

THE BAIT OF OFFENSE



ELI CONSTANT BOTCHWAY

The Bait of Offense:

Escaping the Trap

Eli Constant Botchway

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Have you ever been ignored, misunderstood, betrayed, corrected harshly, or unfairly accused? Have you found yourself smiling in public, but seething in private? Do certain names, memories, or moments still make your chest tighten? If so, you're not alone. And you're not weak. You're simply human—and like millions of others, you've encountered one of the most dangerous spiritual traps on earth:

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Dedication

To **Miss Shantel H. Abdulazeez**, a quiet force of grace and humility. I have never seen you take offense, no matter what is said or done. Your consistent response, *"Sorry sir,"* speaks volumes. You have shown that true strength is not in defending self, but in choosing peace above pride. Your life is a living testimony of what this book teaches.

And to the **remarkable members of the Prayer Tribe & The Pleasant Place Church Campus Ministry** across the campuses of: University of Ghana (Legon, City Campus), University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA), Accra College of Education (AcCE), MNTC Pantang, ATU, and UniMAC. Your passion for prayer, unity, and love has inspired many, including me.

This book is for every one of you who has chosen the altar over offense, and the cross over conflict.
May you continue to walk in power, purity, and peace—unoffended and unshakable.

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Preface

An Invitation to Freedom

There was a time in my life when I smiled on the outside but was silently bleeding on the inside. Someone I loved and trusted hurt me deeply. They may never know how their words, silence, or actions affected me. I carried the weight for days, then months, and eventually, it grew into something darker. I didn't know it at the time, but I had picked up **offense**, and offense had picked up **me**.

I've since learned that offense is one of the enemy's most successful weapons. It sneaks in quietly, through a careless comment, a broken promise, or a misunderstood moment. It hides behind *"I'm fine"* and "*It's nothing.*" But offense rarely stays small. It grows roots. It hardens hearts. It divides families, ruins friendships, splits churches, and slows down destinies. And here's the truth I wish someone had told me earlier: **Offense doesn't hurt the person who caused it, it hurts the person who holds it**.

This book is born from that place of pain, healing, and revelation. It's not a book of blame. It's not a list of rules. It's a journey, a personal one, a spiritual one, and I pray, a freeing one.

Maybe you've been hurt. Maybe you're still carrying something someone said, didn't say, did, or didn't do. Maybe you smile, but deep down, your heart feels stuck. This book is for you. And if you're a pastor, leader, spouse, parent, friend, or just someone who works with people—you know how easy it is to get offended or to offend others. This book is for you too.

My prayer is that, page by page, God will gently uncover wounds you didn't know were there, and lead you to the freedom that only forgiveness and truth can bring. You'll read real stories. You'll see yourself in Bible characters. You'll find strength to release the things that weigh you down. And more than anything, you'll discover the joy of walking unoffended in a world that is often offensive.

Let's take this journey together. Not to judge, not to pretend, but to heal. Because life is too short, and your calling is too great, to live trapped in offense.

What This Book Will Do

This book is not just information it's a journey. A spiritual map. A mirror for the soul. Each chapter will walk you deeper into awareness, healing, and practical wisdom.

You will:

1. Understand how offense hides and grows
2. Explore biblical truths and examples that reveal its danger
3. Discover how Jesus handled offense—and how you can too

4. Learn tools to heal your wounds and protect your heart

5. Be equipped to forgive, reconcile, and restore relationships

6. Gain the maturity to lead, love, and live free

Whether you're a pastor, parent, student, business leader, or simply someone tired of carrying silent pain this book is for you.

Why This Matters Now

We live in a time when everyone is offended. Society rewards outrage. Social media fuels division. Families are fractured. Churches are shrinking not just because of doctrine, but because of offense. The spirit of offense is not just a personal issue it's a cultural epidemic. And God is calling His people to be different.

He is raising up **healed leaders**, **whole believers**, and **unoffended disciples** who carry His heart, not their wounds.

The journey won't be easy but it will be worth it. Each page will ask something of you. Honesty. Reflection. Forgiveness. Surrender. But if you stay the course, you'll walk lighter. You'll love deeper. And you'll finally be free.

So let's begin.

It's time to lay the offense down. It's time to live unshackled.

Let's break free.

— *Eli Constant Botchway*

Chapter 1:

What Is Offense? Understanding the Trap

Have you ever been walking through your day, feeling good, and then someone says something that instantly changes your mood? Maybe it was a joke that went too far. Maybe it was silence when you needed support. Maybe you were overlooked, forgotten, or criticized—and even though you smiled and said, "It's okay," something inside you shifted.

That moment… is the moment offense knocks on your heart.

OFFENSE: THE TRAP YOU DIDN'T SEE COMING

Offense doesn't always shout. Most times, it whispers. It hides behind hurt feelings, misunderstandings, and unspoken expectations. It often starts small, like a splinter in your soul, but if it's not removed, it digs deeper. It becomes bitterness. Resentment. Distance. And over time, it turns soft hearts into hard ones.

The Bible has a word for offense: **"skandalon."** That's a Greek word meaning *a snare, a trap, or the stick that triggers a trap*. It refers to something that causes people to stumble. Imagine a baited trap set in the woods. The prey doesn't see the danger, it only sees what looks good. That's what offense does. It *lures you in*, makes you feel justified in your hurt, and then *locks you into bitterness, distance, and emotional captivity*.

You didn't fall because of what they did. You fell because you *stayed* in what they did.

BIBLICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFINITIONS OF OFFENSE

From a **biblical perspective**, offense is anything that causes a person to stumble in faith, love, or truth. Jesus warned about this in Luke 17:1 (NKJV):

"It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come!"

In other words, offenses are a part of life, but they are spiritually dangerous. They don't just cause pain; they cause **spiritual disconnection** when left unresolved.

From a **psychological view**, offense is the emotional reaction to a perceived insult, rejection, or injustice. It stirs up feelings of anger, embarrassment, betrayal, or shame, and can lead to behaviors like withdrawal, retaliation, or toxic self-protection.
Offense touches the soul, it attacks how we **think**, **speak**, and **act**.

HOW OFFENSE MANIFESTS IN THOUGHTS, SPEECH, AND ACTIONS

In Our Thoughts:

a) "They always ignore me."
b) "Nobody values me."
c) "I'll never trust them again."
d) Rehearsing past hurts over and over.

In Our Speech:

a) Passive-aggressive jokes or comments.
b) Bringing up past mistakes in unrelated conversations.
c) Sarcasm, gossip, or slander.
d) Silence or cutting people off mid-conversation.

In Our Actions:

a) Avoiding people or environments tied to the hurt.
b) Reacting harshly to small matters.
c) Withdrawing from church, family, or responsibilities.
d) Trying to "get even" in subtle ways.

Offense often enters through words—but it doesn't stop there. It changes your posture, your peace, and your purpose.

TYPES OF OFFENSE

Not all offenses are the same. Some cut deep, others are unintentional. But all have the potential to grow if left unchecked.

1. Intentional Offense
This happens when someone *knows* what they're doing is wrong, and still does it—insults, betrayal, public shame, or purposeful harm.

2. Unintentional Offense
This is more common. Someone hurt you without realizing it, an oversight, a poor choice of words, or cultural misunderstanding.

3. Perceived Offense

Sometimes, we *think* someone offended us, but it may have been a misinterpretation. The pain feels real, even if the intent wasn't.

4. Spiritual Offense
Getting hurt by spiritual leaders, church decisions, or even by what we think God allowed to happen. This is one of the hardest forms to admit.

5. Emotional Offense
Triggered by past trauma, rejection, or insecurity. It may not be about what someone did, but about what it reminds us of from our history.

Not every hurt leads to offense, but offense begins when we choose to hold on to hurt instead of healing from it.

YOU CAN'T AVOID IT—BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO CARRY IT

Jesus was clear: **offenses will come** (Luke 17:1). You can't avoid being hurt. But you *can* avoid being trapped. That's the difference between those who live in freedom and those who stay wounded.

So many people carry offense for weeks, months, even decades. They don't even realize it has robbed them of joy, peace, and purpose. Their prayers feel stuck. Their relationships feel distant. Their fire for God dims slowly.

But there's good news: **you don't have to stay offended**. You don't have to keep drinking the poison, hoping it will hurt someone else.

This book will walk you through that journey step by step into freedom.

