

## **BEING OFFENDED IS A SELF INFLICTED WOUND**

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I received an email from someone in our fellowship. In the email she shared a dream she had about "scotch guarding." This dream was right on the mark for what the Lord had been saying to His people. I asked her if I could include it in my May 2008 eJournal and she gave her permission. It is interesting to discern that there are definite seasons in the Kingdom of Heaven (Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, etc.) and that there is also the counter attack that always tries to disrupt the blessings of God for His church. We must not forget that late February to May is the Jezebel, Ahab and Korah counter distractions that always try to disrupt harmony, unity and the summer time season of rest.

As a leader I have learned a great lesson from King David who wrote; A Prayer for Wisdom and Forgiveness to the Chief Musician Jeduthun. I share this Psalm because it exhorts us to understand what it means to muse (think & ponder) on God's Word until it reveals to us our days and the frailness of who we are before a Holy God. Surely in our best condition we are but a vapor before A Holy God.....

*"I said, "I will guard my ways, Lest I sin with my tongue; I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle, While the wicked are before me." 2 I was mute with silence, I held my peace even from good; And my sorrow was stirred up. 3 My heart was hot within me; While I was musing, the fire burned. Then I spoke with my tongue: 4 "Lord, make me to know my end, And what is the measure of my days, That I may know how frail I am. 5 Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my age is as nothing before You; Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor. Selah" Ps 39:1-5 NKJV*

### **The Dream: Scotch Guarding**

"Pastor Bob, I had a dream last night about Scotch guarding my spirit, soul, and body. I looked up scotch in Webster's. To notch, cut, scratch, wound without killing, maim, put an end to, strife, to block. When you scotch guard fabric nothing sticks to it. Coffee will roll off without staining it. I'm thinking we had better be well oiled with the Holy Spirit for this time and for the future. Perhaps it's a warning for me only but thought I would pass it on to you."

I have been pondering the above dream and asking God why is it that so many believers don't take advantage of the fruit of the spirit and forgive seventy times seven (490 times) for the same offense? (Mt. 18:21-22). If Christians scotch guard their spirit and soul with love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance they could prevent the stains of offense.

Scotch guard is not for the “spiller” it is to protect the item that becomes soiled.  
(Gal.5:22).

The mistake is that many Christians think these virtues (fruits) are for the person who commits the offense? The sad part of thinking this way is that the other person may not even know they did anything wrong! Whenever Kris and I entertain in our home we find spots on our carpet left behind by our guests, most don't even know they spilled; those who know they have spilled something 100% of the time immediately clean up the spill. We are mature hosts and understand this is part of entertaining, so we have applied scotch guarded to our carpets to make clean up easy and to prevent any permanent staining. If we practice the virtues listed above we would never become stained by offense. In this *Encore eJournal* I will discuss one of the end time signs Jesus described in Mt. 24:10-13, “many will be offended.”

*“And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”*

There is an interesting word in the above scriptures. “*Then*” false prophets will arise and deceive many. In my ministry experience *offense* seems to *precede* deception. Let me summarize it; offended leads to murmuring, complaining and slander. It will begin a process of distancing, separation and eventually isolate a person from the fellowship (camp). These dynamics happen when someone does not apply the Fruit Of The Spirit to an offense or a perceived offense. Gal.5:22 & Matt 18:15.

When this happens..... “*then*” begins to become active and some level of *deception* is crouching nearby. This is why it is so important to obey the laws of God. Here is a law if obeyed keeps your relationships with the Lord and your neighbor in harmony! Because it will scotch guard you from offensive stains to your spirit and soul!

*“If your brother wrongs you, go and show him his fault, between you and him privately. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother.” Matt 18:15 AMP*

How can offense's, betrayal, hate and deception prevail? It is because of “lawlessness.” This actually refers to “Torah-less-ness.” The Complete Jewish Bible says it this way; *“and many people's love will grow cold because of **increased** distance from Torah.”* Torah is simply God's teaching and instructions. Lest we forget, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy are the foundation that the Apostolic writings of the New Testament are built upon.

