

## IT'S TIME TO DISMANTLE THE FENCE OF OFFENSE

Recently, I have been experiencing more opportunities for offense than I have in any previous time, and others I have talked with say that they are experiencing the same thing! I learned years ago that offense blocks the anointing, so I was shocked to see how often I am tempted to take the bait! As I sought the Lord, He reminded me of a word I wrote five years ago on offense; He told me to revisit it.

The Lord had been speaking to me about tactics the enemy uses to keep us from our promises; He had highlighted offense. At that time, I had noticed I wasn't hearing Him clearly. It had gotten to the point where I wasn't even trying to spend time to hear. I was *doing* ministry, and God was answering my prayers for others, but *personally* my hearing was blocked. I was concerned and sought Him. He woke me the next morning at 2 a.m. and said, "*You can't hear if your heart is hardened.*" That puzzled me. I didn't think *my* heart was hard; He must have been telling me this cute little phrase for someone else! I was reminded of His emphasis on offense, and searched the scriptures.

*And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast [it] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [that] thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast [it] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [that] thy whole body should be cast into hell. [Mat 5:29-30 KJV]*

Those are strong words; whatever offends, get rid of it! The Apostle Paul even goes so far as to say that if eating meat would cause a vegetarian to stumble, he'd forgo the meat! (1 Cor. 8:13, my paraphrase) Why is it so important? Isn't offense just a little indignation? How is that so bad compared to other sins, right?

The dictionary defines offense as: illegal act/rule-breaking; or, annoyance or resentment brought by perceived insult to, or disregard for, one's self, standards or principles. Offense is feeling insulted or disregarded as a person, or for your beliefs.

According to Strong's Concordance, the word offense means stumbling block/snare placed to: a) entice to sin b) cause a person to distrust and desert one whom he ought to trust and obey, causing to fall away; c) be offended by seeing something in another that I disapprove of and that hinders me from acknowledging his authority; d) cause to judge unfavorably or unjustly.

When I read the Strong's definition during that season, Holy Spirit convicted me. I had formed opinions regarding a leader and reasoned they shouldn't be in leadership because of it; I was judging them! I was placing *my judgment* in higher position than God's, not accepting that God placed them (or allowed them) in the position of authority! I immediately repented and took action to bless that person. My hearing returned with greater clarity than before, my spirit was renewed and on fire with hunger again, and in the course of a few days, new doors opened to divine appointments and advancing of His Kingdom!

The word offense in the Greek is scandalon. We can all see how the enemy is using every opportunity to whip things into a seeming scandal! The Lord showed me that this a *spirit* of offense, and is so prevailing that it is manifesting at every turn, infiltrating hearts and becoming a habit of mind. Even Christians are getting caught up in it, perceiving it as "righteous indignation." We shouldn't be surprised and offended by the world – it is satan's domain; those operating in that system are deceived. Many Christians forget that, and get offended *on God's behalf*.

We are in the world but not of it; we are to walk in love and be salt and light, speaking the truth in love. I'm not saying don't get involved; we must stand up for the truth; the issue is our hearts being offended. And if offense causes us to be separated from other believers who have other viewpoints, we should be quick to listen and slow to speak, judge nothing before the time and be sure we are filtering through the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

I heard Him say, *"I am releasing eyesalve in the spirit to allow my people to see correctly and dismantle the fence of offense. Offense is a defense based on pretense, and causes division at great expense."* One of the definitions of pretense is make believe or fiction! When I am offended I may be responding in defense of *something concluded from a wrong perception – something I made up!*

Eyesalve is only mentioned once in scripture, where Jesus tells us to *"anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."* (Rev. 3:18 KJV)

Strong's Concordance defines eyesalve as a preparation used to remedy tender eyelids. I asked the Lord how it relates to dismantling offense. What I heard is that there are areas where we are so tender, "touchy," that our perception of what we see is often incorrect. The eyesalve Jesus gives allows us to see correctly when we are offended, breaks the spirit of division and allow the Body to be joined in unity.

Unity of the Body is of utmost importance to God (Ps. 133:1-3), and the enemy loves to bring division. Our adversary is well aware of the timing of God and ensuing Kingdom advancement, and uses offense to cause us to stumble and to hinder us from going forward. When we repent and allow the Lord's eyesalve to correct our vision, He realigns us, His government in us increases, and we ascend higher!

No wonder Jesus speaks so strongly warning against offense! Praise God, He is releasing eyesalve so that we can see offense and dismantle it! He is increasing focus and clarity in our sight, for full alignment to His ways, His order, His authority and His timings.

The enemy wants to keep us from suffering in the flesh and being raised up higher! In Matt. 16:23, Jesus said to Peter, "... Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Satan was an offense because he wanted Jesus to bypass the cross – first in the temptation in the wilderness, and then again right before the crucifixion. In our lives, Satan wants us to react in pride and not humble ourselves and suffer in the flesh as we obey the leading of the Holy Spirit. Our adversary knows that our humility and obedience will bring honor and elevation to higher authority – gaining victory through Christ's overcoming power!

Another type of offense comes through how we view our God-ordained circumstances. Jesus said, *"And blessed is [he], whosoever shall not be offended in me."* (Mat 11:6 KJV) in response to John the Baptist questioning if He was really the One. I believe John was offended at his circumstance of being in prison. Perhaps if we searched our hearts we'd find that sometimes we are saying, *"I don't deserve this treatment,"* or *"the enemy is attacking me"* but God is allowing it for His purposes to be accomplished.

