



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 40, No. 27, July 8, 2014 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / The Grow in Grace Newsletter is a weekly Bible Study, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church. It is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."

AN OFFENDED SPIRIT— "... Many Shall be Offended ..." Matthew 24:10

Recently, I eat lunch with a pastor friend. We responded back and forth to the question of, "***How are things going in the ministry to which the LORD has entrusted you?***" He was blessed to give some 'good reports'... but, like so many, he was also facing **the challenge of a few OFFENDED SPIRITS**. In Churches and in Christian homes a common and deadly problem is OFFENDED SPIRITS. **None of us are immune to offended spirits— we easily embrace them!** Hopefully, neither you, your family, your church family, nor you and your neighbors and/or co-workers presently have or are having to deal with OFFENDED SPIRITS. **BUT CHEER UP— YOU WILL!** So, let us all read, apply, and keep this study handy!

THE PROBLEM— Offended Spirits!

To take an offense is an emotional response to something that we think is an injustice or an emotional response toward someone we believe has wronged us. We may even take offense simply because someone does not agree with us; or because someone has dared to critique or change our proposed project or plan. **Typically**, when we are offended, we have hurt feelings, resentment, anger, ongoing frustration, contempt, or personal outrage. **MUCH** ongoing conflict in homes, most 'affairs' in marriages, and

most friendship and fellowship breakdowns in families and churches **are rooted back somewhere in an offended spirit.**

The New Testament Greek word for **offense** is *scandalon* from which we get the word scandalized. Sometimes the word is translated as **stumbling block**. Obviously, there is not only the problem of being offended; but also there is the problem of offending others, that is, of placing stumbling blocks in front of others.

JESUS tells us that offenses are inevitable! (Matthew 18:7)

Jesus gives dire warnings to any and all who offend or place stumbling blocks in the way of children. (Matthew 18:6-7) **Jesus** warns of those who seem to receive the Word of God, who seem to be saved; **but when tribulation or persecution arises because of the Word of God, they get offended**— they turn against the gospel— revealing a faulty ‘spiritual birth certificate’....(Matthew 13:20-21). **Jesus also warns us** that the problem of GETTING OFFENDED is a problem for **MANY and not merely a problem for the few**— “... many shall be offended...” (Matthew 24:10)

Throughout the LAST DAYS there have been, there are, and there will be both genuine and professing Christians who are delivered up to persecution and tribulation and who are hated and even tortured to death for Christ's name sake. (Revelation 2:10; 6:9-11) **The ‘wheat’ stands firm in the faith— MANY ‘tares’ GET OFFENDED!** The ‘tares’ stumble, fall away, recant, and even turn against Christ. (Matthew 24:9-10) They even proceed into a lifestyle of betraying and hating genuine Christians... including family members. (Matthew 24:10)

TODAY, however, more often than not, we are tempted to be offended in the midst of everyday life situations. **These offenses may be intentional or they may not be.** **What happens is this: Someone** does or says something that we do not like or that we do not agree with— and we get offended! **Someone** stands in the way of us getting our way— and we get offended. Frankly, it is shocking the length to which we are capable of going in attacking anyone who gets in our way! **There may not be a deadlier trap on the road of life than the trap of an offended spirit.** More than we have ever considered, so much of the Christian life is determined by

how we handle offenses. Offenses will come! **Beware!** Many have been, are, and will be offended.

Our affluent society places many 'slaves' at our beck and call!

We live in a very affluent world where we are served by hundreds of slaves every day! Every day hundreds of nonhuman slaves, remarkable devices, created just to serve us, yield to our every desire! **Immediately—** they deliver mail (email) from around the world. They wash our clothes and our dishes. They transport us across town or across country. They play us music or give us movies... the list is endless! We fully expect to be served according our standards by a myriad of gadgets, every day. **But when these devices do not meet our expectations, we are quick to get offended— that is,** we steam, pout, rail, kick, and even curse! We trade or junk them and get new ones. We were offended!

FRANKLY, WE HAVE ALLOWED the toys and helpful gadgets of an affluent society to spoil us! And without realizing it, SO OFTEN we take the same "SERVE ME!" attitudes [which we have toward gadgets] and transfer them to the people of our world! THUS, we get behind **Grandma Moses** at a red light. It turned green and she ain't moving yet— and we get offended. The Postal Employees or Customer Service people are not serving us according to our standard, pleasure, and time table— so, we are offended! **The homes and churches of America** are overflowing with offended people! In alarming numbers, offended folk leave families, jobs, churches, and friendships. Many will also withdraw from spiritual commitment and serious backsliding takes over. **Let us all be alarmed! None are immune! Let us embrace Biblical solutions!** (Which include applying these truths **only to one's own self!!**)

WAYS TO ESCAPE THE DEADLY TRAP OF BEING OFFENDED!