It never ceases to amaze me when I hear this statement; “we are not under the law or the law has passed away.” After hearing the above statement I often ask this question. “Do you think we should remove the Ten Commandments from our schools and government property?” I always hear a resounding no! My reply is, If we are not under the law, then what need is there for the Ten Commandments (law) in the schools or on government property?

We are simply reaping what we have declared from the pulpits. This removal of God's laws from every level of our nation including within our churches is reaping of what has been sown. The sad fact is, the world is only coming into agreement with what is preached in the pulpits of most western churches. Because of this, lawlessness or Torah-less-ness we see increasing offenses, slander, betrayal, hate and deception prevailing at all levels of our society and sadly within the churches.

A quick look at "Ten Biblical Laws" reveal that the first four commandments speak of our God relationship and the last six speak about our relationship with our neighbor. Number four is the transitional commandment that connects our vertical (God) and horizontal (neighbor) relationships together. Without rest and peace (#4) it is difficult to walk in the Fruit Of The Spirit and enjoy the vertical and horizontal relationships that Jesus said were the first and second commandments.

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not make any graven image.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Honor thy father and thy mother
6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness.
10. Thou shalt not covet.

It is difficult to understand what Jesus was actually saying unless we know God's laws. Here is a simple illustration. *"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is what Jesus says is the first commandment (commandments 1-4). 31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself (commandments 5-10). There is none other commandment greater than these."* Mark 12:30-31 KJV.

In order to understand what Jesus meant by there are no other commandments greater than these two, we will have to study His "laws 1-10." Without all of the Word of God you cannot understand fully what Jesus meant when He summarized the commandments into two statements. The Torah gives us the application principles of what He said. In actuality He revealed commandments 1-4 (love God) and 5-10 (love your neighbor). In the Torah we are told there are 613 laws that contain instructions and biblical patterns for the Priests, Israel, and the Temple including specific laws that apply to all of mankind. They instruct us about serving and loving God including how to treat our neighbor, these laws do not negate the Apostolic writings of the New Testament, but give us the application to New Testament scripture references. When I finally understood this I discovered a powerful truth about grace.

"Grace is not seen as a substitute for law, but rather as a higher motivation to obey all of God's laws."

### **OFFENSE - A SIGN OF CHRIST'S RETURN**

*"And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved."*  
Mt. 24:10-13

This verse was Jesus' response to the disciples' question, "What will be the sign of Your coming?" Jesus tells them and us one of the signs of the end of the age is offenses. It takes only a few moments of TV or reading the newspaper to understand that we are in the season of offenses.

Matthew 18:15-22 speaks about "agape love," the same love Jesus gave through the shedding of His blood for our forgiveness. It is this same agape that can give us the strength to forgive seventy times seven. But time after time born again believers go into the "House of God" worshipping and praying when they have "ought" against someone.

Jesus said; *"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses"* Mark 11:25-26 KJV.

This is a frightening verse. Could un-forgiveness keep a person from heaven?

On the other hand this agape love calls for chastening. The discipline of the Father requires agape for His children. In the original text, the word "discipline" or "chastening" means son training, or sonship, and it is surprisingly described as being very harsh (Heb. 12). This type of love differs from "phileo" (brotherly love, earthly and natural). Phileo says, "If you don't love me the way I want you to, then I don't want to have anything to do with you anymore."

Without God's agape love, we can only love with a selfish heart and remain captive to offenses. If you are packing offenses you have to ask what love lies within me? Many have bought the lie that they love God's way, when in fact; they love the world's way. This deceptive tactic is not from the enemy, like many believe.

The scriptures are clear – *offense is a choice, not an attack*, and it builds walls to protect the human heart and soul by choosing to displace your disappointment onto someone else instead of applying "Scotch Guard" to your heart (Gal.5:22).