Reflection Questions

1. Have you been offended lately? Was it intentional, unintentional, or perceived?
2. Which area does offense show up more for you, your thoughts, speech, or actions?
3. Is there someone whose words still replay in your mind?
4. Are you mistaking offense for "*just having boundaries*" or "*protecting yourself*"?

A Simple Prayer

Lord, show me the places in my heart where offense still lives.
Teach me how to let go. Give me the courage to forgive, even when it hurts.
Help me walk in freedom, not in the trap of offense. Amen.

Chapter 2:

Biblical Roots of Offense

When Saints Get Wounded

Offense is not a modern issue. It didn't begin with your boss, your spouse, or your pastor. It's been with humanity since the earliest pages of the Bible. And if we look closely, we'll find that even some of the most powerful and spiritual people in Scripture struggled with it.

The Word of God doesn't just tell us *what* offense is, it *shows* us what it looks like in real lives, real families, real friendships, and real ministries. Understanding offense from a biblical lens is like turning on the lights in a dark room. You begin to see where the enemy hides, and you also discover how God offers healing.

THE LANGUAGE OF OFFENSE: HEBREW AND GREEK ROOTS

In the **Old Testament**, the Hebrew root word for offense is often linked to **"mikshol"**, meaning *a stumbling block*, *a cause for downfall*, or *something that trips someone up*.

But it's in the **New Testament** that we find the most pointed word: **"Skandalon"** (Greek), from which we get our English word **scandal**.

Skandalon means:

I. A snare, a trap.

II. A trigger stick in a baited trap.

III. A stumbling block that causes someone to fall.

It paints a powerful picture. Offense is not just a reaction, it's a weapon. It's a tool used by the enemy to trap us emotionally and spiritually. We think we're defending ourselves by staying angry, but we're actually stepping into a snare.

OFFENDED PEOPLE IN THE BIBLE: LESSONS FROM THEIR PAIN

Let's walk through the lives of men who faced offense and see what happened.

1. CAIN – OFFENDED BY DIVINE FAVOR (GENESIS 4:1–8)

Cain brought a sacrifice, but God accepted Abel's offering instead. Instead of seeking to do better, Cain took offense. That offense turned to rage, and rage to murder.

Lesson:

When we allow jealousy or comparison to fuel offense, destruction follows. Cain didn't lose to Abel. He lost to his own attitude.

2. JOSEPH – OFFENDED BUT NOT BITTER (GENESIS 37–50)

Joseph was betrayed by his brothers, falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, and forgotten in prison. If anyone had a right to be offended, it was Joseph.

But when he finally faced the brothers who wronged him, he wept, **not in hatred, but in mercy**.

"You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good…" (Genesis 50:20)

Lesson:

Joseph teaches us that even deep offense can become a setup for divine purpose—*if we let go and trust God.*

3. DAVID – REJECTED BUT MERCIFUL (1 SAMUEL 24)

David served Saul faithfully, yet Saul hunted him like an enemy. When David had a chance to kill Saul in a cave, he refused.

Lesson:

Offense says, "*Get revenge.*"
The Spirit of God says, "*Let God vindicate you.*"

David chose **honor over retaliation**, even when it hurt.

4. ABSALOM – OFFENDED SON, REBELLIOUS HEART (2 SAMUEL 13–18)

Absalom's sister, Tamar, was desecrated by their half-brother Amnon. David, their father, did nothing. Absalom carried the offense for years, first in silence, then in rebellion. He eventually turned against David and died in battle.

Lesson:

The Bait of Offense: Escaping the Trap

Hidden offense doesn't go away. It grows. And if we don't deal with it, it may destroy more than just relationships, it can destroy purpose.

5. JESUS – OFFENDED BY NONE (LUKE 23:34)

Jesus was mocked, beaten, betrayed, abandoned, and crucified—yet He looked at His enemies and said:

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

Lesson:

Jesus did not just preach about forgiveness, He practiced it in the worst moment of His life. He is the ultimate model of an unoffended heart.

JESUS AND THE SPIRIT OF OFFENSE

Jesus spoke often about offense because He knew it was unavoidable—but dangerous.

"It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come." —Luke 17:1 (NKJV)

"Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!" —Matthew 18:7 (NKJV)

Jesus made it clear:

I. Offense is part of life.

II. Offense is also a test.

III. How you *respond* to it can determine your growth—or your downfall.

Even His own followers were offended by Him!
In John 6, when He spoke difficult truths, the Bible says:

"From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more." (John 6:66)

Why? They were offended.

Jesus loved people who betrayed Him, healed people who doubted Him, and forgave people who hurt Him. That's the posture we're called to.

OFFENSE IN THE EARLY CHURCH: PAUL, PETER, AND CONFLICT

Even the early apostles had their moments.

Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36–41)

These two were ministry partners. But when John Mark abandoned their mission, Paul didn't want to take him again. Barnabas disagreed. They argued and split ways.

Lesson:

Even anointed people can offend each other. But God still uses them, and reconciliation is possible.

Paul Rebukes Peter (Galatians 2:11–14)

Peter withdrew from Gentile believers out of fear of Jewish criticism. Paul confronted him publicly. Peter could've taken offense, but he didn't. In fact, Peter later called Paul his "*beloved brother*" (2 Peter 3:15).

The early Church had conflict but because they dealt with it in truth and grace, they kept growing.

OFFENSE IN THE UPPER ROOM

Before the Holy Spirit fell at Pentecost, the disciples had to deal with the **trauma of betrayal, fear, and doubt**. They went into the Upper Room not just to wait for power, but to **heal from offense**.

Peter had denied Jesus. Thomas had doubted. The others had run away. But when the Spirit came, offense was replaced with unity.

Sometimes God won't pour out new oil until old offenses are laid down.

These weren't perfect people. But their lives show us what happens when offense is ignored—and what happens when it's surrendered to God.

Some healed. Some didn't. Some forgave. Others stayed wounded. But the choice was always theirs.

And now it's yours too.

Reflection Questions

1. Which Bible character do you relate to the most—Joseph, David, Absalom, or someone else?

2. Have you been carrying offense toward spiritual leaders, family, or even God?

3. What would it look like for you to release it?

4. How would your relationships change if you chose mercy over memory?

A Simple Prayer

Lord, thank You for showing me that I'm not alone. Even heroes of faith dealt with offense. Teach me to respond like Joseph, not like Absalom. Help me love like Jesus, forgive like David, and walk humbly like Paul. I choose healing over holding on. I choose freedom. Amen.

Chapter 3:

The Roots and Causes of Offense

What's Feeding the Fire?

You don't need a big fire to burn down a house. Sometimes, all it takes is a single spark. Offense works the same way. It usually begins with something small, a word, a look, a moment. But what makes it grow into bitterness or division is what's already inside our hearts.

Before we can break free from offense, we have to ask: **"Where is it coming from?"**

Because offense is rarely just about *what happened*. It's more often about *what that moment touched in us*. Let's take a closer look at the roots, the hidden causes of offense.

1. PRIDE – "HOW DARE THEY TREAT ME LIKE THAT?"

At the heart of many offenses is **pride**. Pride says:

i. "I deserve better than this."

ii. "They can't talk to me like that."

iii. "They should know who I am."

Pride is sensitive to disrespect. It constantly compares. It wants to be seen, heard, and honoured. So when someone challenges or overlooks us, it gets wounded fast.

Biblical Example: Naaman (2 Kings 5)
Naaman was a respected military commander who had leprosy. When the prophet Elisha told him to dip in the Jordan River to be healed, Naaman got offended. Why? Because the instructions felt too simple—too humbling. He expected a big show. It wasn't until he humbled himself that healing came.

Lesson:

Pride blocks both healing and reconciliation. You can't be free and proud at the same time.

2. BETRAYAL – OFFENSE FROM THOSE CLOSEST TO US

The deepest offenses often come from people we love. A stranger may insult you, and you'll forget it in a day. But when a friend betrays you, or a family member wounds you, it cuts deep.

Biblical Example: Judas and Jesus (Luke 22:48)
Judas wasn't just a disciple, he was a close companion. He walked with Jesus, ate with Him, saw miracles. And yet, he betrayed Jesus with a kiss.

Lesson:

Betrayal often hides behind smiles and hugs. But even then, Jesus chose *forgiveness over offense*.

You may not be able to control betrayal—but you can control your response. Holding offense gives the betrayer more power over your peace. Release it.