1. LOVE THE WORD OF GOD!

At present you may be struggling with an Offended Spirit, Anxiety, Discouragement, Depression, Frustration, and/or with some other form of addictive thinking or behavior. In any case, **great peace comes to**

those who love God's Word and God's law! God's Word received into our minds and souls gives us an eternal perspective and produces a cleansing effect. **God's Word** is profitable to teach us the truth and the truth sets us free. **God's Word** delivers us from errors in judgment, errors in destructive thinking.

God's Word, quickened by the Holy Spirit, resets our lives on to healing, winning paths, trains us in Godly living, and equips us even for the unknown and the unexpected! (Psalm 119:165; 2 Corinthians 4:17-18; John 15:3; Ephesians 5:26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; John 8:32) **Most of all, GOD'S WORD reveals the God of the Word to us and guides us into deepening fellowship with Him—** thus, walking in His steps we love and forgive in the same fashion as He loves and forgives us. THIS KILLS offended spirits!

2. YIELD TO GOD for Him to Be God in Your Life!

GOD Makes No Mistakes In What He Brings Or Allows In Our Lives! (Psalm 115:3; Romans 14:8) To avoid being offended, we must understand how the world works! Believe it or not, the world was not created for us! It was created by God and for God. He is committed to carrying out His plan and will and not our plans and will. (Isaiah 40:25; Romans 1:20; Psalm 19:1; Revelation 4:11) Life on planet earth is all about God Almighty! God reigns! **Reality: "God has invited us to a party! But it ain't our party, it's His!"** However, here is some very good news: You are loved with an everlasting love! God has good, redemptive purposes for all He brings or allows. He who began a good work in you will complete it. You are not alone. You are becoming like Christ! You have a "**Fellow Suffer**" who prays for you 24/7! Stay close to Jesus! (Romans 9:14-16; 1 John 3:1; 4:10; John 13:7; 14:16-18; 2 Corinthians 4:8-11; 1 Peter 4:12-13a; John 15:18-20; Philippians 3:8,10; Acts 9:15-16; 2 Corinthians 11:23-28; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:21)

3. BUILD BRIDGES OF LOVE So Truth Can Be Delivered (Ephesians 4:15)

Every Christian is under clear commands from Jesus: **Do not be overcome by evil** which may come from others. Overcome that evil with good. Bless. Do not persecute. Do good. Walk in the steps of Jesus who although He was shamefully treated— He loved, He sacrificed, He forgave, He committed these matters into His Father's care. (Romans 12:14-21;

Matthew 5:43-47; 1 Peter 2: 11-21) In the Christian faith, we are also called upon to live and to speak the truth. We must speak the truth in love. **"The greater the load of truth we must deliver, the greater the bridge of love we must build!"**

4. DO NOT LIVE TO Please People; HOWEVER, DO SEEK To Be Sensitive To Others!

(Romans 14:7,19, 21; 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1) It is so easy to fall into the trap of seeking to please someone on earth more than we seek to please God. But we are commanded in Scripture to do all that we do to the glory of God! (1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1) At the same time, our LORD would have us **to always be patient and kind toward others**. So far as we are able— Let us make every effort to live at peace with others. Let us never be careless with the souls of others! Let us be careful to speak words and do deeds which edify.

5. KEEP A GOD FOCUS!

Never Allow Another Person To Rob You Of Joy and Power In Christ! (Acts 16:23-25; 2 Timothy 4:15; 2 Timothy 4:17-18; Jude 24-25) These Scriptures reveal the awesome power of a God-focused life. Let us remember: **Offenses will come! And when they do, let us join with Paul and Silas in having a PRAISE SERVICE!** And let us confess supreme faith in the Good Shepherd! (Psalm 23; Romans 8:27-39) MOREOVER, as we focus on JESUS, we will hear Him call upon us to CONFESS our own sins—not the sins of others! A GRAND SECRET of joy and peace is to give others to God and to personally be 'clay' in His hands!

