

CHRISTIAN LIVING 1

Christians must not bear grudges.

We must refuse to hold on to issues and have things "against" others. By these I mean things that will cause disaffection, break down communication and create tension amongst fellow brethren. We are taught to forgive.

Luke 17: 3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

This was even before the New Creation was made manifest.

In the epistles, we are to forgive without conditions.

Ephesians 4: 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

This is the rule and principle in the New Creation. It must be practiced because it is our nature.

Ephesians 5: 1 Therefore be imitators of God [copy Him and follow His example], as well-beloved children [imitate their father].

2 And walk in love, [esteeming and delighting in one another] as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a slain offering and sacrifice to God [for you, so that it became] a sweet fragrance. (Amplified Bible)

That is well said.

Whenever we feel hurt by the actions people and we refuse to deal with it in love, we fall into the trap of offence. When offence sets in, then all other "Siamese" of unforgiveness will have a free course.

OFFENCE IS A VERY BAD STATE FOR ANY BELIEVER.

At times we claim "I am so hurt and bitter, I don't know how to forgive". Not so! You are a child of God. If you can't forgive, then you are not His Child!

Let us see a few things offences will do to us.

When we are offended at people, churches, persons we will not see what God is doing and will work in dishonour against the plans and purposes of God. Don't leave a church and be in offence, God might still intend to use the church to bless you. Don't leave a relationship and stay offended, God might still use the partner, friend, associate as a vessel for you.

Don't leave a company and stay offended, God might still have doors for you in that organisation.

Let's see how deep offences can get.

Matthew 11: 2 Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

3 And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:

5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

6 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me

Strange.

Why would John say such about Jesus?

He questioned Jesus' ministry.

He told his disciples. He created such impression in the hearts of others.

Hear John earlier on.

John 1: 29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

This was John's testimony before he was offended.

WHEN YOU ARE OFFENDED YOU DON'T SEE WHAT GOD IS DOING.

We leave churches that had blessed us and call them names. That was not our testimony before offence set in.

John must have felt bitter about Jesus' style, words, and actions.

Matthew 11: 2 says he heard of Jesus' ministry.

How often have we reacted to things we heard and this caused offence?

John questioned Jesus' ministry. His calling. His teaching.

Many times we do this out of grievances. Unresolved issues. Our emotions are involved. We feel aggrieved.

You can't be blessed when you are offended.

Mark 6: 1 And he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him.

2 And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

4 But Jesus, said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.

6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

The power of God "ceased" to work because of offence.

Offences cause strife.

Strife is of the devil.

James 3: 14 But if you have bitter jealousy (envy) and contention (rivalry, selfish ambition) in your hearts, do not pride yourselves on it and thus be in defiance of and false to the Truth.

15 This [superficial] wisdom is not such as comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual (animal), even devilish (demoniacal).

16 For wherever there is jealousy (envy) and contention (rivalry and selfish ambition), there will also be confusion (unrest, disharmony, rebellion) and all sorts of evil and vile practices. (Amplified Bible)

Refuse to be bitter about your ex (husband, wife, boss, colleague, place of work), refuse to be bitter about your former church or Pastor!

STOP THE OFFENCE AND WALK IN THE WORD, LOVE, THE SPIRIT!

Blessed? refuse to be offended at ANYONE; walk in love, in the spirit not in the flesh.

Jesus is Lord, We win!

CHRISTIAN LIVING 2

A believer in Christ MUST not live in offence. No matter how logical it is, we must never be found holding grudges against anyone. An offence is a poison- it destroys us and those around us.

An offence is a viper- it subtly stings those who listen to us.

Be careful around anyone offended!

1 Corinthians 15: 33 Do not be so deceived and misled! Evil companionships (communion, associations) corrupt and deprave good manners and morals and character. (Amplified Bible)

Don't hang around offended brethren! They oftentimes infect you with the killer virus. That said, offences lead to dishonour, disrespect and disregard of sacred things.

NO ONE IS IMMUNED, NOT EVEN CLERGY.

Ministers easily spread offences to their members, who in "loyalty" make the enemy of their Pastor their targets of insults, disrespect and abuse. We must watch it and NEVER use the pulpit as a platform for settling personal scores.

IT IS A SIN.

John the Baptist was the greatest prophet of the Old Testament.

Matthew 11: 10 This is the one of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger ahead of You, who shall make ready Your way before You.

11 I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist...

He had the single privilege of being the FIRST to point out the messiah. His revelation was the greatest. He acknowledged he was lesser than Jesus. He acknowledged Jesus was to continue while he (John) was to decrease. However, he continued! Was imprisoned.

Jesus' ministry became popular. Drew crowds. Had miracles. Had followership.

John was still in prison. He couldn't pay for airtime on television. He had no church building. No private jets. No cars.

To make matters worse, Jesus wasn't criticizing Herod on John's behalf. John is aggrieved. The limelight is gone. No one is waiting at Jordan anymore (at least in case he comes back) to be baptised.

John remembers how he baptised Jesus. He remembers they are cousins. Younger cousin. Small boy! Who does Jesus think he is? After all I was also a miraculous conception. My Dad was a priest.