3. REJECTION AND INSECURITY – FEELING LEFT OUT OR UNACKNOWLEDGED

Some people carry offense because they were **not chosen**, **not affirmed**, or **not invited**. Rejection creates wounds, and if not healed, those wounds become filters. We start seeing everything through pain:

i. "They ignored me on purpose."

ii. "They only choose certain people."

iii. "They don't value what I bring."

Biblical Example: Cain (Genesis 4)
God accepted Abel's offering but not Cain's. Cain wasn't punished, he was invited to do better. But instead of rising, he chose offense. That offense turned into hate and eventually murder.

Lesson:

Offense often hides where there is comparison. Insecurity makes every difference feel like rejection.

4. CULTURAL AND ETHNIC DIFFERENCES – OFFENSE THROUGH MISUNDERSTANDING

In diverse communities, offense can arise from misunderstanding customs, language, or traditions. What one culture sees as normal, another may find offensive. Without grace and conversation, these differences become division.

Real-Life Example: A pastor invites members from different tribes into leadership, but others complain: "*They're not from here.*" That silent offense creates tension in the church even if no one says it aloud.

Biblical Example: Hellenist Jews and Hebrew Jews (Acts 6:1)
The early Church experienced this. Greek-speaking widows felt neglected compared to Hebrew-speaking ones. It wasn't intentional, but it *still hurt*. The apostles addressed it quickly to protect unity.

Lesson:

Offense doesn't need to be intentional to be real. Understanding and humility are bridges that heal.

5. RELIGIOUS AND DOCTRINAL DISPUTES – OFFENSE IN THE NAME OF TRUTH.

Churches split over worship styles. Ministries break apart over titles and traditions. Believers stop talking to each other over scriptures or theology. But many times, offense hides behind "I'm standing for the truth."

Biblical Example: Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15)
They disagreed over John Mark. It wasn't about sin, it was about

direction. But offense still entered, and they parted ways. Thankfully, God later restored what was broken.

Lesson:

Truth spoken without love creates division. We must handle disagreements without becoming enemies.

6. UNMET EXPECTATIONS – "I THOUGHT YOU WOULD…"

We often carry silent expectations:

i. A pastor should visit.

ii. A friend should call.

iii. A leader should support me.

When these things don't happen, we feel hurt, even if the other person never knew what we expected.

Biblical Example: Martha and Jesus (John 11)
When Lazarus died, Martha said to Jesus: *"If You had been here, my brother wouldn't have died."* She expected Him to come sooner, and His delay offended her faith. But Jesus didn't scold her. He wept with her. He *healed before He explained*.

Lesson:

God may not meet your expectations—but He will always meet your needs.

7. EMOTIONAL WOUNDS – OFFENSE FROM THE PAST STILL BLEEDING IN THE PRESENT

Some offenses don't begin today. They're connected to unhealed pain from yesterday. A word from someone triggers a memory. A situation brings up old rejection. And suddenly, offense walks in through an open wound.

Real-Life Example: A woman feels hurt when her pastor corrects her. Not because the correction was wrong, but because it reminded her of how her father used to speak harshly to her.

Lesson:

We're not just reacting to people; we're reacting to our past. Healing helps us separate today from yesterday.

HOW THE ENEMY USES THESE ROOTS

Satan doesn't need a demon to destroy your destiny; he just needs an offense. He uses pride to isolate you, betrayal to harden you, and rejection to make you defensive. He hides in unmet expectations and fans the flames of cultural tension. And he whispers, "*Don't forgive. Don't trust. Don't try again.*"

But here's the truth:

Offense is not just a feeling it's a weapon. And you get to choose whether it disarms you or develops you.

Reflection Questions

1. Which of these roots pride, betrayal, insecurity, or unmet expectations do you see in your life?

2. Have you allowed cultural or doctrinal differences to affect your love for others?

3. Are there old wounds you've never truly healed from?

4. What would it look like for you to start pulling out these roots today?

A Simple Prayer

Lord, help me to see where offense has taken root in my life. Uproot pride, fear, insecurity, and every lie I've believed. Heal the wounds I've ignored. Teach me to respond with grace, not with defense. I want to live free. Amen.

Chapter 4:

The Devastating Effects of Offense

What Happens When We Don't Let Go

Offense may start as a small seed, but if left unchecked, it grows into a thick root system that wraps itself around every area of our lives. It touches our spirit, our emotions, our health, our relationships even our ministries. You may think you're just "hurt" or "keeping your distance," but offense doesn't stay contained. It spreads.

You weren't created to carry offense. And the longer you do, the heavier it gets.

Let's take an honest look at what offense does to us if we refuse to release it.

SPIRITUALLY: OFFENSE BLOCKS OUR CONNECTION WITH GOD

When your heart is full of offense, it becomes harder to hear God's voice. Not because He stops speaking, but because your heart is too noisy to listen.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:23–24 that if you bring a gift to the altar, but remember someone has something against you, *first go and be reconciled*, then come back and offer your gift. Why? Because **offense creates a wall between you and true worship**.

Offended people often stop praying. Or if they do pray, they feel dry. Their hearts grow cold. Worship becomes empty. The Word feels distant.

"Beware lest any root of bitterness spring up and cause trouble, and by this many become defiled." —Hebrews 12:15 (NKJV)

Bitterness isn't just a root; it's a spiritual poison. It separates you from the presence and power of God.

EMOTIONALLY: OFFENSE DRAINS THE SOUL

Offense doesn't just live in your thoughts, it begins to shape your emotions. It:

i. Steals your joy.

ii. Fuels anxiety and fear.

iii. Triggers depression and restlessness.

iv. Breeds hatred, revenge, and irritability.

Many people are emotionally exhausted not because of their workload but because they are **emotionally carrying old offenses**. They've rehearsed the hurt so many times that it's become a soundtrack in their minds.

You were never created to nurse anger, relive betrayal, or feed unforgiveness.
Your soul was made for peace.

But offense won't let your soul rest. It keeps you in a cycle of blame, anger, and sorrow until you decide to break it.

PHYSICALLY: OFFENSE IS A SILENT KILLER

Medical science has shown that **unforgiveness and bitterness can negatively affect your health**. When you're emotionally hurt and hold on to offense:

i. Your blood pressure rises.

ii. Your immune system weakens.

iii. Your sleep becomes disturbed.

iv. Your body holds stress hormones that lead to fatigue, tension, and even disease.

Have you ever noticed how tense your body becomes when you think about someone who hurt you? Your shoulders stiffen. Your chest tightens. Your stomach churns. That's not just emotion. it's your body reacting to poison.

Offense may live in the heart, but its symptoms show up in the body.

RELATIONALLY: OFFENSE DIVIDES AND ISOLATES

Offense doesn't stay private. It leaks into how we treat people, even those who had nothing to do with the hurt. It causes:

i. Distance in marriages.

ii. Coldness in friendships.

iii. Gossip and cliques in churches.

iv. Walls between parents and children.

v. Silence between leaders and teams.

Families break apart because someone refused to let go of something that happened 10 years ago. Churches split because a misunderstanding was never addressed. Marriages fall apart because offense was buried, not healed.

Offense divides what God intended to stay united.
And it isolates people from the very community that could have helped them heal.

MINISTERIAL CONSEQUENCES: PREACHING FROM PAIN, NOT POWER

One of the most dangerous places for offense to live is in the **pulpit**. When leaders carry offense, they start preaching from personal wounds instead of the Word of God. Their messages become:

i. Defensive instead of prophetic.

ii. Emotional instead of edifying.

iii. Targeted instead of Spirit-led.

Wounded leaders lead wounded people. Offense clouds judgment, breeds favoritism, and creates suspicion. Eventually, entire ministries begin to reflect the pain of the person at the top.

Biblical Example: Saul (1 Samuel 18)
Saul became offended by David's success. He let jealousy and suspicion poison his leadership. Instead of leading in wisdom, he wasted his anointing chasing someone who had done him no harm.

Offense turned a king into a killer. And it can turn a shepherd into a destroyer, if not healed.

SO, WHAT'S THE COST OF OFFENSE?

Let's be real:

i. You may keep your title—but lose your peace.

ii. You may stay in church—but miss the presence of God.

iii. You may keep serving—but no longer serve with joy.

iv. You may look fine on the outside—but carry a storm inside.