6. KEEP AWAY FROM TALEBEARERS!

A very common way in which the Evil One seeks to get our focus away from God, is by getting us to listen to Talebearers! **So many of God's people are offended because of believing the slanderous gossip of talebearers and discord planters!** **BEWARE:** The words of talebearers cause deep wounds; cause strife; and separate even close friends! (Proverbs 11:13; 17:9; 18:8; 20:19; 26:20)

Note: To humbly inform God ordained leadership of problems in a Church or ministry IS NOT tale bearing: 1 Corinthians 1:11)

7. RESOLVED:

BECAUSE I AM REDEEMED BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB AND INDWELT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT— I will follow Jesus Christ! I will refuse to live in misery and/or blame others if I am presently in a pathetic state of mind. **Instead, I will** humble myself before God and flee to the throne of Grace! **Henceforth, I will** embrace GOD AS GOD in my life. He is good and He has a right to do all of His good pleasure! **I choose** to trust Him, even when I do not understand. **I will** seek NOT to offend others. **I refuse to be offended. Instead, I will PRAISE and REJOICE in God!** And I will love, bless, pray for, and do good to others! [Note: A number of sources used, especially material from Steve Brown and Clay Sterrett.]

TO WIN OVER AN OFFENDED SPIRIT, I MUST MAKE GOOD CONFESSIONS! In Christ, I have the Power to CHOOSE! Therefore,

I Choose Love— No evil spoken or done to me justifies hatred, resentment, or retaliation. No injustice warrants the holding of a grudge or bitterness. **I am Divinely empowered to WALK IN THE STEPS OF JESUS and to Choose Genuine Love because** God first loved me while I was His enemy; and because at salvation, (by His Holy Spirit, Romans 5:5), He flooded my heart with His unselfish, sacrificing, forgiving love that never fails, that never quits. **I choose love!**

I choose love and surrender to love; and I choose to be a channel for the love of God which is very patient, very kind, always looks for a way to be constructive, is never envious, never boastful, is not arrogant, is never rude or conceited or indecent, does not insist on its own way in a self-seeking way, **is not quick to take offence, it is not irritable or touchy, nor does this love keep an account of the failures of others. This love with which God has flooded my heart** is never glad when others go wrong, delights in the truth. God's love in the saint is slow to expose the failures of others and is eager to believe the best. There is nothing this love cannot face; there is no limit to love's faith. **And God's love in me hopes under all circumstances; and knows no limit to its endurance; and this love never comes to an end! (Let us all drink deeply of First Corinthians, chapter 13!)**

I Choose Joy— I will invite the one, true and living God to be the God of all my circumstance. **I will refuse** the temptation to be cynical. **I will refuse** to claim that people have stolen my peace or my joy OR made me frustrated or angry or depressed! **INSTEAD, I WILL CONFESS** THAT my

wrong, un-Christ like response to them is destroying me! **I will refuse** to see any problem as anything less than an opportunity to **see God at work to transform me** more into the likeness of Jesus!

Jesus, the most joyful person ever on earth, had to learn obedience through suffering. Suffering, trials, tribulations, persecutions are brought or permitted by God because He has a storehouse of JOY He is getting ready to pour out! As I choose to walk in the steps of Jesus, **I am choosing joy!**

I Choose Peace— upon the merits of the precious blood of Jesus, I HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN! I will live forgiven. I will forgive others so that I may live in the awesome freedom of Divine forgiveness. I am empowered by the Holy Spirit— **I choose peace!**

I CHOOSE to embrace the path of peace: *“Do not fret or have any anxiety about anything, but in every circumstance and in everything, by prayer and petition (definite requests), with thanksgiving, continue to make your wants known to God. ⁷And God's peace [shall be yours, that tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and being content with its earthly lot of whatever sort that is, that peace] **which transcends all understanding shall garrison and mount guard over your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.**” (Phil. 4:6-7, Amplified Bible)*

I Choose Patience— **because** I am astounded at the patience of God with me; and because He who is patient lives in me that He might live His patience through me! **Rather than** complaining that the wait is too long, I will thank God for a moment to pray! **Instead of** clinching my fist at new assignments, difficult people or circumstances and using them in an attempt to justify my flesh— I will face them with joy and courage. **I choose patience!**

I Choose Kindness— I will be kind to the poor, for they are alone; Kind to the rich, for they are afraid; And I will be kind especially to the unkind, for such is how God treated me while I was yet His enemy! God's love to me is patient and KIND! God's love in and through me is ready to be kind! **I choose kindness!**

I Choose Goodness— **I will look for the good in others when it is hard to find.** I will confess hope and faith toward others. As commanded

in the Word of God, I will do good to all, especially to saints! Because God, who alone has perfect goodness, resides in me to be made manifest through me— **I choose goodness.**

I Choose Faithfulness— Today I will keep my promises. **My debtors** will not regret their trust.

