

Help! I've Been Offended!

A Biblical Process for Seeking Peace When Hurt or Offended

Introduction

Purpose: to provide a biblical process for seeking peace with those who hurt or offend us.

Background: too often we hear that someone has something against us second or even third hand, and this makes it confusing and awkward to address. Love will not allow us to leave another person confused but will lead us to handle hurts and offenses in a manner conducive to peace.

1. Check Yourself

- a. Check your intimacy with the Lord.

Are you in good communication with Him through His Word and prayer?

- Is His Word speaking to your heart?
- Is prayer precious to you?

- b. Check your attitude (Psalm 26:1–2).

Sour attitudes sour perceptions and lead you to read your sourness into the words and actions of others (Hebrews 12:15).

- c. Check your pride (1 Peter 4:7-8; 5:5).

True humility and brokenness creates space for grace and leads us to let love cover a multitude of sins.

2. Consider If the Offense Is Real

- a. Ask whether the offense is actual or perceived, based in fact or in speculation (Proverbs 18:13).
- b. Believe the best about others until proven wrong (1 Corinthians 13:7).
- Assume the offense was not intended.
 - Look for alternate explanations rather than immediately assuming the worst.
- c. Differentiate among hurt, impact, and offense.
- i. Hurt (feelings)
 - ii. Impact (effects)
 - iii. Offense (sins)

3. Weigh the Perceived Offense Against Scripture

- a. Ask whether there has been a sin.
- Could you take the person to the Bible and point out the wrong?
 - Looking to Scripture first also helps weed out what is petty or pointless (Matthew 7:1-2; cf. Hebrews 5:14).
- b. If the offense is due to preference, weigh how important this matter should be to you.
- Many preferences should be let go (Philippians 2:3-4; Ephesians 4:1–3).
 - Some preferences have real impact and warrant a conversation.

4. Bring the Offense to the Lord in Prayer

- a. Being “spiritual” means walking in/by the Spirit and includes recognizing that addressing sin is a spiritual work (Galatians 6:1; 2 Corinthians 10:3–4).
- b. Wrestling the issue through with the Lord changes our attitude toward the other person, reminding us how He has every cause to be angry with us yet has shown us great mercy (Matthew 18:23-35).

5. Go Directly to the Offender

- a. Our flesh wants to share with everyone *except* the offender (cf. Galatians 5:13–21).
 - “Venting” is gossip.
 - Seeking help is biblical:
 - o Ask, “Is the person from whom I’m getting help *spiritual*?”
 - o Ask, “Am I really going to get help or to vent?”
 - o Ask, “Am I willing to follow the counsel I get?”
- b. If you cannot let go after working through the previous steps, you are obligated to go directly to that person to pursue peace and reconciliation (Matthew 18:15).
It’s not wrong for someone who is objective and spiritual to go with you if needed.
- c. The goal is to win your brother, not the argument (Galatians 6:1).
 - Approach the conversation seeking peace and reconciliation.
 - Remain open to the possibility that it was a misperception or misunderstanding.
- d. Remember, the gospel is powerfully displayed when we pursue peace with those who offend us (Romans 5:10).

Conclusion

The gospel is a message of love and reconciliation, and those who conduct themselves in a manner “worthy of the gospel” (Phil. 1:27) will act in love and will pursue peace with others.

Among believers, the steps above are generally sufficient because believers love one another, desire peace, and are aware of their own potential for sin (*1 John 1:8-10; 4:7–8; Romans 14:19*).

If the offender is a fellow believer who does not respond well, additional steps may be needed (Matthew 18:15–18).