is a deadly weapon that kills relationships and builds up bitterness.

Offense is tied to pride and control. Those three in operation together are a deadly trio.

People manifesting this trio seldom experience deliverance without spending a serious amount of time casting down their flesh, allowing God to divinely intervene and receiving correction and insight from those with prophetic wisdom. Offense is difficult to identify within, because pride will

keep us from exposing the offense in our life. Pride tells us we are always right and cannot have offense in our lives.

Removing offense from us and assisting others involves identifying the characteristics of offense:

Entitlement: The person with offense feels they are owed something. They value what they have in themselves and feel they have worked hard and they deserve to be elevated. The truth is they felt they deserved something they weren't entitled to. Entitled people feel it is their duty and responsibility even though it isn't. When they feel entitled to a position or thing and don't receive it they get offended and rejected.

Pride: Prideful people are self-reliant instead of God reliant. When pride attacks, it doesn't allow us to see the entire picture. Lucifer was prideful and it resulted in his fall. When people are offended, the offense is rooted in pride. Pride makes us fall, however with offense people don't see the fall as a result of their own doing, but they put the blame on others. Some people cannot handle the thought of being wrong and then they feel shameful and unworthy. When a person offers direction or correction to a prideful offensive person, often it is interpreted as I can't do anything right or I messed up again.

Unfairness: People with offense often feel church leaders have treated them unfairly. A common complaint I hear is that, "they didn't value my gifting." People get hurt and build up resentment and bitterness when they are not used in the church. What people don't realize is that there is proper order in a well-structured church and more than likely the person wanted to be used and valued before their time.

Respect: The world has taught us to demand respect, but the Bible has taught us to humble ourselves and serve with love. When offended, what the world has taught us screams in our

ears and we cannot hear the quietness of the Lord's voice that says serve with humility.

Control: Offensive people often desire to control the situation. When control and having it my way cannot exist, offensive people get offended and leave the church. If only they would have stayed under the strong leadership that didn't put up with their selfish behaviors, they may have received the healing they were longing for but didn't know they needed.

There are pastors and leaders who will put up with offensive people in attempt to usher them into deliverance and manifest the giftings within them. Unfortunately, offensive people think everyone else is wrong and they are the only one who is right. Therefore, when a genuine person comes into their life or is sent by God, they often don't receive them because they don't know how to receive unconditional love, correction and instruction.

People with offense become unteachable in their pursuit to be elevated, entitled and respected. They can't receive the fact that this situation or church will be different from the last encounter they had. They are still elevating themselves and can't believe that someone may have more knowledge or growth in their spiritual walk. They often would rather be argumentative than pursue peace and humility.

How can people assist those caught up in offense? We must love them unconditionally and listen to them. People with offense want to be valued and heard. We can go forth in the love of the Father by yielding to them, listening to them, offering spirit led advice and giving them a chance to heal.

How do you do that? Set healthy boundaries, but show them you have a quality that is different. Extended them the grace and mercy that Jesus Christ gave to you. Approach them with tenderness, but firmness. We want to lead and guide people into a place of peace and love, forgiveness and hope.

A good mentor and leader will speak the truth in love and give the person practical examples and instruction on how to walk out their past hurts and pain. Instead of always giving them the answer, instruct them in question form by making suggestions of what they could think about and take to prayer, seeking the Holy Spirit for discernment. By working with them and not against them, you can lead them to a place of receiving exactly what they are seeking, love and value and to be used by God.

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