My associates will not have reason to question my word. **My spouse** will not have reason to question my love. **My children** will never have to fear that their parent will not come home. **My Church family** will find me in my place of service and with a Christ-like spirit. This choice, as all the others, is the result of the **indwelling compelling** Holy Spirit. **I choose faithfulness!**

I Choose Gentleness— **Brute force, does not win. I choose to be gentle.** If I raise my voice, may it be only in praise. If I clench my fist, may it be only in prayer. If I make a demand, may it be only of myself. By the grace of God, my passion shall be that I shall overflow with the awesome, transforming power of the Gentleness of Jesus! THE GREATEST BATTLE OF ALL TIME WAS WON BY JESUS AS THE LAMB OF GOD! **I choose gentleness!**

I Choose Self-control— I am a temple, a dwelling place of the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit fruit in me and through me is self-control. I am no longer a slave to sin, self, satan, or selfishness. I am no longer a slave to bad habits, bad thoughts, bad attitudes, or an evil tongue. I am free in Christ. My body and spirit belong to Christ. I am His Holy Temple. **I NEVER HAVE ANY RIGHT** to think, to say or to do anything with which JESUS is not well pleased.

I choose to be being continuously filled with the Holy Spirit by letting the Word of Christ richly dwell within me. (Col. 3:16) I choose to "live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God!" (Matt. 4:4)

And when I fail in any of the above, I will choose to be humble, confess my sin and repent. PRAISE THE LORD! I will be restored by God's amazing mercy and grace! *Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-control*— to these I yield, **because in CHRIST I already possess them one and all by the gracious indwelling Holy Spirit!**

They are expressions of the Love of God which has been given to me and poured into the very center of my soul and spirit by the

Holy Spirit. For by the Grace of God, I am a Christian! The very life of God is in me by the indwelling Holy Spirit!

I am not a victim of or a slave to my past. I will rise above any present failings or trials or persecutions! I will give thanks! I will seek God's face! And then when this day is done, I will place my head on my pillow and rest... all amazed by the goodness, the mercy, the love and the grace of God in Christ!... **AND ALL FULL OF HOPE— KNOWING THAT ONE DAY I SHALL SEE MY LORD AND SAVIOUR FACE TO FACE AND HE WILL WELCOME ME HOME, “WELL DONE, MY CHILD, YOU YIELDED TO ME AND FOLLOWED ME AND WALKED IN MY STEPS!... ENTER THOU INTO THE JOY OF THY LORD!” FOREVER, AND FOREVER, AND FOREVER! AMEN!**

Grace to one and all! James Bell / www.southsidegallatin.org

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES!

TUESDAYS: Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care nursing home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM. Questions call Bradley Pennington at 615-804-3054.

**** WEDNESDAYS: PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM; IN THE CHURCH AUDITORIUM! ****

NOTE: Jody Allen is ministering to young Children, up to about age 10 during Prayer Service. Older children, but not old enough for the Youth Group... will be with their parents in the Prayer Service. **YOUTH GROUP:** Wednesdays 6-8pm... led by Byron Smith

→ NEXT LADIES BIBLE STUDY— Thursday, JULY 17, 11:00AM, led by Cindy Bell

*** SATURDAY MORNINGS @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study! ***

~~~~ SUNDAY SCHEDULE FOR JULY 13, [20*], 27 ~~~~

1. **9:30am-** Sunday School Bible Study and Small Group Fellowship
2. **10:45am-** Morning Worship / Children's Church
3. **Noon- Covered-dish Fellowship Meal**
4. **1pm- Early Afternoon Service, fellowship hall**

[*JULY 20: 9:30am- Sunday School; 10:45am- Worship— concludes with LORD'S SUPPER. NO FELLOWSHIP MEAL // EVENING HOME GROUPS— same 3 groups; Each group determine location for 7/20 Home Group ... invite additional ones. Can we start another group?]

SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL! Children are like young plants in a garden— while young and tender they must be protected. Southside Christian School works in harmony with the local Church and empowers parents!

<http://www.aceministries.com/curriculum/?content=presentingACE>