Offense never stops at *"just a feeling."* It becomes a thief, a wall, and a weight. But here's the hope: You don't have to carry what Christ already carried for you.

Reflection Questions

1. Has offense affected your spiritual life—your prayer, worship, or passion for God?

2. Are you experiencing anxiety, depression, or restlessness tied to unresolved hurt?

3. How has offense affected your relationships—family, church, marriage, or friendships?

4. If you're in ministry, have you caught yourself preaching or leading out of personal pain?

A Simple Prayer

Lord, I didn't realize how much offense has been costing me. It has affected my spirit, my emotions, my body, and my relationships. Forgive me for carrying what I should've surrendered. Heal me, and make me whole again—from the inside out. Let me live light, love freely, and lead from a pure heart. Amen.

Chapter 5:

Offense in the Church and Among Leaders

When Healing Should Begin in the House of God

Some of the deepest wounds are not found in bars or battlefields but in church pews and pulpits. The place that should bring healing can sometimes become a place of hurt. The very people who should protect, restore, and strengthen us can also be the ones who disappoint, neglect, or wound us.

Offense in the church is real.
And when it's not addressed biblically, it doesn't just affect one person, it affects the flow of God's presence, the spirit of unity, and the health of the entire body.

This chapter dives into the uncomfortable but necessary truth: offense in leadership and church life isn't just common it's costly.

LEADER TO MEMBER: When Shepherds Wound the Sheep

Leaders are human. They make mistakes. But when spiritual leaders:

i. Correct harshly without grace,

ii. Neglect their people emotionally or spiritually,

iii. Show favoritism or act out of pressure, it can deeply wound the hearts of those under them.

Sometimes members are not hurt by sin, but by **silence**. A leader who ignores their pain, overlooks their growth, or fails to follow through on promises can unintentionally open the door to offense.

Biblical Model: Moses and the Israelites (Numbers 20:10–12)
The people complained, and Moses got tired and frustrated struck the rock in anger. That one act, though provoked, cost him the Promised Land. Leadership under pressure is risky, especially when leading from **frustration instead of faith**.

Lesson:

When leaders act out of emotional pain, even with good intentions, it can shut people's hearts.

MEMBER TO LEADER: When Expectations Become Offense

Just as leaders can wound, **members can also carry offense toward their pastors** and leaders often due to unmet expectations:

i. "He didn't call me when I was sick."

ii. "She didn't use me the way I expected."

iii. "They didn't acknowledge my gift."

iv. "I gave everything to this ministry, and no one saw me."

These offenses may not be spoken aloud, but they silently eat away at honour, loyalty, and trust. Before long, people begin to withdraw, gossip, or rebel; all because something inside was never addressed.

Biblical Model: Miriam and Aaron against Moses (Numbers 12)
They questioned Moses' authority because of a personal issue (his wife). But the real problem was deeper jealousy and offense over how God was using him.

Lesson:

Offense distorts perception. It makes you see leadership through a lens of pain instead of purpose.

OFFENSE IN SPIRITUAL FATHER–Son Relationships

The relationship between spiritual fathers and sons—or mentors and mentees—is powerful when healthy, but explosive when wounded.

Offense enters when:

i. Fathers fail to affirm, guide, or protect.

ii. Sons become impatient, ambitious, or dishonouring.

iii. Either party misunderstands the other's silence or correction.

Real-Life Example: A spiritual son feels forgotten because the father didn't invite him to preach. The father sees it as timing. The son sees it as rejection. Offense grows silently until the relationship collapses.

Biblical Model: Paul and Timothy (1 & 2 Timothy)
Paul models healthy fatherhood. He corrected, encouraged, and released Timothy but with love, not control.

Lesson:

Honor must flow both ways. Correction without relationship breeds offense. Expectation without communication breeds frustration.

LEADERSHIP TEAMS: Jealousy, Competition, and Ambition

One of Satan's favourite places to sow offense is **within leadership teams**. Where there should be unity, support, and shared vision, offense introduces:

i. Comparison: "Why did they promote her and not me?"

ii. Criticism: "He always gets the spotlight."

iii. Suspicion: "I think they're sidelining me."

Before long, offense gives birth to gossip, cliques, and rebellion—killing what could have been powerful partnerships.

Biblical Model: Saul and David (1 Samuel 18)
Saul loved David—until the people started singing David's praises. Jealousy turned affection into assassination. Instead of mentoring David, Saul tried to destroy him.

Lesson:

Offense kills potential when ego outweighs vision. No team can thrive where offense is allowed to hide.

CHURCH HURT: When People Walk Away from God Because of People

Sadly, many believers leave the faith not because God failed them, but because **people did**. A word spoken carelessly. A leader who fell. A ministry that rejected them. A promise that was broken.

They didn't stop loving Jesus but the pain pushed them away from His Body.

Example Phrase: "*I love God, but I don't trust church people*."

That's a wound talking. That's offense speaking.

Biblical Model: Judas and Jesus
Judas walked with Jesus but allowed offense to grow perhaps over money, unmet expectations, or correction. In the end, his offense led to betrayal and regret.

Lesson:

Unaddressed church hurt not only pushes people out of community, but sometimes out of destiny.

MINISTERING FROM A WOUNDED PLACE

One of the most dangerous results of offense in church is **leaders who minister from their wounds** instead of their healing. When you preach from pain:

i. You teach suspicion instead of faith.

ii. You draw people to your offense instead of the Cross.

iii. You create toxic loyalty based on shared wounds—not shared purpose.

A wounded shepherd can't properly lead wounded sheep.

Biblical Model: Peter Before Restoration (John 21)
After denying Jesus, Peter went back to fishing offended by his failure. But Jesus restored him first *before* giving him the command: "*Feed My sheep."*

Lesson:

You can't feed others until you've been fed by healing.

HOW TO HEAL AND MATURE THROUGH CHURCH OFFENSE

1. **Speak the Truth in Love** – Don't hold silent grudges. Communicate in humility.

2. **Protect Honour** – Even when hurt, choose respect. Dishonour invites delay.

3. **Keep Short Accounts** – Don't carry offense week after week. Resolve quickly.

4. **Submit to God's Timing** – Let Him deal with injustice. Don't try to punish others.

5. **Stay Planted** – Don't uproot yourself every time offense comes. Growth happens through perseverance.

Unity is not the absence of conflict. Unity is choosing love and loyalty *through* conflict.

Reflection Questions

1. Have you been hurt by a leader, pastor, or spiritual parent?

2. Have you allowed expectations to turn into offense toward those who lead you?

3. Are you serving from a place of healing—or silently bleeding as you lead?

4. Is there someone on your team or in your church that you need to forgive?

A Simple Prayer

Lord, help me to release the offense I've carried in the church. Heal my heart from betrayal, misunderstanding, and silence. Teach me to love even when I've been wounded. Restore broken relationships. Let me lead from healing, not from hurt. Amen.

Chapter 6:

Healing from Offense – The Path to Wholeness

You Don't Have to Stay Wounded

Offense is not the end of your story. It may have slowed you down, shut you off, or stolen your joy but it doesn't have to define your future. There is a path to healing, and it's one that leads not just to freedom from others but freedom from the emotional prison offense creates within you.

This chapter is your invitation to begin healing—for real.

HEALING BEGINS WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

No healing is complete without the work of the **Holy Spirit**. He is not just our Comforter, He's, our **Restorer**. While counselors speak to your mind, the Holy Spirit goes deeper. He ministers to your **soul**. He gently exposes where the pain is buried and breathes new life into broken places.

When you invite Him into your offense, something beautiful begins to happen:

i. You remember the hurt without reliving the pain.

ii. You see the person who wounded you—and feel compassion instead of anger.

iii. You stop rehearsing the moment—and start releasing it.

Healing isn't forgetting what happened. It's breaking the power it had over you.

BREAK THE SPIRIT OF OFFENSE THROUGH HUMILITY

Pride holds offense tightly. It says, "*They owe me*." Humility lets go and says, "*Even if they never apologize, I choose peace*."

The healing journey begins with this simple but powerful truth:

"I can't control what they did, but I can choose how I respond."

Humility allows you to:

i. Admit where you were hurt.

ii. Acknowledge where you may have misunderstood.

iii. Accept that you don't need closure to heal.

Biblical Model: Jesus (Philippians 2:5–8)
Jesus humbled Himself even though He was innocent. He forgave without an apology. He submitted to the Cross so we could be free.

