

## REMOVING OFFENCES

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### **Do not allow yourself to become offended or to stay in a condition of being offended.**

Offences happen to **everyone**, *Lk 17:3, Mat 18:7*.

To become offended is to fall into a **trap**, into **bondage**, which lasts as long as you stay offended, and which prevents Christian growth and service.

The Greek word for offence is **skandalon** and refers to the part of an animal trap to which the bait is attached. (See Vine's dictionary). Offence has come to mean a trap, a stumbling block. We all receive offences but we **do not have to become offended** and in bondage.

In *Gen 4:5* God rejected Cain's bloodless sacrifice. This was an offence to Cain and he became very angry, v5. His "countenance fell" and he became offended with God. Although God had caused an offence to him, **Cain did not have to become offended**. He could have accepted the rejection of his sacrifice, found out what God wanted, and gone on from there. However Cain killed his brother, who may have tried to explain to Cain what he needed to do; his place of work became unfruitful, v12, and he became a wanderer, v12. He had taken "the bait" and had fallen into "a pit".

In *Mat 15:1-12* Jesus told the Pharisees they were transgressing God's commands by their traditions, v3, and that they were hypocrites, v7. This was **an offence** to the Pharisees and they **became offended**, v12.

*1Pet 2:6-8* says that Jesus is the precious chief cornerstone to those who believe the Word, v6, but He is a **stumbling stone** and a **rock of offence** to those who are disobedient to the Word, v8.

*Jn 6:48-58* records Jesus teaching that His flesh is food indeed, and His blood is drink indeed, v55. This teaching was an **offence** to many, v60-61, who became offended and no longer followed Him, v66. Probably Peter found His teaching hard to take, v67, but he refused to become offended, v68.

Sometimes an offence comes when **people** sin against us, *Lk 17:1,3*. At other times the handling of the church congregation by a **leader** causes an offence to some.

Perhaps circumstances like an accident can cause an offence. (Why did God "allow" it?)

Remember **you do not have to become offended** when the offence occurs.

### **How to handle offences.**

1. Make a choice **not to take** the "bait" and become offended.
2. **Forgive** the person who has sinned against you, *Eph 4:32, Mat 6:14,15, Mk 11:25,26, Col 3:13*. Release them from your judgment, *Mat 7:1,2, Jam 4:11,12, Rom 14:4,10, Rom 2:1*. Hand the problem over to God to sort out and resolve, *Ps 55:22, Ps 37:5-9, 1Pet 5:7*. **Pray** wholeheartedly for the person who has caused the offence, *Mat 5:44, Lk 6:27,28*.
3. **Go to the brother** and explain how he has caused an offence, *Lk 17:3, Mat 18:15*. Do not tell anyone else. Go and gain your brother.
4. Cut out what offends, *Mat 18:6-9*. (This is not literal and physical) It may be pride, status, impatience, anger etc.
5. When another person becomes offended and hurt **do not take their offence** to yourself.

Help the other person to forgive, pray and go.

6. Deal with the offence while the person who caused it **is still around**, and as soon as possible.

Finally, if you become offended you build a **stone wall** around yourself, *Pro 18:19*, which no one can get through (probably). You become **unfruitful, wandering** from place to place, not able to become committed or form relationships in depth. There are many uncommitted, wandering believers who are in this condition because of unresolved offences.