The word "offense" literally signifies "laying a trap in someone's way." Proverbs. 18:19 declares; *"A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle."* Have you ever tried winning back an offended brother or

sister? Sadly to say, it is exactly how the Word of God declares, yet, the writer of the book of Hebrews 12:14-15 declares, *"Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessings, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears."*

Could un-forgiveness keep a person from heaven? *"But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."*

### **THE OFFENDED MINDSET**

No matter what the scenario is, we can divide offended into two major categories.

Those who have been treated unjustly.

Those who believe they have been treated unjustly.

People in category #2 believe whole-heartedly that they have been wronged, and either draw their conclusions from inaccurate information; or their information is accurate, but their conclusion is distorted. In either case, they are hurting people because their understanding is darkened. Paul prayed for the Ephesian church that the eyes of their understanding may be flooded with His light, that their light may not be darkness (Eph. 1).

Scripture clearly depicts a *choice* has to be made by the human will.....if the choice made is to *not* forgive.....it will bring emotional darkness.

### **PRIDE**

Pride will keep a person from admitting or desiring correction and repentance for taking offense. It distorts one's vision by dimming the eyes of their understanding and hardens the heart, preventing repentance and regeneration by the Spirit of God. The offended person always views their "self" as a victim, which produces an attitude of, I was mistreated and therefore I am justified by my behavior and thus they hold back forgiveness and a *"root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and by it many be defiled."*

Now a wall of defense is developed and the stronghold is built. The individual now becomes a master of defending their un-forgiveness because the bitter root has sprung up and defiles the offended one and anyone who is willing to listen. This why Hebrews says, "it comes short of grace, causes trouble and many are defiled by it."

Without repentance and forgiveness love grows cold and lawlessness behavior prevails, *"revealing the heart, for out of the heart flows the issues of life" Mt.24:10-13*. The result is, *"a tongue set on fire of hell" James 3:6*.

Could un-forgiveness keep a person from heaven?

## TEAR DOWN SELF-MADE WALLS

Our future is determined by the choices we make today. The human soul consists of the mind (intellect), will and emotions. So the battlefield is the mind, which includes the thought life. Do we realize how God views our thought life?

The Word of God states; *“that our weapons are not fleshly but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds and bringing every thought captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ, in order that our obedience may be complete.”*

Notice how the Spirit of God relates our thought life to obedience, and that strongholds can take residence in the mind. We have to ask ourselves, obedience to what? The answer is simple His laws, if we obey they bring blessings if we disobey they bring the cursings.

It is not up to God to change you if your will is not submitted in obedience to His laws, precepts and patterns.

By choosing to resist every thought that is not of God, the stronghold cannot be constructed in the mind. This is an act of your will.....not an act of God. God will not override your will; agape love is a choice so is offenses and the development of a stronghold.

You can't resist the will of God and receive the grace of God at the same time.

It is clear through Scripture that our way to freedom begins in the mind and the renewing of the mind comes by the washing of the water of the Word, resulting in sanctification and transformation (Eph. 5:26 & Rom. 12). It is not up to God to change you if your will is not submitted in obedience. The freedom from “offense” is only one step away and obedience is better than being stained by offenses.

### Scotch Guarding

*“Pastor Bob, I had a dream last night about Scotch guarding my spirit, soul, and body. I looked up scotch in Webster's. To notch, cut, scratch, wound without killing, maim, put an end to, strife, to block. When you scotch guard fabric nothing sticks to it. Coffee will roll off without staining it. I'm thinking we had better be well oiled with the Holy Spirit for this time and for the future. Perhaps it's a warning for me only but thought I would pass it on to you.”*

*“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him and let it drop (leave it, let it go), in order that your Father Who is in heaven may also forgive you your [own] failings and shortcomings and let them drop. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your failings and shortcomings.” Mark 11:25-26 AMP*

We change our minds, and God changes our hearts! Now you are “scotch guarded.”

*Blessings, Pastor Bob Hill*

OFFENSES A SIGH OF THE TIMES