John was offended!

Matthew 11: 2 Now when John in prison heard about the activities of Christ, he sent a message by his disciples
3 And asked Him, Are You the One Who was to come, or should we keep on expecting a different one?

When we are offended, we begin to get critical of others. We say things like 'so called pastors', 'so called "Christians'.'
Men who laid hands on us to be healed. Ministered to us. Taught us what we knew before what we "now know". We call fellow brethren 'so called'.

We begin to question the miracles, the crowds, the success. We are plainly JEALOUS. Jealousy is the child of offence. When we can't celebrate the progress and success of others, oftentimes we are offended.

Jesus added salt to injury.

Mathew 11: 4 and Jesus replied to them, Go and report to John what you hear and see:

5 The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed (by healing) and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have good news (the Gospel) preached to them.

6 And blessed (happy, fortunate, and to be envied) is he who takes no offense at Me and finds no cause for stumbling in or through Me and is not hindered from seeing the Truth. (Amplified Bible)

Offence reduces us to brawlers. We become petty. Busy bodies. Critics. Shame! We draw some examples from the Old Testament.

They were written for examples and for our learning- 1 Corinthians 10:11, Romans 15: 4.

Miriam and Aaron were Moses' brethren. But God placed Moses above them.

They knew. Miriam was a prophetess, Aaron, a priest (High priest). Everybody had his role and place. We all can't be the same. Yet they were aggrieved. My kid brother is the "man of God".

Hear what they said.

Numbers 12: 1 And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

It seemed they had legitimate reasons. But it was just an excuse to get back at Moses. He was stealing the limelight.

His books were popular. His conventions were full. They had forgotten God made it so. Now let's listen to them.

Numbers 12:2 And they said, Has the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? Has He not spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it.

It's like saying 'what is special about him?' They were offended.

By the way, it appeared from the text Miriam was the lead speaker, Aaron was a supporter. Again, he shows weakness of leadership in him.

God heard and responded thus.

Numbers 12: 4 Suddenly the Lord said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, Come out, you three, to the Tent of Meeting. And the three of them came out.

5 The Lord came down in a pillar of cloud, and stood at the Tent door and called Aaron and Miriam, and they came forward.

6 And He said, Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord make Myself known to him in a vision and speak to him in a dream.

7 But not so with My servant Moses; he is entrusted and faithful in all My house.

8 With him I speak mouth to mouth [directly], clearly and not in dark speeches; and he beholds the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses? (Amplified Bible)

God NEVER is behind critics. They are ill-motivated. They may have logical reasons. But it's never scripturally correct.

God yet again approves Moses.

James 1: 20 For man's anger does not promote the righteousness God [wishes and requires]. (Amplified Bible)

Your anger is not God's anger.

You are only sometimes frustrated and jealous. Deal with it.! Miriam became leprous. Both nearly lost their lives. It took Moses' intervention. Imagine!

Offences lead us into more evils.

2 Samuel 13 & 14

Absalom was angry with Amnon his brother.

Amnon raped Tamar. David, the king (their Father) was not decisive.

Absalom felt aggrieved but said NOTHING.

2 Samuel 13:22 And Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad; for Absalom hated Amnon because he had humbled his sister Tamar.

23 After two full years Absalom had sheepshearers at Baal-hazor near Ephraim, and Absalom invited all the king's sons.

HE WAITED FOR TWO YEARS.

The matter had died down. He struck. HE KILLED AMNON.

He would later move to dethrone his Dad.

He wasn't a bad boy from birth. But when you allow offences to set in, you shall be transformed into another man!

Offences led him from hatred to bitterness, conspiracy, murder, rebellion and strife.

WE MUST DEAL WITH OFFENCES BEFORE THEY DEAL WITH US!

We shall examine how to do this later. Paul admonishes us this way.

Ephesians 4: 26 When angry, do not sin; do not ever let your wrath (your exasperation, your fury or indignation) last until the sun goes down.

27 Leave no [such] room or foothold for the devil [give no opportunity to

him. (Amplified Bible)

STAY AWAY FROM OFFENDED PEOPLE or you will become offended too.

Blessed? refuse offences in your heart and around you, walk in the Spirit, don't fulfil the lusts of the flesh!

Jesus is Lord, We win!

CHRISTIAN LIVING 3

The art of forgiveness is the Christian nature. It is the believer's uniqueness. When he doesn't forgive others, he puts his faith on the spotlight to be questioned. To overcome offences the believer MUST learn to forgive.

OFFENCES WILL ALWAYS COME TO US....ALWAYS.

LUKE 17 :1 Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come...!

People are bound to say hurtful things to us, treat us unfairly, abuse us, cheat us, lie against us. IT WILL SURELY COME TO PASS. IT WILL... DAILY.

Yet, we must never get offended nor live in offence.

Philippians 1:10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.

Paul prays that we live without offence until the day of Christ. The day of Christ is the Day of judgement for believers. In that Day we receive reward for our works as believers.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

1 Corinthians 3: 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Offence will surely make us lose our reward.

The only way out?

Philippians 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment.

