

Finding Freedom From Offense

Do you get offended when something bad happens in your life? I know I have. It's an attitude that says, "This shouldn't be happening to me!" While it may seem harmless, offense is actually one of Satan's greatest tools to rob us of God's blessings. He uses offense to lure us into bitterness, resentment and unforgiveness—things that stunt our spiritual growth and make our lives miserable.

When difficulties come our way, they present opportunities for offense. They challenge our faith and what we believe about God. In fact, a lot of people use the trouble in their lives as an excuse to be mad at God or not believe in Him at all. In their minds, they can't reconcile the idea of a loving Creator allowing such pain and suffering.

Webster's Dictionary partially defines offense as "an act of stumbling." I find this interesting because the enemy would love for us to get offended by the trials in our lives and stumble or fall away from our relationship with God.

If you're like me, when things aren't going well, you're tempted to think, Why, God, why? But we're not always going to be able to figure out why. Sometimes other people's decisions affect us negatively or we make unwise decisions that hurt us. Our enemy, Satan, also works hard to come against us and prevent us from walking in God's good plan.

Whatever the reason, it's important to realize that suffering is not from God. The Lord originally created a world where everything was perfect, but when Adam and Eve sinned, it changed all of that (Gen. 3). Thankfully, through Jesus Christ, God has restored us to Himself (2 Cor. 5:17, 21), but that doesn't mean that our lives will be problem-free (John 16:33).

So what should we do when trials come our way? The best thing

we can possibly do is trust God, because it's the answer to every single problem we have!

There's tremendous freedom in trusting God. When something's not going our way, instead of getting offended, we can trust that He has a plan that's better than ours and He will ultimately work out the situation for good (Rom. 8:28).

We need to understand this, because sometimes when we're having trouble, we can even get offended at other people who are being blessed. We can have a self-righteous attitude that says, "Well, I'm a better Christian than you are. I deserve those blessings."

For example, maybe you want a promotion at work, but someone else receives it instead. You can choose to be offended, or you can trust God and say, "Lord, if this is where You want me right now, then I'm going to serve my boss with a smile on my face. And I know if You want to put me somewhere else, You will do it in Your perfect timing."

I've learned that God is smarter than we are. Sometimes He doesn't give us what we want because He has a different purpose in mind—something better than what we could have imagined. Many times the Lord has allowed me to go through things the hard way. Sometimes it has been extremely difficult, especially when I watched other people receive breakthroughs in the same areas more quickly. But when God allows me to walk this path, He wants me to experience and understand what people are going through so I can relate to their pain and help them walk through it successfully.

The Bible actually tells us that trials are good for us. James 1:2-3 (AMP) says, "Consider it nothing but joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you fall into various trials. Be assured that the testing of your faith [through experience] produces endurance [leading to spiritual maturity, and inner peace]."

Suffering doesn't originate from God, but He will use it to

help us grow up spiritually because He knows it will eventually bring out the best in us! (See Ps. 94:12-13.)

The Lord wants us to become stable and mature. He wants us to have joy and contentment in Him, even when our circumstances aren't perfect (Neh. 8:10). God never promised us a trouble-free life, but we can take comfort in knowing that He loves us tremendously, He has His eye on us, and He is already working behind the scenes to help us (Ps. 33:18, Rom. 8:38-39).

Remember, what you're going through now won't last forever. So don't live your life bitter and resentful over something you can't do anything about. Instead, choose to place your trust in God. He's the one who loves you unconditionally ... and He's the one who can turn your trials into something great.

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