

*“I did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).*

## Offendedness

“And after a time, Cain gave to the Lord an offering of the fruits of the earth. And Abel gave an offering of the young lambs of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord was pleased with Abel's offering; But in Cain and his offering he had no pleasure. And Cain was angry and his face became sad. And the Lord said to Cain, Why are you angry? and why is your face sad? If you do well, will you not have honor? And if you do wrong, sin is waiting at the door, desiring to have you, but do not let it be your master” (Genesis 4:3-7 BBE).

Cain is the father of the offended.

### What Does It Mean to Be Offended?

Being offended means that you have hurt feelings, that you are sad, angry, sorrowful, grieved, annoyed, disappointed, or upset, but it also means that you largely, emotionally **disagree** with what has been done to or with you, and that you take the act personally (whether it was personal or not).

Being offended means that you feel you have been unjustly treated, or, if not unjustly, at least treated in a way unacceptable or undesirable to you, even unforgivably so. You will not be satisfied until there is some sort of compensation, if only an apology. Even then, you may not be appeased, though you hear from God as did Cain.

Being offended usually means that you assume certain motives on the part of the offender, and react to what happened as something that could have and should have been prevented.

Being offended is the very opposite of forgiveness. Forgiveness means that you pardon another his offenses towards you, whereas being offended means you hold on to a grudge (as Cain did with Abel), even where there is no offense (as with Abel towards Cain).

### Are You Offended?

Are you offended, and if so, why? Is it good or bad? Most likely nobody would say it is good, though some might often think it is justified.

Is it profitable, constructive, or healthy in any way to be offended? If you are offended, does it do anyone any good - yourself, the offender, or anyone else? What effects does being offended have if continued indefinitely?

### Must You Be Offended?

Is being offended something unavoidable that happens to someone, or is it something about which one can exercise choice? Can I choose to or not to be offended? God counseled Cain against his attitude, did He not?

While you may have heard that it is wrong to offend someone without cause, have you considered that being offended may be every bit as wrong?

## Where Does Being Offended Lead?

Being offended is often identified as grief or sorrow - something one may consider socially, morally, or spiritually legitimate. However, being offended leads to *illegitimate* attitudes and emotional states of self-pity, resentment, bitterness, anger, hatred, unforgiveness, jealousy, and vengeance. From there, one can go on to theft, deceit, revenge, violence, and murder, which are often and inevitably the end result of these passions if left unchecked, as was the case with Cain. Let's face it - being offended leads to no good:

**“And Cain said to his brother, Let us go into the field: and when they were in the field, Cain made an attack on his brother Abel and put him to death” (Genesis 4:8 BBE).**

## Why Are You Offended?

Pride and selfishness most often cause offendedness. But for God's grace, we all have an image of ourselves that is selfishly biased. We forbid anyone touching our ego. When that forbiddance is violated or overcome, we are offended.

There are many ways in which pride can cause one to be offended. For example, competitiveness grows from pride, and the acceptance of someone over us, or instead of us, leads to envy. What is envy, except another way of saying, “You offend me because you have what I lack or want”?

With Whom are you offended, really? Is it not with God?

“A man can receive nothing unless it is given to him from Heaven” (John 3:27 MKJV).

Once again, being offended comes from pride, an expression of self-righteousness that is contrary to God's sovereignty and His righteousness.

Cain believed his sacrifice - **his good works** - should have been accepted.

## At What Are You Offended? Do You Know?

Is being offended ever justified or legitimate? Is it right, perhaps, to be offended as long as the thing done against you is truly wrongful? Consider this: What if you mistakenly thought some act against you was wrongful or unjust? Would you be justified in being offended before you learned the wrong was only perceived as wrong and was unintended by the offending party? Perhaps it would be too late to change your mind if you found out your initial reaction was based on a false perception. Could you not have done damage in your reaction by then, perhaps the kind that would be difficult or even impossible to reverse or correct? Can you offend someone simply by being offended without cause? I know I've done it.

What if you did not know whether or not some act against you was deliberately harmful or ill-willed, and you reserved judgment until you verified that the person purposed to do you harm? (Is reserving judgment not an indication that being offended is a reaction by choice?) When finding out the offense was intended, would it then be right to be offended?

Perhaps one could consider the saying, “Two wrongs do not make a right”?

