119 MINISTRIES

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It Was a Matter of Self-Offense

Have you ever been offended by anyone or anything? All of us have been offended. Many of us who have come to believe that the whole Bible is true, and thus practice it, end up going through many trials with friends and family, or even those we once defined as "spiritual" leaders.

These are not often pleasant experiences and can last for days, months, or even years in some instances. We try to present the whole Word of God, but things end up not being received or presented as well as we intended. We've all been there.

Even with those who claim to follow the Torah, there are still so many ways to be offended. There are always disputes on the calendar, or how to spell or pronounce our Creator's name and other issues that can arise that often result in not the most friendly debates. Even in just daily life, friends, family, co-workers, and even strangers can and will do things that offend us.

The 119 Ministries team receives dozens of emails, phone calls, or social media comments every day with the intent of trying to offend us, simply because one or more of our teachings offended them.

All of this can be quite frustrating to experience, even in the midst of all of the blessings that come out of realizing and practicing His whole truth.

The reality is that the more we practice His truth, the more we may offend others, and thus, they may offend us in return. It can be bittersweet. Blessings and joy are certainly the result of practicing the fullness of His Word, yet there is much more sadness reserved for those that live in the state of being offended. It can even get worse. Such sadness can turn into interpersonal tension. And tension is always at risk for producing bitterness, or even worse, anger, inside of us. We have all been guilty of this. Sometimes just presenting the truth of His whole Word may produce circumstances that result in us

being offended. Witnessing someone rejecting and denying truth is one thing, but hearing the Word of God being called bondage, obsolete, or poor instruction by professed believers, is certainly more difficult to deal with.

When someone says such things about the Word of God, it can elevate to being quite an emotive response, despite the fact they simply do not understand their error. They might really believe that parts of the Word of God are bondage. An attack on the truth of YHWH's Word often feels like an attack on us, and in reality, it should. The Word is God, and the Word is to be in us. It is hard not to take such things personal because it is the Word of God that we should all want to become. So, when the Word of God is attacked, how can we not feel attacked ourselves?

The question that we should ask is, "Do we have a right to be personally offended?" Even under the same umbrella of those who confess the whole Word of God to still be true, negative situations still happen. We are all human. In Romans 7, Paul himself was clear about how much he struggled with his flesh and the law of sin. While at the same time, he wanted to do the law of God, the law of his mind.

Perhaps there is some opportunity for us to realize something quite profound, yet also something quite difficult to accept and apply. If we are offended for someone else, like Yeshua was with the money changers in the Temple as they took advantage of the people, then we have every right to be offended for them (Matthew 21:12-17). However, if one offends us personally, then it simply does not matter. We are to let it go and then even question the reason that we were offended in the first place; because being offended is only concerned with the self. There is no way around that because it is only the self that was offended and to the self that the offense was made.

Yeshua, in the things done against Him, in every offense made against Him, more than we could ever know in a thousand lifetimes, he was never offended personally. He never lashed out in anger nor got upset because people were mean to Him, not once. During His whole ministry, people were trying to kill him, trap him, humiliate him, and all those are just the things that we are aware of (the things that are written). We can only imagine the amount of offenses made against Him. Imagine all of the slander, deceit, and the gossip that must have existed around our Savior. Imagine the situation when He was kissed by Judas, betrayed, spit on, and wrongfully punished. If anyone would have been justified in the world's eyes as having a right to be offended, it was most certainly Yeshua. Yet, He was sad for others in their deception and forgave them.

Take Stephen as another example. Stephen was drug out of the city while an angry mob of Pharisees took turns throwing rocks at him with intent to kill him, and succeeded. Stephen should have been very offended. Not many situations can be considered worse than this, yet Stephen asked for **their** forgiveness on **their** behalf just before they successfully stoned him to death.

Acts 7:60

> And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Then, look at us. We become offended and bitter for the smallest things in comparison, completely contrary to the example Yeshua laid out for us. He continued to teach and practice the Word of God as written and thus showed evidence that it was only the Word of God that was in Him. He never let His

flesh get the best of Him. He made Himself low in obedience, fully worshipping the Father, not his self. Through His obedience, He showed that He died to himself, even to the point of physical death, and guess what? He is to be our example. Would we not be offended if everyone wanted to kill us? If He did not become offended for such extremes, why should we be offended at lesser things if we are dedicated to following His example?

All of these things are easier said than done. It is always easier to say that we believe in the Word of God and to teach it rather than live like we really do believe in it. We can live and teach the Word of God, and through such, rebuke and correct with such authority. However, there is a way to do that with kindness and respect, gentleness and self-control, patience and peace, joy and faithfulness; all being elements of love. Concern in love should radiate from us, not anger and bitterness, and a "Look at what you did to me," attitude. If we are not correcting in love but only correcting to show that we are right, then we have missed the whole point.

We need to correct in such a way that forces others to know without a doubt that it is being done in love for them and not because we were offended and thus focusing on ourselves. Any other such motive for correction other than love is exposing a focus of addressing an offense on one's self instead of trying to bring someone back to the Word of God in love and concern for them. Correction with such a false motivation is never going to be received well nor should it.

