

UNOFFENDED HANDOUT: ESCAPING THE TRAP

THREE TRAPS OF OFFENCE

1. Clam Trap (never deal with it, run away, escape, push it down inside)

Eph 4:26,27 *Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.*

2. Attack Trap (my instinctive reaction is to defending myself and defeating my opponent)

Prov 29:11 (NIV) *A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.*

Prov 15:1 (ESV) *A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*

3. Gossip Trap – including others who are not a part of the problem or part of the solution

Pro 17:9 (NIV) *He who covers over an offence promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.*

The right way is to ask a friend for counsel without revealing the identity of the offender or the details of the offence.

HOW DO WE ESCAPE THE TRAP?

1. LET IT GO - Do not take the offence.

Prov 19:11 *Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offence.*

Col 3:13 *bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*

2. TAKE IT TO GOD

This is an important next step of Personal Inspection

Matthew 7– “If you see a speck in your brother’s eye but pay no attention to the log in your eye...*first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.*”

Personal inspection helps you see things more clearly, overlook minor offences and take responsibility for your part in it. Also removes the raw emotion of the situation, and reduces the issue to its true size.

It’s asking, “God, show me if I am overly sensitive to the wrong of others, making their sin more serious than they really are.”

“Show me where I may have contributed to the conflict through my own attitude and behaviour.”

It then puts us in a better place to forgive them from the heart.

Forgiveness is a choice of the heart we make

Forgiveness is neither a feeling, nor forgetting nor excusing.

Forgiveness means that what was done was wrong and inexcusable, but since God has forgiven me, I forgive you.

Forgiveness is an act of the will, a decision not to think or talk about what someone has done. God calls us to make this decision regardless of our feelings.

As we pray to forgive that person, we also express to God how what they did made us feel. It helps help the pain and hurt.

“Father, I choose to forgive Mike for the times he yells at me when I have to speak to him. That make me feel belittled and not respected.”

After you’ve given it to God, examined your own heart and come to the place you can forgive them, that may clear it up and you can truly let it go.

But if it’s something you still can’t get past it, you can’t overlook, once you’ve dealt with your contribution to a conflict, you are in a better place to approach the others person about it.

3. GO TO THE PERSON - If you are offended – go.

It may bring to their attention how their words and actions are affecting others.

Mastering the Art of Going

Matt 18:15 If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.

#1 Go to them PERSONALLY

- Face to Face
- Not Phone if possible (can’t see your countenance)
- Not Letter or email or text (but cannot hear your tone – misinterpret your tone).
 - It will be read without your intended tone and through their filters.

#2 Go with the right TIMING

- After time of inspection and reflection
- Don’t go when you are in high emotion
- Don’t delay out of fear

#3 Go with the right ATTITUDE

- Go to reconcile, not to blame.
- It isn’t about being right. It is about being reconciled. Restoring relationship. **GAINING YOUR BROTHER OR SISTER**
- Reconciliation means to replace hostility and separation with peace and friendship
- You may talk through the issues together. We are not going to confront them, but you’re focussing on restoring the relationship.

#4 Go with the right WORDS

- Focus on “I” before “YOU”
- Focus on how it affected you and you see it
- Invite them to explain it from their perspective

- Avoid “You always” or “You never”

HOW NOT TO:

“Mike, you really upset me when you arrived late. You’re always late.”

“Mike, I’m really mad at you. You just don’t care, do you? How could you do that?”

The heated tone is a sign that you haven’t taken it to God first.

RIGHT WORDING:

- Mike, when you keep arriving late, it leaves me feeling that you aren’t taking this project seriously. I don’t want anything to come between us and it could be the way I’ve reacted. You may have a good reason for it, but I wanted to talk about it.
- Mike, when you told everyone about the struggle I was having, which I shared with you in confidence, I got upset and it really hurt me. Can you explain to me why you felt you needed to do that?
- For both people, it important to listen instead of just thinking of your next point.

#5 Go with someone they respect if they refuse to make it right.

- Go with a leader in the church if he is a believer and still refuses to reconcile.

#6 Go on with your life if he still refuses to reconcile having done your part of forgiving them from the heart.

IF YOU HAVE OFFENDED

Matt 5:23,24 (ESV) So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Tips for Going to make things right:

1. Address everyone involved
2. Be specific – “I’m sorry for.....”
3. Apologize – an expression of sorrow or regret for hurting another person
4. Change your behaviour – true repentance
5. Ask for forgiveness and allow time to heal the wrong done and rebuild trust.
6. The person receiving your apology should express their forgiveness, not simply, “DON’T WORRY ABOUT IT.”

HOW NOT TO:

“Sorry”

“I’m sorry for getting angry, BUT you make me really angry when you don’t clean up.”

Keep your big but out of it.

RIGHT WORDING:

“It has come to my attention that I may have offended you when I took all the credit for the project we did together... I was wrong to do that, I am sorry. Please forgive me.”

“After the party on Saturday, I came away feeling bad that I may have upset you when I joked about your cooking. I went too far and I was wrong to do that. I am sorry. Please forgive me.”

Go to repent, not require repentance.

A heart-searching question in this is when was the last time we admitted a wrong and asked for forgiveness?

WHAT IF OUR OFFENCE IS WITH GOD?

- An offence is a hurt or pain that we blame on someone else
- Sometime our pain is hooked to something we blame God for.
- We can get stuck with trying to understand WHY?
- Why did you allow that to happen?" – "What didn't you answer our prayers?"
- There are situations that can only fit in a box called Mystery that we won't fully understand until we are face to face with God in heaven.
- People will try to give reasons for things there's no clear explanation for. That's not helpful.
- Yet we struggle with the fact that God doesn't need to be forgiven – He's perfect
- The pain and hurt is still very real.
- Equally, there may be people we have held an offence with that are no longer alive.
- It's an outstanding offence that they aren't here to deal with.

Psalm 43:5 - *Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.*

- Talk to God and express to him all the hurt and pain you are feeling and give it all to him. Then make a choice to let go of the offence.
- "God, this hurt and pain I've blamed on You. I choose to let it go, but I ask you to heal my heart. You are God, and I am not."