Is being offended *ever* a good choice? Being offended may mean that you would return in kind some evil done to you, perceived or otherwise, if you could somehow get even. You would at least *wish* to get even if you were unable to perform an act of vengeance. Being helpless to take revenge, you may simply sulk, creating an unpleasant atmosphere for everyone around you. Being offended is the feeling that your offender owes you - at least an apology, if not more. But, even if it were so (and often it is not), it is written:

“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord” (Romans 12:19 KJV).

Sometimes there is an issue that makes it necessary for you to speak for the sake of others:

“No more lying, then! Each of you must tell the truth to the other believer, because we are all members together in the Body of Christ. If you become angry, do not let your anger lead you into sin, and do not stay angry all day. Don't give the Devil a chance” (Ephesians 4:25-27 GNB).

Remembering, above all:

“For this is admirable, if because of conscience toward God someone endures pain, suffering unjustly. For what glory is it, if when you sin and are beaten, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it, you endure, this is admirable before God” (1 Peter 2:19-20 EMTV).

## What Does Jesus Say About Being Offended?

Jesus says that being offended can lead to betrayal and hate.

“And then many will be offended, and will betray one another, and will hate one another” (Matthew 24:10 MKJV).

Are not the desire and attitude just as wrong as the act?

“You have heard that it was said to the ancients, ‘You shall not kill’ --and, ‘Whoever shall kill shall be liable to the judgment.’ But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be liable to the judgment. And whoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be liable to the Sanhedrin; but whoever shall say, Fool! shall be liable to be thrown into the fire of hell” (Matthew 5:21-22 MKJV).

Jesus said: “And blessed is he, whoever shall not be offended in Me” (Matthew 11:6 MKJV).

I have had people offended at me, in some cases because I have done them wrong, but in most cases because I spoke the truth frankly about them and they did not like it. They were bitter and would not forgive, no matter what I did. So is fulfilled the proverb:

“A brother offended is like a strong city; and their disagreements are like the bars of a fortress” (Proverbs 18:19 MKJV).

## Being Offended Can Defile and Destroy

Being offended immediately defiles perception. Because these people did not like the truth I spoke about them, though spoken in objectivity and with desire to help, they assumed I was hateful. That is common: When disagreeing with something, one is prone to find fault with the thing itself and/or with the messenger. Isn't that why the religious killed the prophets, then the Son Himself, and then those He sends in His Spirit thereafter, to this day?

**“Not being of the Evil One like Cain, who put his brother to death. And why did he put him to death? Because his works were evil and his brother's works were good” (1 John 3:12 BBE).**

Offendedness is of the evil one.

Is it not true that we offend in being offended? The call of the follower or disciple of Christ is to forego being offended. The call is to forgive, tolerate, understand, show mercy, overlook offenses, and seek a right way for all concerned, including and perhaps especially for the offender.

## Christ Died for Offenders

Instead of being offended by our offenses, Jesus Christ died for us offenders.

1 Peter 2:18-25 MKJV

(18) Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to those good and forbearing, but also to the perverse ones.

(19) For this is a grace, if for conscience toward God anyone endures grief, suffering wrongfully.

(20) For what glory is it if you patiently endure while sinning and being buffeted? But if you suffer while doing good, and patiently endure, this is a grace from God.

(21) For you were not called to this? For Christ also suffered on our behalf, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps,

(22) He Who did no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth,

(23) Who when He was reviled did not revile in return. When He suffered, He did not threaten, but gave Himself up to Him Who judges righteously.

(24) He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that dying to sins, we might live to righteousness; by Whose stripes you were healed.

(25) For you were as sheep going astray, but now you are turned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

## Righteous Offense

What about the offender? Is the one offending wrong simply because someone was offended by what he said or did? While there are wrongful offenders, to be sure, one speaking the

truth in love, which is in Christ, should not be afraid of offending or capitulate to one hurt or offended by the truth. Nor should he or she pity the one in the wrong or feel badly for the one offended.

Should Abel have been apologetic for his acceptable works before God because Cain was offended, or should he have refrained from his works lest Cain be offended?

I have seen people try to manifest what they presume to be Christian love by apologizing or expressing regret for offending someone, albeit unintentionally, by speaking truth. But is that good? One person said she was offended by what I had to say to her, but, after considering, she accepted it because she knew I was right. There is a process involved in accepting truth, and it takes time. She says that had I apologized to her, it would have interfered in the process of accepting the truth about herself. Though truth can hurt, it must be spoken, even as a surgeon must take a scalpel to a patient to repair the body.

