

October 29, 2023

Commitment: The Foundation of Love III

"Your faith will be tested." Our faith is being tested in order to **expose our weaknesses** to prepare us for a darkness that is coming. Jesus warned Peter that Satan wanted to *"sift him as wheat"* right before Peter denied Christ 3 times.

Luke 22:31-34 *And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."*

"Sift you as wheat" means to separate you from your closest relationships; Jesus, spouse, children, family and church family and then from all people. Satan wants us alone and separated so he can destroy us. A hardened heart locks people out causing bitterness, draining "life" out of their soul.

Faith that works through love, is everything! **Gal 5:5-6** The best word that describes agape love is **commitment**.

Love Strong's # 26, *agape* (ag-ah-pay); an unconditional love that gives of itself without asking anything in return. This is a love of choice and will, not by feelings, chance and emotions. It is a commitment. It is the greatest of all love.

1 Cor 13:8 *"Love never fails..."* therefore if our faith is working through love, it will never fail.

Don't Take the Bait of Satan! *** BEING OFFENDED! *** Warning! This Message Might Offend You

The primary way Satan will "separate us as wheat" is through offenses. Satan wants us to "take the bait!" Proud people are critical, and some of the easiest to offend. Another word in the Bible that is synonymous with offence is stumble.

Offended Strong's #4625 and 4624, *skandalizo* (skan-dal-id-zoe),

A snare or stumbling block in the way which **hinders right conduct or thought**.

The noun to which it is related referred to the **bait-stick of a trap** used to catch animals.

It also means an **enticement** to error or sin.

Insulted, hurt or upset.

Enticement: a lure, temptation, a trap, seduction; the act or pressure of giving in to a desire especially when ill-advised, (merriam-webster).

When we become offended, it hinders our thought process and can manifest in sinful conduct. It will harden our heart which can lead to bitterness. **Heb 12:14-16** *Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: 15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;*

Acts 8:22-23 *Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity."*

Bitterness Strong's # 4088, *pikria* (pik-ree'-ah); acidity (especially poison). Webster; 1. having a harsh, acrid taste 2. hard to bear; grievous. 3. causing sharp pain. 4. characterized by intense hostility or resentment. 5. experienced at great cost: *a bitter lesson*.

Being offended with someone is like drinking poison yourself, expecting the other person to die. **It sucks the life out of your soul.**

Offences come by any type of ill feelings toward another person, whether it is anger or being hurt by someone. These ill feelings will fester into bitterness, and can lead to anger, hatred, rejection, resentment and even murder. We blame the other person for our offenses therefore justifying the sin in our heart and we refuse to repent because it is "Their fault!" not ours. Being offended not only causes us to be distressed, but others around us as well. We are upset and we want everyone to know it! **Self-pity** will cause us to hold onto our offence, and actually protect it.

Religious people get offended easily; **Matt 15:10-12** *When He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear and understand: 11 Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man." 12 Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the **Pharisees were offended** when they heard this saying?"*

Offenses cause unbelief and stops the move of God; **Matt 13:53-58** *Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there. 54 When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? 55 Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? 56 And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?" 57 **So they were offended at Him.** 58 But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house." 58 Now **He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.***

We become offended when things don't go how we think they should; **Matt 11:4-6** *Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: 5 The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. 6 **And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.**"*

Once we become offended, we put walls up around our heart as to not let anyone in and we stop giving out to others; **Prov. 18:19.** We become separated and alone believing no one will understand "my" problem. When we get offended, we don't see clearly, so when someone tells us the truth, we don't believe it and many times become more offended.

Being offended causes us to become deceived; **Matt 24:10-14** *And then **many will be offended**, will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, **the love of many will grow cold.** 13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

The world sees Jesus as an offense because they cannot get past the fact the He is the only way to God; **1 Pet. 2: 4-10.**

Forgiveness is the only answer for offenses; **Matt 18:23-35.** The Unforgiving servant (READ)

We are a Spiritual Doorway

Notice in **Matt 18:6-9**, Jesus said "woe to that man by whom the offense **comes!**" We have two spiritual kingdoms at hand; the kingdom of Heaven and the kingdom of darkness. Both are looking for an avenue to operate in this physical world around us, and that avenue is through you and me. Satan wants us operating under and in his jurisdiction.

Matt 18:7 "Woe to the world because of **offenses!** For **offenses** must come, but **woe** to that man by whom the **offense** comes!"

Woe Strong's # 3759 *ouai* (oo-ah-ee), means **grief**. Webster; grief is mental suffering over affliction or loss, distress or sorrow.

Bring your offence to the altar, before the cross of Jesus and lay it down. Ask God for forgiveness for being offended and forgive those who have offended you. Ask the Lord to soften your heart and for His love to flow through you again. The #1 thing that will stop the flow of the Holy Spirit in our lives is unforgiveness.