That same humility is what God calls us to walk in when dealing with offense.

Proverbs 4:23 says, *"Guard your heart with all diligence…"*
But guarding your heart doesn't mean **closing** your heart. It means **protecting it with wisdom**, not walls.

SET BOUNDARIES WITHOUT BUILDING WALLS

One of the most misunderstood aspects of healing is the role of **boundaries**. People often confuse boundaries with bitterness. But there's a difference.

i. **Boundaries** are healthy decisions based on wisdom.

ii. **Walls** are fear-based reactions built on offense.

You can love people **without giving them full access**. You can forgive someone **and still set clear limits** on what is acceptable in your life.

Forgiveness is about **your heart**. Boundaries are about **your peace**. You don't have to attend every argument you're invited to. Sometimes silence is wisdom. Sometimes "***no***" is healing.

ACCOUNTABILITY, MENTORSHIP, AND COUNSELING

Healing from offense isn't always something you do alone. Sometimes you need someone to walk with you someone who can:

i. Hear your heart without judging.

ii. Help you process pain without gossip.

iii. Remind you of truth when emotion clouds your vision.

That's where **accountability**, **mentorship**, and **Christian counseling** come in.

Biblical Model: Nathan and David (2 Samuel 12)
David didn't see his sin clearly until Nathan lovingly confronted him. Sometimes healing comes through someone bold enough to say, "***You're still bleeding, even though you're pretending you're fine***."

Offense thrives in isolation. Healing grows in honest, loving community.

THE MINISTRY OF INTERCESSION AND EMOTIONAL HEALING

There are wounds that words can't reach but **prayer can**. When you pray for someone who hurt you, something shifts. The offense begins to lose its power. Your heart starts to heal, and God begins to move in ways you couldn't imagine.

Intercession doesn't deny the pain; it surrenders it.

Real-Life Step: Start praying for the person who hurt you. Not with sarcasm, not with anger. Just a simple prayer: *"Lord, heal them. And heal me."* In many cases, emotional healing follows that simple, quiet act of obedience.

Isaiah 61:1 says Jesus came *"to bind up the brokenhearted"*. Healing is not only possible, it is God's will for you.

FINAL KEYS TO THE HEALING JOURNEY

1. **Be Honest** – Admit the offense. Don't excuse it or spiritualize it.

2. **Be Humble** – Let God deal with the other person. Your job is to stay free.

3. **Be Open** – Healing often comes through others; counselors, friends, mentors.

4. **Be Persistent** – Healing takes time. But every step toward wholeness matters.

5. **Be Prayerful** – Pray not just for release, but for restoration of peace, joy, and trust.

Healing doesn't mean it never happened. It means it no longer controls your thoughts, your emotions, or your life.

Reflection Questions

1. Have you honestly invited the Holy Spirit into your pain?

2. Are you willing to forgive even without an apology?

3. Are you setting healthy boundaries or building walls?

4. Do you need to reach out to someone for accountability or help?

A Simple Prayer

Holy Spirit, I welcome You into the places I've hidden and hardened. I confess my pain, my pride, and my unforgiveness. Give me wisdom to set boundaries without bitterness. Bring the right people to walk with me. Heal my heart, one layer at a time. I choose to be whole. Amen.

Chapter 7:

Forgiveness and Reconciliation

From Offense to Oneness

At some point on the journey of healing, we reach a crossroad: *Do I let go, or do I hold on*? Forgiveness is the door that leads out of the prison of offense. It's not always easy. It's not always fast. But it is always necessary. Forgiveness is not just a feeling. It's a decision. It's a spiritual discipline that opens the door to freedom—not only for the person who hurt you, but for you as well. Forgiveness is not about forgetting what happened. It's about refusing to let it keep happening in your heart.

Some chains don't rattle, but they still restrict. Offense is one of those chains. It may not be visible on the outside, but it binds hearts, paralyzes spiritual growth, and quietly chokes the joy out of relationships. If offense is the poison, then **forgiveness** is the antidote—and **reconciliation** is the healing that follows.

Forgiveness and reconciliation are not optional for the believer. They are **spiritual disciplines**, **acts of obedience**, and **invitations to**

deeper healing. In a world where getting even is celebrated and bitterness is normalized, forgiveness becomes a radical act of faith.

1. FORGIVENESS AS A SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

Forgiveness is not just a reaction to pain. It is a decision made in obedience to Christ. When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He included one non-negotiable:

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." (Matthew 6:12)

This isn't just about asking God for forgiveness, it's about releasing others so you can be released too. Forgiveness is not an emotion you wait for. It is a **discipline** you practice even when your feelings scream otherwise. Like prayer, fasting, or worship, forgiveness trains your heart to align with God's.

You forgive because you are forgiven. You release because you've been released. And every time you choose to forgive, heaven notices—and hell loses.

2. WHAT FORGIVENESS IS AND WHAT IT ISN'T

A lot of people resist forgiveness because they think it means giving the other person a free pass. That's a myth. Let's break it down.

Forgiveness is NOT:

i. **Excusing the behavior** – It was wrong, and it hurt.

ii. **Denying the pain** – You're not pretending it didn't affect you.

iii. **Instant trust** – Forgiveness is granted; trust is earned.

iv. **Reconciliation** – Forgiveness opens the door, but reconciliation requires effort on both sides.

v. **Weakness** – Forgiveness is strength under control.

Forgiveness IS:

i. **Releasing the right to revenge** – You leave justice in God's hands.

ii. **Refusing to let bitterness take root** – You protect your soul.

iii. **Choosing peace over resentment** – You guard your joy.

iv. **Obeying God even when it's hard** – You walk by faith.

Forgiveness doesn't say, "*You were right*." It says, "*I refuse to be ruled by this anymore*."

3. STEPS TO FORGIVING AN OFFENSE

Let's walk step-by-step through how real forgiveness takes place.

Step 1: Face the Pain Honestly

Don't minimize it. Don't spiritualize it away. Acknowledge that what happened *did* hurt. Name the offense. Say it out loud. Own the impact it had on your heart.

Step 2: Choose to Forgive by Faith

Say it before you feel it. *"Lord, I forgive [Name] for [specific offense]. I release them and the debt they owe me."* This is not pretending. It's prophesying your freedom.

Step 3: Give the Person to God

Stop holding the person in your emotional court. Surrender them to God's justice and mercy. He sees what they did. Trust Him to deal with it far better than you can.

Step 4: Bless Them in Prayer

"Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who mistreat you." (Luke 6:28) This is spiritual warfare. When you pray for someone who wronged you, you break the enemy's grip on your emotions.

Step 5: Repeat as Necessary

Forgiveness is sometimes a **process**, not a one-time event. Emotions may rise again. When they do, forgive again. Keep releasing until your heart is truly light.

4. THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN HEALING OFFENSES

You can't truly forgive without the help of the **Holy Spirit**. He empowers you to:

i. Let go when it's painful.

ii. Love when it's undeserved.

iii. Heal when the wound is deep.

iv. See the offender through God's eyes.

He is the One who reminds you how much **you've** been forgiven, and gives you the strength to extend that same grace to others.

Forgiveness is supernatural. Invite the Holy Spirit to do what you can't do on your own.

5. How to Ask for Forgiveness (If You Were the Offender)

Sometimes, the offense is on our side. And healing requires that we humble ourselves.

When you ask for forgiveness:

i. Be specific. A vague apology lacks sincerity.

ii. Take ownership. Don't use words like "If I hurt you…"

iii. Avoid blaming. No "but you also…" this is not a debate.

iv. Express remorse. Let them see your humility, not just your words.

v. Be patient. Rebuilding trust takes time.

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed…" (James 5:16)

Healing flows through humility.

6. RECONCILIATION: THE BRIDGE BACK TO FELLOWSHIP

Forgiveness is a one-way street you can do it alone. But **reconciliation is a two-way bridge**. It happens when both parties are willing to listen, understand, and rebuild.

How Reconciliation Works:

i. Start with forgiveness.

ii. Engage in honest, grace-filled conversation.

iii. Establish healthy boundaries and expectations.

iv. Invite accountability or a mediator if needed.

v. Commit to the process. Rebuilding takes time.

Example Topic: "Reconciliation: The Forgotten Ministry"
2 Corinthians 5:18 says we've been given the **ministry of reconciliation**. That means healing relationships isn't just optional it's part of our Christian calling.