There is a need to speak truth, even if it happens to offend. If I compromise, I can find myself inadvertently siding with wrongness and losing the reward and favor from both man and God. It is written:

“He who rebukes a man shall afterwards find more favor than he who flatters with the tongue” (Proverbs 28:23 MKJV).

“Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful” (Proverbs 27:6 MKJV).

## Easily Offended

You have heard one say of another, “So-and-so is so easily offended” (or “so sensitive”). Paul speaks of people who are easily offended, but who are not in the least hesitant to offend. We live in a day of proud, stubborn, selfish, self-centered, and self-righteous people, more so than when Christ first came. Paul writes:

“But evil men and seducers will go forward to worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:13 MKJV).

“But know this, that in the last days grievous times will be upon us. For men will be lovers of themselves, money-lovers, braggarts, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural feeling, unyielding, slanderers, without self-control, savage, haters of good, betrayers, reckless, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power of it; even turn away from these” (2 Timothy 3:1-5 LITV).

Being offended when corrected is a refusal to acknowledge what is right:

“A scorner does not love one who corrects him, nor will he go to the wise” (Proverbs 15:12 MKJV).

Cain paid no attention to God’s warning.

## Do the Offended Prosper?

People who have been offended by the truth can certainly appear to prosper, and do so in this world. Cain was offended, but look at what he was able to accomplish thereafter:

**“And Cain went away from before the face of the Lord, and made his living-place in the land of Nod on the east of Eden. And Cain had connection with his wife and she became with child and gave birth to Enoch: and he made a town, and gave the town the name of Enoch after his son” (Genesis 4:16-17 BBE).**

How interesting! Cain prospered, and God even gave him protection:

**“And the Lord said, Truly, if Cain is put to death, seven lives will be taken for his. And the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one might put him to death” (Genesis 4:15 BBE).**

## Does One Reprove or Rebuke Because Offended?

One may reprove or rebuke because he is offended, but because one reproves or rebukes does not necessarily mean he is offended. Reproving the works of darkness and rebuking sin is a necessity before God laid on those whom He chooses to speak. Paul rebuked Peter, for example, not because he was personally offended but because Peter was wrong and was setting a bad example for all. Was Peter offended when Paul publicly rebuked him? Though we do not know Peter’s initial reaction, he later demonstrated in his letter that he was not offended, but rather that he held Paul in high esteem:

**“...as also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you, according to the wisdom given to him” (2 Peter 3:15 LITV).**

## Offended in Righteousness

What we have just described in Paul is a kind of offendedness that is not as the one we have described thus far, the difference being altogether in the spirit of the man and his motive. This leads us to our next question.

Can God be offended? Yes, He can. Should He be offended? Yes, He should. But, as with all things, there is man’s perspective and attitude, and there is God’s. God’s offendedness is different from that of man, as is His jealousy, for example. The Bible says that God is a jealous God. This does not mean that He is foolishly, selfishly jealous. It means that He will not countenance worship of other gods, which destroys us. He is jealous for our sakes as well as His, whereas men are jealous for themselves. The same goes for God’s understanding and ways in all things:

**“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, or your ways My ways, says the Lord. For as the Heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9 BBE).**

Can men of God be offended? Yes, they can - righteously if identified with God, but unrighteously if taking personal offense. That goes for all believers in Christ.

Abel was offended in righteousness:

“And He said, What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to Me from the earth” (Genesis 4:10 BBE).

Was Abel crying with enmity for Cain? I do not believe so. He was unjustly treated, yes - he was brutally and unjustly violated - but Abel was crying for justice, the godly kind, not revenge. That is why God heard him, because we know that God does not hear the prayers of sinners.

Now we speak to avenge our brother Abel’s blood. God is offended at the wanton bloodshed by the seed of Cain, those who speak without understanding, blaspheming with their opinions and verbal religious garbage, speaking evil of the seed of Abel.

We are here as God’s spokespersons to set the record straight. It is God’s turn now to speak. If men have any wisdom, if they have any grace, they will shut their mouths to their benefit, or open them wide, as they usually do in their brutishness, and destroy themselves. Either way, God is glorified and vindicated. This is His Day, a terrible day for the wicked, but a great day for the righteous.

So thankful to know and to speak these things,

Victor Hafichuk

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