

Conundrums of Conflict & Deeper Truths (Part 2)

My Goals of this Sermon Series

1. **I Want You to Become Experts in Recognizing & Avoiding the Evil Trap of Offense**
2. I Want You to Discover the Sources of Hurt, Anger, Resentment, and Unforgiveness Inside
3. I Want You to Diligently & Humbly Work Towards Reconciliation Regarding Any Offense that Stands Between You and Others

We get hung up on and confused by these conundrums, and default to holding on to offenses.

- Justice Claim
- Weakness
- **Trust & Vulnerability**
- **The Fear of Being an Enabler**
- **Self-Care & Respect (Doormat Effect)**
- The Offender Has No Remorse
- The Offender is Dead
- Responsibility to Push Back Oppression

The Hierarchy of Truth

Some truth is “weightier” than other Truth. In other words, some truth is deeper, more foundational, and supersedes the claim of less “weighty” truths.

Trust and Vulnerability

We are rightly concerned that to give someone trust again who has broken and betrayed our good faith, and wounded us to a great extent, is both unwise and dangerous. But, many have the misconception that to forgive and let go of an offense means that I have to give trust to this person again and be exposed and vulnerable despite the obvious, probable danger.

- Forgiveness (Letting Go of an Offense) and Trust Are Not Necessarily Connected

Mercy is a Gift; Trust is Earned.

John 2:23-25

²³ Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in him. ²⁴ **But Jesus didn't trust them, because he knew all about people.** ²⁵ **No one needed to tell him about human nature, for he knew what was in man.**

- **There are consequences to actions.**
- Forgiveness can fully occur while **consequences and lost trust continue.**

2 Samuel 11:13-14, 9-10

David confessed to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” Nathan replied, **“Yes, but the Lord has forgiven you, and you won't die for this sin.** ¹⁴ **Nevertheless,** because you have shown utter contempt for the word of the Lord by doing this, your child will die...you despised the word of the Lord and done this horrible deed. For you have murdered Uriah the Hittite with the sword of the Ammonites and stolen his wife. ¹⁰ From this time on, the sword shall never depart from your house...

The Fear of Being an Enabler

We understandably are afraid that if we don't respond firmly and even harshly to someone who offends us again and again, that they will never get the message that their actions are wrong and hurtful. In fact, we fear, if we just keep forgiving them, we're actually somehow enabling their poor and destructive behavior. We come to believe that they need to learn – and we will teach them!!! "I'm going to teach him a lesson!" "See if she likes how it feels!"

- However, you may well NOT be the one God uses to teach or "change" the offender.

Matthew 7:4

How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when **you can't see past the log in your own eye?**

Offense is Not an Impartial or Sincere Teacher; Trust God to Do the Teaching

Romans 14:4

Who are you to condemn someone else's servants? Their own master will judge whether they stand or fall. And with the Lord's help, they will stand and receive his approval.

Self-Care & Respect (Doormat Effect)

We rightly see the unhealthiness and potential damage that can be done to our sense of worth and how our perspective can be skewed if we are "used and abused" over and over again. We understandably don't want to be a doormat where others wipe off the dirt, mud, and muck of their lives onto us.

- **Boundaries** are an appropriate exercise of self-care and respect without offering retaliation or holding on to offense.
- And more importantly, **if our Identity is rooted in God's Affirmation, God will use the situations where others offend us to shame and shift the offenders outlook.**

Kindness Will Shame and Eventually Overcome Meanness

Romans 12:17-21

Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. ¹⁸ **Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.** ¹⁹ Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the Lord. ²⁰ **Instead, "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads."** ²¹ **Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.**

"Love is the only force capable of transforming and enemy into a friend."

MLK, Jr.