

## Choosing Love Over Pride

Lesson 04 in the series: "No Offense"

"Take offense" = to become angry or upset by something that another person has said or done

### A. Jesus commanded us to love people who offend us.

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Matthew 5:43-48 (NIV)

### B. Our biggest obstacle to loving people who offend us is pride.

"Pride" = 1. A high or inordinate opinion of one's own dignity, importance, merit, or superiority. 2. A feeling of deep pleasure or satisfaction derived from one's own achievements

1. Pride and love are opposites and cannot coexist.

"...We know that 'We all possess knowledge.' But knowledge puffs up while love builds up. Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know." 1 Corinthians 8:1-2 (NIV)

- Love values others; pride values self.
- Love values relationships; pride values winning.
- Love values forgiveness; pride values being right.

"Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance." 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NLT)

2. Pride is so insidious it can cause us to stay angry and offended at others even while we're servicing God.

"As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!' 'Martha, Martha,' the Lord answered, 'you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.'" Luke 10:38-42 (NIV)

*Note:* Pride is easy to spot in others but very difficult to see in ourselves.

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! (blind guides) You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness." Matthew 23:27-28 (NLT)

**\*\*Warning\*\*** God hates pride and will oppose us if we become prideful.

"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." James 4:6b & Proverbs 3:34 (NLT)

"In his pride the wicked man does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God."  
Psalm 10:4 (NIV)

"...Miriam and Aaron criticized Moses because he had married a Cushite woman. They said, 'Has the Lord spoken only through Moses? Hasn't he spoken through us, too?' But the Lord heard them. (Now Moses was very humble—more humble than any other person on earth.) '...I speak to him face to face, clearly...He sees the Lord as he is. So why were you not afraid to criticize my servant Moses?' The Lord was very angry with them, and he departed. As the cloud moved from above the Tabernacle, there stood Miriam, her skin as white as snow from leprosy..." Numbers 12:1-10 (NLT)

**Good News!** God will bless us if we humble ourselves.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you and lead me along the path of everlasting life.” Psalm 139:23-24 (NLT)

“And all of you, dress yourselves in humility as you relate to one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’ So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor.” 1 Peter 5:5b-6 (NLT)

**Good News!** God will give us power to let go of offenses and genuinely love people who offend us.

“So we keep on praying for you, asking our God to enable you to live a life worthy of his call. May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do. Then the name of our Lord Jesus will be honored because of the way you live, and you will be honored along with him. This is all made possible because of the grace of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ.”

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 (NLT)

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### Connect Group Questions

1. Read the following “letting go” prayer. How would you feel about praying a prayer like this every day?  
“Lord, I realize that the hurtful things people say and do are more than I can bear. So please cleanse me of any anger, impatience, sadness, or despair that I have picked up. Please fill me with your Holy Spirit and replace these temptations with love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness. Please give me the desire and the power to let go of things that offend me. I pray these things in the name of Jesus, Amen.”
2. Read 1 Corinthians 8:1-2 & 13:4-8. Then discuss the following contrast statements between love and pride. What other statements could you add?
  - Love values others; pride values self.
  - Love values relationships; pride values winning.
  - Love is values forgiveness; pride values being right.
3. Read Luke 10:38-42. Why do you think Martha was offended by her sister’s actions? Discuss the following prayer that sounds a lot like Martha’s request of Jesus: “Lord, don’t you care that nobody is helping me serve You the way I want to serve You? Tell them to come help me!” How might Jesus respond to this prayer?
4. Why do you think God opposes prideful people? (James 4:8, Psalm 10:4, Numbers 12:1-10)
5. Why do you think God blesses those who humble themselves? (1 Peter 5:5-6, Psalm 139:23-24)
6. Why is it usually easier to spot pride in others than in ourselves? (Matthew 23:27-28, Luke 18:9-14)
7. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:11-12. How does it make you feel to know that we can ask God to empower us to do what He wants us to do?
8. Spend some time as a group praying for each other, our church, and Christians across our country. Ask God to empower us to let go of offenses and love people who may disagree with us politically. Pray the “letting go” prayer out loud as a group.

**Great Resource:** “Unoffendable: How Just One Change Can Make All of Life Better,” by Brant Hansen, W Publishing Group, 2015.