An offense on the Word of God should merit correction for other believers delivered in full kindness, love, patience, and self-control, and when that happens, the recipient of such correction should welcome the truth of the Word. It is only through acting as though one really is in the Word that we can deliver the truth of the Word.

What does that mean? If the whole foundation of the Word of God is love, then how can we bring someone back to the Word of God (Love) and not being loving in the same presentation?
To do anything else would be just hypocritical. Just think about it. If we are trying to bring someone back to the Word of God, which is loving God and loving others, then how in the world can we expect to bring someone back to love by being unloving? That would be ridiculous, yet so often, that is what we do in practice. What is then being delivered, and how it is being delivered, is then in serious conflict, and this would only bring confusion at best or ignite a rather negative response in others at worst.

Love must deliver love and it must be perceived as such. But the moment we dwell on any offense toward us, we have resurrected the old man, and he is bondage, who loves things of the flesh, who runs from the law of God and all things spiritual, leading us away from the law of God into the law of sin (Romans 6-8). This is very important to understand. Being personally offended is focusing on one's "self."

The love of self simply cannot correct and rebuke others in the Word of God. It is simply not possible without it being a contradiction. Only the love of others can correct and rebuke others in the Word of God. Why? It is because the Word of God is all about loving others and loving God and NOT loving one's self. If one's motive is to correct others because of one's self-offense, then one's motives are broken and misguided. Our desire to correct others should be solely based on our love for them and desire to bring them back to the truth of the Word of God. The Word of God does not afford us the

latitude to correct anyone when someone has offended us because the Word of God is all about dying to ourselves.

Do you see how this is a problem? One literally has to resurrect the old man to even attempt to correct anyone that has offended us. One has to allow the flesh to control us for us to be offended. Thus, it is impossible to ever correct another when someone offends us and still be consistent with Scripture at the same time.

So what is the solution, then? We are simply to let it go. Do what our Messiah did. So, this is an encouragement to all. Let the old man die. Conform to the Word of God so that when Yeshua arrives as the Word of God, He will only see Himself in you, then you will not be ashamed. If we are ever offended at something directed toward us, it should make us realize that there is still a part of us that the Word still needs to kill. A part of us is still focused on the self. There is always more of us to deal with. Sadly, this is the case, to some degree, until He returns.

Just the same, if we are indeed offended, it opens our eyes that something is not exactly right with ourselves. It exposes our flesh, and we need to deal with it. It is true that there is always going to be something not right with us, but our goal is for us to be more like His image every day.
All that we can do is look to the Word of God to fix us, and when we are offended, that is an indicator that something needs fixing.

When we are offended, it exposes that we are concerned with loving our "selves," instead of dying to ourselves and focusing on loving others and God. It happens to all of us, but we should want it to happen less and less. We should be closer to the goal of being like Yeshua who was never selfishly offended in things done against Him. Consider how close Peter was to Yeshua, yet Peter denied Yeshua three times. If our closest friends would not acknowledge us in public, would we not be offended by that? It's just natural. Yeshua focused on what He needed to do according to the Father's will. He did not focus or become consumed with how others were treating him, mocking him, or embarrassing him. He did not focus on what others said about Him. He simply made sure that He practiced and taught the Word of God. Should we not do the same? The Bible is not silent on this issue and offers clear instructions and warnings for situations in which we may be offended. So, the next time that you are offended, ask yourself if you are selfishly focusing on yourself in response, when instead, you should be focused on living out the Word of God. Consider what the Word of God teaches us on this matter. If someone sins against us, we are to forgive them and let it go.

Matthew 6:14-15

> "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

We are to dissolve any bitterness and anger that may reside in us because of others.

Ephesians 4:31-32

> "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

There is no offense that can come against us that love cannot solve, even if we are the only one being loving.

Proverbs 10:12

> "Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses."

Our anger that is the product of our flesh, will never produce righteousness.

James 1:19-20

> "Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God."

We are to strive for peace with everyone and not be defiled by bitterness.

Hebrews 12:14-15

> "Strive for peace with everyone and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no 'root of bitterness' springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled."

We absolutely must forgive others regardless of their behavior or actions to us.

Mark 11:25

> "And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

We are to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Ephesians 4:1-5

> "I, therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism..."

We are to ignore insults against us.

Proverbs 12:16

> "The vexation of a fool is known at once, but the prudent ignores an insult."

Loving others, a primary purpose of the Law of God, can only result if we bear no grudges against others.

Leviticus 19:18

> "You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord (YHWH)."

In the end, we should realize that we should not allow others to offend us. To do so is allowing the flesh to control us instead of the Spirit.

We should allow the Spirit to control us, leading us in the instructions of God and thus producing the expected fruit.

Ephesians 5:8-10

> "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord."

Galatians 5:22-23

> "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

So, we should want to avoid being offended because of our focus on the flesh and instead strive to walk in the spirit, loving God and loving others to practice truth.

John 4:24

> "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

We are accountable to what we do, not to what others do to us. When you have an opportunity by being offended, take advantage of it. How you react is a demonstration of the character of YHWH inside of you, or perhaps, even the lack of it.

We hope that this study has blessed you, and remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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