7. RESTORING BROKEN TRUST AND FELLOWSHIP

Trust is fragile. When broken, it must be restored carefully.

Here's how to rebuild it:

The Bait of Offense: Escaping the Trap

i. **Consistency** – Let your actions match your words over time.

ii. **Transparency** – Keep the lines of communication open.

iii. **Patience** – Don't rush the other person's process.

iv. **Mutual Effort** – Both sides must be willing to grow.

Biblical Model: Paul and John Mark (Acts 15 vs. 2 Timothy 4:11)
Paul once refused to travel with John Mark. But years later, he says: *"Bring Mark, for he is helpful to me."* Time. Maturity. Restoration.

Forgiveness sets you free. Reconciliation brings God glory. It reflects the heart of a Father who wants His children walking in unity.

Reflection Questions

1. Is there someone you need to forgive, even if they never apologize?

2. Are you waiting on a feeling—or are you ready to make a decision?

3. Have you asked God to help you forgive through the power of the Holy Spirit?

4. Are you open to restoring a relationship that has been broken by offense?

A Simple Prayer

Father, I thank You for the forgiveness You have given me.
Right now, I choose to release those who have hurt me.
I surrender every memory, every word, and every wound.
I ask You to heal what's broken inside of me.
And if it is Your will, restore what has been lost between us.
Give me the courage to walk in love, and the grace to forgive over and over again.
I choose freedom. I choose peace. I choose You. Amen.

Chapter 8:

Maturity Through Offense

When Pain Becomes a Teacher

Nobody likes being offended. It stings. It surprises us. It disrupts our peace. But offense, though unpleasant, has a strange way of revealing who we really are on the inside. It shines a light on our emotional responses, our character, and our spiritual condition.

Handled wrongly, offense leads to bitterness. Handled rightly, offense becomes a classroom for **maturity**. Every offense is an opportunity to either grow or stay stuck.

This chapter is about choosing to **grow**.

Everyone wants to grow spiritually. We attend conferences, read books, listen to sermons, and seek out mentors. But many times, the most powerful growth doesn't come from the mountain top it comes from the valleys, the betrayals, the misunderstandings, the disrespectful comments, and the disappointments that we never expected.

Offense may not feel like an opportunity—but it often becomes God's **classroom** for maturing your heart, developing your discernment, and sharpening your ability to walk in love.

Pain can paralyze you or prepare you. The choice is yours.

1. OFFENSE: A HIDDEN TEST OF SPIRITUAL CHARACTER

Offense doesn't just expose others. It exposes **you**.

i. How do you react when you're overlooked?

ii. What's your inner response when you're falsely accused?

iii. How do you handle correction—especially when it feels unfair or harsh?

iv. What do you do when someone less qualified gets promoted over you?

Offense is not always about the person who hurt you. Many times, it's about the **emotions**, **idols**, or **insecurities** in you that are being exposed. It becomes a test of:

i. **Pride**: Do I believe I deserve better?

ii. **Entitlement**: Do I feel robbed of something that was mine?

iii. **Control**: Am I upset because things didn't go my way?

iv. **Identity**: Have I placed my worth in others' recognition?

You'll know how much you've matured by what it takes to offend you—and how you respond when it happens.

2. SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Spiritual growth is not measured by how long you've been in church, how well you sing, or how loud you pray. It's measured by your ability to stay steady when tested by offense.

And at the core of this is something called **emotional intelligence**—the ability to recognize, understand, and manage your emotions while also navigating the emotions of others.

Spiritually mature believers with emotional intelligence:

i. Pause before responding.

ii. Refuse to assume bad intentions.

iii. Ask for clarity instead of making accusations.

iv. Know when to speak and when to stay silent.

v. Set healthy boundaries without becoming bitter.

Paul says in **Ephesians 4:2**: *"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."*

This doesn't just sound nice. It's warfare. It takes strength to hold your peace when your flesh wants to explode.

Spiritual maturity is not shown in what you know—but in how you love when it's hard.

3. TURNING OFFENSE INTO A TOOL FOR GROWTH

Let's stop asking, "*Why did this happen to me?"*
Start asking, "*What is God teaching me through this*?"

Offense can serve God's purpose by:

i. Revealing pride you didn't know you had.

ii. Teaching you patience in uncomfortable situations.

iii. Stretching your capacity to love those who don't deserve it.

iv. Developing self-control and spiritual endurance.

Biblical Example: Joseph (Genesis 37–50)
He was thrown into a pit by his brothers, falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, and forgotten in prison. But instead of becoming bitter, he allowed those seasons to **build his maturity**.

"You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good…" (Genesis 50:20)
He didn't just survive offense. He **grew** through it. Every offense is a fork in the road choose the path that leads to growth.

4. LEARNING TO RESPOND INSTEAD OF REACT

Reacting is easy. Responding takes maturity.

A reaction is:

i. Instant

ii. Emotional

iii. Usually defensive

iv. Focused on self-protection

A response is:

i. Prayerful

ii. Measured

iii. Grounded in wisdom

iv. Focused on resolution

Biblical Model: Jesus and the Pharisees
They constantly provoked Him. Yet, Jesus never reacted in fear, pride, or sarcasm. Sometimes He answered with truth. Other times He remained silent. He always responded by the **Spirit**, not by **emotion**.

It takes strength to be silent when falsely accused. It takes courage to love when betrayed. And it takes maturity to walk away when staying would escalate pain.

5. HOW TO GROW THROUGH OFFENSE

Here are some intentional ways to turn offense into spiritual formation:

A. Let the Offense Reveal You

Ask: *"What did this offense uncover in my heart?"*
Offense often reveals the very area where God wants to heal or grow you.

B. Reflect Before Reacting

Pause. Breathe. Pray. Don't text, post, or lash out. Let God guide your response.

C. Invite God's Perspective

Ask Him to help you see the situation and the person through His eyes.

D. Seek Counsel, Not Comfort

Talk to someone who will sharpen you, not just sympathize with you.

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend…" (Proverbs 27:6)

E. Journal the Journey

Write out the situation, your feelings, God's response, and how you chose to grow.

F. Celebrate the Growth

Look back and say, "Last year, this would've broken me. But today, I'm stronger."

6. SIGNS YOU'RE MATURING THROUGH OFFENSE

i. You forgive faster.

ii. You assume the best before the worst.

iii. You seek peace instead of power.

iv. You don't take things as personally.

v. You let go without needing closure.

vi. You prioritize unity over being right.

Maturity means you care more about preserving the relationship than proving your position.

Reflection Questions

1. How do I usually respond when offended—react or reflect?
2. What recurring offenses may be highlighting areas God wants to grow in me?
3. Am I spiritually mature in public but emotionally immature in private?
4. Who do I need to thank for helping me grow—even if they hurt me in the process?

A Simple Prayer

Lord, I confess that I don't always respond well to offense.
Sometimes I react. Sometimes I run. Sometimes I shut down.
But today, I choose growth. I choose wisdom.
Use every offense to teach me something deeper.
Grow my emotional strength and my spiritual sensitivity.
Make me more like Jesus—even when it's hard.
I want to pass every test that offense brings.
Help me mature. Amen.

Chapter 9:

Guarding Against Future Offense.

Staying Free in a World That Wounds

You've forgiven. You've healed. You've grown. But now what?

The truth is, offense will keep knocking. People will still misunderstand you. Words will still sting. Disappointments will still happen. But maturity means that while offense may come **to you**, it no longer lives **in you**.

"Offense will come again. Your job is to be prepared before it arrives."

Offense is not a one-time threat it's a **repetitive test**. Even after you've been healed, grown, and forgiven others, new offenses will still come. Why? Because we live in a broken world, full of imperfect people, and we ourselves are still being perfected.

Offense doesn't knock once it keeps circling back, looking for any crack in your heart, any unresolved wound, or any unguarded moment to re-enter.

The Bait of Offense: Escaping the Trap

This chapter is about building **spiritual walls of protection**, not to keep love out but to keep offense from re-establishing its grip.

You can't stop offense from coming to your door but you can choose not to open the door anymore.

1. GUARDING YOUR HEART: YOUR GREATEST DEFENSE

Proverbs 4:23 says: *"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."* (NIV)

To "*guard*" means to protect, preserve, and watch carefully. The heart in Scripture represents more than emotions it's the **control center** of your life. Your thoughts, words, decisions, and relationships all flow from your heart.

