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RECAP: Remember that Jim said last week that, “offense is like a trap.”

- In this broken world that we live in, there will be endless opportunities to be offended. Being offended is actually something that is celebrated today. We are encouraged to get offended.
- The most painful offense in our lives often come from the people that are closest to us.

THE STORY OF JOSEPH...

- Joseph was his father’s favorite, and because of this, his brothers hated him.
- To make things worse, Joseph tells them about a dream that he had where they would all bow down to him one day.
- His brothers are so offended that their ultimate plan became to kill Joseph.

Genesis 37:19-20 (ESV) ¹⁹They said to one another, “Here comes this dreamer. ²⁰Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams.”

Bitterness is a major part of being offended.

Hebrews 12:15 See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;

- Have you ever experienced bitterness in a close relationship? The longer we hold onto hurt and offense, the more control it has over us.

Ephesians 4:26-27 ²⁶Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and give no opportunity to the devil.

- Joseph’s brothers’ first idea is to kill him, but Reuben speaks up and says NO to that plan. They end up throwing him into a pit. This doesn’t solve the problem though! Just because they throw Joseph into a pit doesn’t mean that they aren’t offended and hurt anymore.

OFFENDED PEOPLE TYPICALLY DO 1 OF 2 THINGS:

1. Build walls. “I’ve been hurt so many times that I can’t ever trust anyone again.”

“Many are unable to function properly in their calling because of the wounds and hurts that offenses have caused in their lives. They are handicapped and hindered from fulfilling their full potential. Most often it is a fellow believer who has hurt them.”

- John Bevere, *The Bait of Satan: Living Free from the Deadly Trap of Offense*

- The walls that you thought were protecting you become the prison that enslaves you.

2. Seek Revenge. “I’ll wait for the right time and get even.” (See also Romans 12:19)

1 Thessalonians 5:15 See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.

Proverbs 20:22 Do not say, “I will repay evil”; wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.

- Joseph’s brothers sought revenge, and when the opportunity showed up, they took full advantage.

WHAT DID THEY GAIN?

- All they gained was the 20 shekels of silver. Throwing Joseph into a pit didn't mean that they weren't frustrated anymore. It didn't remove the pain of the truth that Joseph was the favored brother.

WHAT DID THEY LOSE?

- Joseph's brothers missed out on the same things that you and I miss out on in life when we *live in offense*:
 - **Authentic relationships:** People who are always offended have a hard time getting close to others because everyone has to walk on egg shells around them.
 - **Ability to learn:** When you are always offended, that means you believe you are always right. People who are always right don't have anything new to learn.
 - **Reconciled relationships:** Forgiveness is not an option when we live in offense.
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HOW DO WE DEAL WITH OFFENSE?

- Ask why. "Why am I offended. Am I actually a victim?"
- Ask, "Am I looking for ways to be offended?"
- The way to deal with offense in our lives is through **forgiveness**.
- Later on, Joseph rises to power and could have gotten revenge on his brothers, but he doesn't do any of that. He actually does the opposite. He FORGIVES his brothers.

Genesis 50:18-20 ¹⁸His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." ¹⁹But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? ²⁰As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

- Forgiveness is not saying what you did is okay. Forgiveness is saying, "I'm not going to hold you hostage for what you did."
- When we recognize that God has forgiven us much, it becomes easier to forgive those who have offended us.

QUESTIONS TO REFLECT AND DISCUSS:

Passages to consider: Romans 12:9-21; Matthew 5:21-26,38-48; Matthew 6:9-15; 1 Corinthians 13

Icebreaker: Would you rather, for the rest of your life: be around someone who talks nonstop, or be all alone on a deserted island?

1. From the sermon, what was challenging or insightful to you?
2. Read Matthew 5:21-26 & 38-48. Read it twice. What insights does Jesus share about relationships, being offended, and dealing with offense?
3. What is familiar from these passages? What is fresh to you from these passages?
4. How do you typically respond to those close to you when there is a challenge in the relationship? (You may think of immediate family, extended family, friends, fellow believers, co-workers, neighbors, or enemies.) A) What works? What doesn't work? B) How well does your response line up with what Jesus is saying?
5. Read Psalm 4:4,5 & Ephesians 4:1-3. What insights do these passages give you about handling offense in the midst of your close relationships? A) What can be a road block for you to dealing with offense in relationships?
Note: The Five Languages of Apology can be a helpful resource
6. What do you see God showing you? A) How will you respond?

Resources:

- *The Five Languages of Apology* by Chapman and Thomas, <https://www.5lovelanguages.com/quizzes/apology-quiz/>
- *Unoffendable* by Brant Hansen
- *Forgiveness* by June Hunt
- *Humility* by Andrew Murray

Passages to prepare for next week, Offended (Week 3) Living in the Midst of Our Culture:
Matthew 18:21-35; Matthew 5:38-48; Matthew 7:1-6; 1 Peter 2 & 3:8-17