



**Relationship Matters:
Okay, I'm Offended. Now What?
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Acts 7:54-60 NIV
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"MANY WILL BE OFFENDED, will betray one another, and will hate one another." - Jesus, Matthew 24:10 NKJV

Offended- σκανδαλίζω|: skän-dä-lē'-zō: bait for trapping

THREE PRAYERFUL DELIBERATIONS WHEN FACED WITH THE BAIT OF OFFENSE:

I. AM I SOMEONE WHO IS EASILY OFFENDED?

Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. OPPOSITION ROSE, HOWEVER...They were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. - Acts 6:8-9a; 7:54 NIV

Stephen, FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, hardly noticed – HE ONLY HAD EYES FOR GOD... - Acts 7:55a MSG
"Look," he said, "I SEE HEAVEN OPEN and the Son of Man [Jesus] standing..." - Acts 7:56 NIV

II. WHOM DO I NEED TO FORGIVE AND WHOM DO I NEED TO ASK FORGIVENESS FROM

We need to do a personal inventory.
"THEY PRODUCED FALSE WITNESSES, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law." - Acts 6:13 NIV

"Don't pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults—unless, of course, you want the same treatment. THAT CRITICAL SPIRIT HAS A WAY OF BOOMERANGING." - Matthew 7:1 MSG

The same magnifying glass that we use on others needs to be used upon ourselves.

"BE STILL and know that I am God." - Psalm 46:10 NIV

"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." - Proverbs 27:17 NIV

"Make the first move; MAKE THINGS RIGHT..."
- Jesus, Matthew 5:25a MSG

"So I find this law at work: ALTHOUGH I WANT TO DO GOOD, EVIL IS RIGHT THERE WITH ME. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me."
- Romans 7:21-23 NIV

"Then he fell on his knees and cried out, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them. "When he had said this, he fell asleep.'" - Acts 7:60 NIV

Where there's forgiveness, there's freedom.

III. WILL I BENEFIT FROM FORGIVING OFFENSES?

"LOVE your enemies, DO GOOD to those who hate you."
- Jesus, Luke 6:27 NIV

"If we really want to love, we must first learn to forgive before anything else." - Mother Teresa

"PRAY LIKE THIS...Forgive us for doing wrong, AS WE FORGIVE OTHERS." - Jesus, Matthew 6:12 CEV

When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the energies of PRAYER FOR THAT PERSON."
- Jesus, Luke 6:28 MSG

"Father, FORGIVE them; they know not what they do."
- Jesus, Luke 23:34 KJV

While they were stoning him, STEPHEN PRAYED, "Lord Jesus...DO NOT HOLD THIS SIN AGAINST THEM."
- Acts 7:59,60 NIV

LOVE COVERS over an offense... - Proverbs 17:9 NIV
...That set off a TERRIFIC PERSECUTION of the church in Jerusalem. The BELIEVERS WERE ALL SCATTERED throughout Judea and Samaria. Wherever they were scattered, THEY PREACHED THE MESSAGE ABOUT JESUS. - Acts 8:1, 4 MSG

We know that IN ALL THINGS GOD WORKS FOR THE GOOD... - Romans 8:28 NIV

Jesus will write (right) your story to tell His story.

The church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed A TIME OF PEACE. It was STRENGTHENED; and ENCOURAGED by the Holy Spirit, it GREW IN NUMBERS, living in the fear of the Lord. - Acts 9:31 NIV

"If the Son sets you free, YOU ARE TRULY FREE."
- Jesus, John 8:36 NLT