If offense enters the heart, it begins to:

i. Filter how you view people.

ii. Distort how you hear truth.

iii. Poison how you love and serve.

iv. Erode your ability to trust, forgive, and rejoice.

Guarding your heart means:

i. Recognizing emotional red flags.

ii. Taking your thoughts captive before they take root.

iii. Being intentional about what you entertain, who you listen to, and how you interpret people's actions.

Offense usually starts as a whisper before it becomes a wall.

Bitterness is rarely born in a moment. It grows in a heart that stopped guarding itself.

2. SETTING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES VS BUILDING DEFENSIVE WALLS

One of the ways to guard your heart is through **boundaries**. But many people confuse boundaries with emotional barriers.

Healthy Boundaries Are:

i. Prayerfully chosen.

ii. Communicated with love.

iii. Designed to protect peace, not punish others.

iv. A sign of spiritual maturity.

Walls Are:

i. Reactionary and impulsive.

ii. Motivated by fear, pride, or past pain.

iii. Closed off to restoration or reconciliation.

iv. A sign of unresolved wounds.

Example: After being betrayed by a friend, you can set a boundary by limiting access to your vulnerable spaces while still treating the person

with respect. But if you build a wall, you avoid all new friendships and treat everyone as a threat.

Boundaries say "I've healed, and I want to stay healthy."
Walls say "I'm still hurting, and I don't want to risk it again."

Jesus set boundaries. He didn't entrust Himself to everyone (John 2:24), but He still walked in love. You can love with wisdom. That's maturity.

3. EMBRACING HUMILITY AND GROWING IN SELF-AWARENESS

The opposite of guarding your heart is living from pride, ego, and unexamined pain.

Pride says:

i. "I'll never let anyone treat me like that again."

ii. "They should know better."

iii. "I don't need anyone."

But **humility says:**

i. "I've been hurt, but I still choose love."

ii. "I may not understand them, but I will pray for grace."

iii. "I don't know everything. Let me listen before I react."

Self-awareness is the internal discipline of knowing your emotional patterns and acknowledging your personal triggers.

Ask yourself:

i. "Why did that comment bother me so much?"

ii. "Is this offense about them or something in me?"

iii. "What does this reaction reveal about my heart?"

Emotional maturity grows when you stop blaming people for every discomfort and start letting God teach you through it.

4. CHOOSING COMMUNITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Offense thrives in isolation. The more isolated you become, the easier it is to be misled by assumptions, feelings, and emotional narratives.

God designed us for **community**. And sometimes, the best defense against offense is a wise friend or mentor who can help you process pain before it becomes poison.

Surround yourself with:

i. **Accountability Partners** – People who call you higher, not just agree with you.

ii. **Spiritual Mentors** – Those who've walked through betrayal, yet remained pure.

iii. **Safe Confidants** – Trusted voices you can talk to without fear of gossip or judgment.

Biblical Model: David and Nathan (2 Samuel 12)
When David sinned and likely grew defensive, God sent Nathan to lovingly confront him. David didn't get offended he humbled himself. The result? Restoration.

Don't run from correction. Invite it. It may save you from yourself.

5. STAYING FULL OF THE WORD AND THE SPIRIT

A heart filled with truth is harder to offend. A heart filled with the Holy Spirit is quicker to forgive.

The more you feed your soul with Scripture, worship, and prayer, the less room you give to offense. It's not just about reading the Bible it's about being **transformed by it** daily.

Let the Word of God:

i. Renew your mind (Romans 12:2).

ii. Filter your emotions.

iii. Reveal hidden bitterness.

iv. Replace lies with truth.

Let the Holy Spirit:

i. Soften your heart before offense takes hold.

ii. Convict you quickly when your attitude slips.

iii. Empower you to love your enemies.

The Bait of Offense: Escaping the Trap

iv. Comfort you when words or actions wound you again.

Galatians 5:22–23 is your offensive strategy:

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. These don't just bless others they *protect* you.

6. DISCERNING EARLY WARNING SIGNS OF RETURNING OFFENSE

The enemy is strategic. He waits until:

i. You're tired.

ii. You're unguarded.

iii. You're misunderstood.

iv. You're insecure.

That's when offense tries to creep back in. Learn to recognize the early signs:

i. Sudden withdrawal from people.

ii. Rehearsing old conversations.

iii. Reacting emotionally to small matters.

iv. Avoiding places or people connected to past pain.

v. Feeling spiritually dry or irritable for no clear reason.

When you sense these, don't ignore them. Invite the Holy Spirit in immediately.

Pray: *"Lord, search my heart. Show me any offense trying to rise up. I reject bitterness, I choose peace."*

Reflection Questions

1. What systems or spiritual habits do I have in place to guard my heart daily?

2. Am I setting wise, healthy boundaries or am I withdrawing out of fear?

3. Do I regularly check my reactions to see if offense is creeping in?

4. Who in my life helps me process pain in a biblical and balanced way?

5. Am I consistently feeding my spirit with the Word or relying on emotional strength alone?

A Simple Prayer

Lord, thank You for the healing You've already done in me. Now I ask for the strength to guard my heart from future offense. Teach me to recognize early warning signs. Help me respond with humility, not pride. Give me discernment to set boundaries with wisdom, not bitterness. Fill my heart with Your Word and Your Spirit. And surround me with people who keep me anchored in truth. I declare that offense will not take root in my life again.
I choose freedom every day. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Chapter 10:

Offense in Today's Culture.

Living Unoffended in an Easily Offended World

We are living in what many now call the **"Age of Offense."** A time when people are constantly hurt by what someone said, didn't say, posted, tweeted, preached, wore, or didn't do. Offense is everywhere. And worse, it's often celebrated as a virtue *"If you're offended, you must be right."*

But offense has become a tool in the enemy's hand to divide families, break churches, tear down nations, and stir up chaos. What used to be considered minor misunderstandings now explode into full-blown scandals. As believers, we must recognize that **offense is no longer just personal it's cultural, and it's spiritual.**

This chapter will help you stand strong in truth, walk in grace, and remain **unoffended in a world that lives to be offended.**

1. SOCIAL MEDIA: THE BATTLEGROUND OF MODERN OFFENSE

One of the most fertile grounds for offense today is **social media**. With just a few taps, people express unfiltered opinions, attack others publicly, and vent personal frustrations to the world. Misinterpretations are rampant. Misinformation spreads like wildfire. Tone and intent are often lost in translation.

Social media offense looks like:

i. Comment sections turning into war zones.

ii. Posts being misread and shared out of context.

iii. Cancel culture silencing people instead of seeking understanding.

iv. People publicly shaming others for private matters.

Proverbs 18:2 — *"Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions."*

The Bible warns us about being quick to speak and slow to listen (James 1:19). But social media reverses this: quick to react, slow to reflect.

You don't have to respond to everything. You don't have to prove yourself online. You don't have to join every argument that tags your name.

2. CANCEL CULTURE: WEAPONIZING OFFENSE

Cancel culture is the modern-day version of stoning. It thrives on exposing someone's mistake, amplifying their failure, and destroying their platform. It leaves no room for repentance, grace, or redemption.

The spirit behind cancel culture says:

i. "You messed up once. You're finished."

ii. "You disagree with me. You're evil."

iii. "I'm offended, so I get to judge you publicly."

But Jesus showed us a different way.

The Woman Caught in Adultery (John 8). She was guilty. The crowd wanted to cancel her with stones. But Jesus responded with wisdom and mercy: *"Let him who is without sin cast the first stone."*

Offense without grace becomes **self-righteousness**. Correction without mercy becomes **legalism**.

Cancel culture says, "*You must pay*." Kingdom culture says, *"Jesus already paid."*

3. POLITICAL AND RACIAL TENSIONS: OFFENSE ON A NATIONAL SCALE

In today's world, offense isn't just personal it's **tribal**. People are deeply offended over political ideologies, cultural histories, ethnic stereotypes, and national decisions. These offenses are real, deep, and painful. But they are also dangerous when used to fuel hatred instead of healing.

The Church must lead the way in reconciliation.

"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." (Romans 12:18)

Peace does not mean ignoring injustice. But it means **confronting pain with truth and love**, not retaliation. The Church should be a place where black, white, rich, poor, left, right, urban, and rural all kneel before one Lord. We are not called to take sides. We are called to take ground for the Kingdom.