So, what are we to do when we get offended? Jesus gives us the answer in Matt. 5:44, *"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,"*

How can we do that when we feel hurt or angry, when we feel justified being offended? We are to trust God as the lawgiver, the judge and enactor of justice. *“Great peace have they which love thy law, And nothing shall offend them.”* [Ps. 119:165 KJV] If someone does us wrong, God will judge accurately and vindicate us if necessary. And when we recognize His law of sowing and reaping, we can see that maybe what are experiencing is reaping what we have sown toward others or God Himself. We are to have no other gods before us – pride is the god of self and satanic in nature.

Recently, I had a situation arise after a house church meeting. A member had been speaking pridefully, arguing and causing division; I became disturbed by it, but didn’t address it. In fact, I allowed my feelings to fester to the point that the Lord showed me my attitude toward this person had become prideful – the very thing I was disturbed about, I was now manifesting! Holy Spirit reminded me of Gal. 6:1, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

I repented, prayed for and blessed that person as led by the Holy Spirit. Immediately the heavens were opened, although I hadn’t realized they were closed! Pride will do that! I felt I was “right,” but not staying in a place of love and humility was wrong. A few weeks later another situation came up and when that person shared their thoughts, Holy Spirit revealed to me the stronghold in that person that was based on a slight error of doctrine. The Lord brought an opportunity to rightly instruct, *in love*. God used all of it and turned it to good, *after I repented of my attitude and followed the leading of the Holy Spirit*.

God desires to increase His government in the earth, and His government must be increased in us first. We are to be instruments of blessing, trusting GOD to judge justly. He is the One who knows all things, and to whom all must give account. It isn’t about others when we get offended. If we are *truly* wronged, God will vindicate, in His timing and in His ways (perhaps after we learn what we need to learn). When we become as a little child, trusting God completely, in humility and obedience, He will move on our behalf.

Holy Spirit is always hovering over our hearts – offense hardens us to His still small voice! Paul exhorts us in Acts 24:16, "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and [toward] men." Also in 2 Cor. 6:3 Paul instructs, “giving no offence in anything, that the ministry not be blamed.” He goes on to tell us how to do this - much patience in all types of sufferings; and to do it by pureness, knowledge, long-suffering, kindness, the Holy Ghost, love unfeigned, the word of truth, the power of God, etc. Exercising our spirit instead of our flesh and soul!

Most of our offenses are because of things we make up in our head! The Lord said, *“It is a defense based on pretense, and causes division at great expense.”* Defenses are strongholds of pride formed from heart issues - roots of inferiority, insecurity, bitterness, unforgiveness, etc. When we get close to the gates of new land – where the enemy rules and God wants us to overtake - the enemy brings an offense causing “self” to rise up - our feelings, desires for recognition, wanting to be “right.” Or it might be our opinion, a pre-conceived notion of how things should look, what we “deserve,” etc. *Self* rises as a defense guarding heart issues.

Holy Spirit reminded me of times when the disciples didn’t understand what Jesus was saying and rather than asking him to explain, they began arguing about who among them was greatest. He responded by saying that whoever wants to be greatest must become as a little child; in another instance, he said that he who would be the greatest would have to be the least, the servant of all.

What about when we are offended seeing the wrong done to others, things that are evil and *should* offend us! Maybe we say, "I can't believe they would do that; somebody needs to speak up or do something!" God is raising some to be His mouthpiece of justice in the earth. Some are offended by being put in that position, unwilling to be a mouthpiece of correction, an arbiter of justice in the earth. Some may simply not want to have their lives inconvenienced. Still others are fearful of the backlash that may come. I heard the Lord say, *"See something? Say something - in My Spirit through love - for they know not what spirit they are of! Be shrewd as a serpent and gentle as a dove; bring my Kingdom to the earth with wisdom from above."*

The Lord is calling many to come up higher, to press in and hear the strategies of heaven and, in His authority, decree and declare His Kingdom in the earth! Some are offended and resent that God would put that kind of a demand on them, like children not wanting to take on the next level of responsibility. God is providing great grace for the task at hand, to enable us to rise and take the land!

As I was pondering these things, I saw in the spirit many people enroute to their personal gates of promise. Along the way they stopped and were picking up pieces of fencing and erecting a structure that surrounded them as a cage. They were not aware that this was blocking them from entering their gate; they no longer had vision for the destination as they were blinded by the structures they built. The Lord told me that this was what offense does. It builds a structure hindering vision and blocking access!

The fence of offense is being torn down. Right now, Holy Spirit is shining His light on areas of offense in the hearts and minds of the Body of Christ! I heard the Lord say, *"Many are offended in Me because they don't see Me in others. They see the differences and allow division in their heart because they do not value the uniqueness of My design in each of My children. They do not have their vision opened to perceive the glory that will come when each part is in place and functioning, for the release of the full measure of the stature of My Son in the earth. This has caused blockages, arteriosclerosis of the spirit, and I am doing surgery right now!"*

I hear the Lord saying, *"Many are offended because they don't know their true identity. They have a defense built on pretense because they don't know who I have created them to be. Now is the time for all to see that their true identity is found in ME! I am releasing my eyesalve to expose the fence of offense, to break down structures of defense based on pretense. Let My Spirit search the heart, and fences of offense will break apart. The time is now for all to see their true identity is found in ME. From this will come the unity that has been my design from eternity."*

Lord God, thank you that you are revealing our need and releasing eyesalve for renewed vision to perceive ourselves and others accurately. Thank you that you are exposing the fence of offense so that we can dismantle every defense based on pretense and move forward in love and unity, advancing your Kingdom on the Earth. We pray this in the mighty name of Your Son Jesus Christ, and give You all the Glory. Amen.

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