4. GENERATIONAL OFFENSES: WHEN AGE BECOMES A BARRIER

Today, there is a growing divide between generations.

i. The young feel dismissed, unheard, and undervalued.

ii. The old feel disrespected, replaced, and irrelevant.

Offense festers in assumptions:

i. "They don't understand us."

ii. "They don't respect our journey."

iii. "They're out of touch."

iv. "They think they know everything."

But God designed generations to **complement**, not compete.

Joel 2:28 says; *"Your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams…"*

We need **dreamers** and **prophets**, **wisdom** and **energy**, **honor** and **creativity**. Offense keeps generations apart. But humility brings them together.

5. DOCTRINAL AND DENOMINATIONAL DIVIDES: OFFENSE IN THE CHURCH AT LARGE.

Sadly, offense thrives even in the **Body of Christ**. Churches divide over styles of worship, secondary doctrines, personality clashes, or leadership shifts.

Denominations criticize each other over spiritual gifts, dress codes, or minor theological differences. Social media has magnified the war, making preachers and prophets more divided than ever.

But Jesus prayed for unity (John 17:21) not uniformity, but **oneness in purpose and love**.

If Satan can keep us offended with each other, he doesn't have to fight us we fight ourselves.

Offense grieves the Holy Spirit. Unity invites revival.

6. RESPONDING DIFFERENTLY: LIVING UNOFFENDED IN A TRIGGERED WORLD.

You don't have to live like the culture around you. You can:

i. **Stay curious instead of critical** – Ask, *"Why do they think that way?"*

ii. **Speak truth in love** – Don't compromise, but don't condemn.

iii. **Refuse to generalize** – One post doesn't define a person. One person doesn't represent a whole group.

iv. **Seek understanding** – Choose to listen deeply instead of reacting loudly.

When you live unoffended:

i. You stand out in a chaotic world.

ii. You become a safe place in a toxic culture.

iii. You model Jesus, who forgave those who crucified Him while they were still doing it.

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." (Luke 23:34)

That's the posture of a healed heart.

Reflection Questions

1. How has today's culture shaped my tendency to get offended?

2. Am I easily triggered by online content or different views?

3. Have I allowed political, racial, or generational offense to harden my heart?

4. How can I walk in love without compromising truth?

A Simple Prayer

Lord, help me live free in a culture that's bound by offense. Teach me how to respond like Jesus—with truth, wisdom, and grace. Keep my heart soft even when the world grows cold. Help me love people I disagree with. Help me lead with peace in a time of division. Let me be a peacemaker, a truth-speaker, and a carrier of Your love. Amen.

Conclusion:

Living Unoffended in an Offensive World

Walking in Power, Peace, and Purpose

We've come to the end of this journey, but in truth, your journey is just beginning.

You've seen what offense really is a spiritual trap dressed in emotional pain. You've walked through healing, learned to forgive, and gained tools to stay free. But if there's one truth you must carry with you after all these pages, it's this:

You were not made to live offended. You were made to live free.

Jesus didn't just die to save your soul. He died to heal your wounds, renew your heart, and restore your relationships. He offers you peace that the world can't give and maturity that the flesh can't produce.

But living unoffended doesn't mean offense won't try to knock again. It will. Sometimes quietly. Sometimes violently. But the difference now is that you're equipped. You're aware. You're armed.

The Bait of Offense: Escaping the Trap

Let's look, one final time, at **why staying free matters** so much.

1. UNRESOLVED OFFENSE LEADS TO SPIRITUAL STAGNATION OR BACKSLIDING.

A heart filled with offense struggles to hear God. It becomes harder to pray. Harder to worship. Harder to read the Word without distortion.

Unresolved offense clouds your discernment, numbs your conviction, and shrinks your hunger for God's presence. What used to move your spirit now feels dry. What used to bring joy now feels like obligation.

God hasn't left. He's just speaking where bitterness is blocking the signal. Forgiveness clears the spiritual airwaves. Without it, you may keep attending church, but never truly encounter Him. Offense may start in your heart, but it often ends at the altar by blocking your access to divine intimacy.

2. UNRESOLVED OFFENSE BREAKS RELATIONSHIPS AND DIVIDES COMMUNITIES.

Offense is **the silent divider**. It splits marriages, destroys friendships, dissolves ministries, and fragments churches.

A slight misunderstanding turns into gossip. A correction turns into rebellion. A single unhealed wound becomes the seed for disconnection. Many walk away from people they once prayed with, served with, and loved because they never dealt with the pain honestly.

Offense doesn't scream. It whispers. And before you realize it, people who used to be allies become strangers.

Jesus prayed in John 17 that we would be "*one*." Offense prays for separation. God builds bridges; offense builds fences.

3. UNRESOLVED OFFENSE DESTROYS MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

Bitterness is not just a spiritual issue it affects your **mind and body**. Many who carry offense silently also carry:

i. Constant fatigue

ii. Chronic headaches

iii. Stomach issues

iv. Insomnia

v. High blood pressure

vi. Depression

vii. Anxiety

These aren't random. They are sometimes the **physical fruit of spiritual bondage**. The body remembers what the heart hasn't healed.

Forgiveness is medicine. Unforgiveness is poison.

Proverbs 14:30 says: *"A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones."*

When you refuse to release, you carry what your soul was never designed to hold. But when you let go, healing begins in ways you never imagined.

4. UNRESOLVED OFFENSE BLOCKS PRAYER AND DIMINISHES ANOINTING.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:23–24 that if you come to worship and remember that someone has something against you, you must first reconcile before offering your gift. Why? Because **offense contaminates the altar**.

When your heart is cluttered with pain, judgment, or resentment, your prayers lose clarity and power. The anointing becomes muddy. The prophetic becomes personal. Ministry becomes performance.

You can't carry bitterness and hear clearly. You can't preach powerfully while harboring pain. Forgiveness doesn't just cleanse your soul it sharpens your anointing. It purifies your motives. It reopens the well of divine flow.

FINAL WORDS: LIVING FREE IS YOUR DAILY CHOICE

The world will always give you a reason to be offended. People will still say things, forget things, and do things that hurt. But you are no longer a slave to offense. You are now a guardian of your peace.

Every day, choose:

i. Truth over assumption

ii. Prayer over reaction

iii. Grace over judgment

iv. Restoration over silence

v. Freedom over pain

Offense may knock, but it doesn't get to live here anymore.
Your heart is under new management.

Final Reflection

i. Will you let go of the last thread of pain you're still holding?

ii. Will you allow God to use your journey to help others heal?

iii. Will you walk into this next season lighter, freer, and fully healed?

You've come so far. Now it's time to live this message not just read it.

Final Prayer

Abba Father, Thank You for carrying me through this journey. Thank You for showing me the truth about offense and giving me the grace to walk in freedom. Help me never return to the chains You've already broken. Teach me to forgive faster, love deeper, and walk lighter. Use my story to bring healing to others. Let my life be a picture of what Your grace can do. I will live unoffended. I will live free. In Jesus' name. Amen.

ABOUT THE BOOK

"What if the thing holding you back isn't the devil—it's offense?"
We live in an age where everyone seems offended—by words, by silence, by truth, by difference. But behind the outrage and pain lies a deeper truth: offense is a trap—a spiritual snare designed to wound your heart, block your prayers, steal your peace, and derail your destiny.

In The Bait of Offense: Escaping the Trap, you'll embark on a powerful journey from hidden hurt to lasting healing. Whether you've been wounded by a friend, a leader, a church, or even yourself—this book will help you identify the roots of offense, understand how it works, and equip you with practical, biblical tools to break free for good.

Inside, you'll discover:

- **How offense manifests in thoughts, words, and relationships**
- **Biblical and emotional causes of offense: pride, betrayal, rejection, doctrinal disputes**
- **Real stories of people in Scripture who were deeply offended—and how they overcame**
- **What Jesus taught about offense and how He handled betrayal**
- **How to forgive when it feels impossible**
- **The spiritual and physical toll of holding on to pain**
- **How to guard your heart, walk in maturity, and lead with a healed spirit**
- **30-day devotionals, prayers, and personal reflection tools for freedom**

Whether you're a pastor, parent, mentor, team leader, or simply someone ready to stop carrying the weight of yesterday—this book will meet you where you are and walk you into healing.

Because life is too short, your calling is too important, and your joy is too precious to live offended.

It's time to drop the weight.
It's time to reclaim your peace.
It's time to live unoffended.