Only our Love walk can keep us free from offence. ONLY.

We must have a love walk. A lifestyle of love. The love of God.

Hear Jesus.

Matthew 5: 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he

maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

You are to love those who do wicked things to you! It's not justifiable to hate one who hates you! Or curse back one who curses you!

Peter exhorts us.

1 Peter 2: 21 For even to this were you called [it is inseparable from your vocation]. For Christ also suffered for you, leaving you [His personal] example, so that you should follow in His footsteps.

22 He was guilty of no sin, neither was deceit (guile) ever found on His lips.

23 When He was reviled and insulted, He did not revile or offer insult in return; [when] He was abused and suffered, He made no threats [of vengeance]; but he trusted [Himself and everything] to Him Who judges fairly. (Amplified Bible)

VERY APT.

YOU MUST NEVER TAKE REVENGE. YOU MUST NEVER PAY FIRE FOR FIRE.

Revenge at times may come in subtle forms.

You will tell other brethren about it so they will have disaffection against the offender.

Romans 12: 17 Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is honest and proper and noble [aiming to be above reproach] in the sight of everyone.

18 If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave the way open for [God's] wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay (requite), says the Lord.

20 But if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head.

21 Do not let yourself be overcome by evil, but overcome (master) evil with good. (Amplified Bible)

The burning coals in verse 20 refers to an offering for sin. In other words, you are asking for forgiveness for the offender by doing good to him. You are overcoming evil with good!

When you forgive and refuse to revenge you have Christ Jesus (not the offender) in view.

Ephesians 4:32 And become useful and helpful and kind to one another, tenderhearted (compassionate, understanding, loving-hearted), forgiving one another [readily and freely], as God in Christ forgave. (Amplified Bible)

Ephesians 5:1 Therefore be imitators of God [copy Him and follow His example], as well-beloved children [imitate their father].

5:2 And walk in love, [esteeming and delighting in one another] as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a slain offering and sacrifice to God [for you, so that it became] a sweet fragrance. (Amplified Bible)

Practical things to do:

1. Always and never get carried away with the present and forget who you were. By this I mean don't start feeling like 'I am a child of God as though you have always been, I am a man of faith and power as though you were born so. I am a man of God as though it was your family name'.

YOU WERE A SINNER SAVED BY MERCY AND GRACE.

Peters puts it this way.

1 Peter 1: 9 For whoever lacks these qualities is blind, [spiritually] shortsighted, seeing only what is near to him, and has become oblivious [to the fact] that he was cleansed from his old sins. (Amplified Bible)

We all hold on to the thread of God's mercy. None of us can ever claim self-justification. We are only here by mercy! We offended God (and even still do). He took the blame. He loved us and still does.

We need to constantly remind ourselves that we are SINNERS outside God's mercy! This will put us in check when we feel aggrieved by others.

Paul did this often.

1 Timothy 1: 13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

14 And the grace (unmerited favor and blessing) of our Lord [actually] flowed out superabundantly and beyond measure for me, accompanied by faith and love that are [to be realized] in Christ Jesus.

15 The saying is sure and true and worthy of full and universal acceptance, that Christ Jesus (the Messiah) came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am foremost. (Amplified Bible)

Never forget who you were. Never.

When all is said and done, all of us, I mean ALL OF US will be hanging ONLY, I repeat ONLY, on the MERCY OF GOD in eternity. All our braggadocio before men, our church members would have ended. All our 'solid' and oftentimes arrogant boasts on 'New Creation realities' will have no effect. ONLY HIS MERCY WILL BE OUR HOPE AND FAITH.

Never forget. NEVER.

If God were to revenge daily, Humanity would need to be created again. Daily. No one would survive a day. No one!

2. Pray for your offenders.

We have been taught to pray against. This is not from the Word.

When you are hurt, get HOT with praying for the offender.

Matthew 5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

How is this done?

Luke 23: 34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

Acts 7: 60 And falling on his knees, he cried out loudly, Lord, fix not this sin upon them [lay it not to their charge]! And when he had said this, he fell asleep [in death]. (Amplified Bible)

Both Christ- Jesus and the man in Him turned the focus on the Father in prayer. They refused to get personal about things done unto them.

They saw the sin firstly against God!

Hence they prayed. Heaped coals of fire upon the heads of the offender.
Overcame evil with good!

We must include praying daily for those who offend us. It must be a prayer point. For God to heal them, bless them, forgive them. They shouldn't fall and die because they hurt us, We didn't (don't) because we continually 'hurt' God!

People must be BLESSED when they hurt us.

It is an opportunity for God's blessings when they offend us. Evil done (deeds) creates the way for Good. Darkness for Light. Man's sin brought out the "best" of God. His love.

WHEN ANYONE OFFENDS YOU, It's only an avenue to bring out your best- The nature of God! Wherever and whenever you read this, stop and pause over those who sinned against you, wronged you. Get on your knees and pray. At least 5 minutes.

Blessed? I am (was) a sinner saved by grace, I have not right to be unmerciful as I am a man saved ONLY by mercy. I will never allow revenge. No offences. I walk in the Light. Jesus is Lord, We win!

THE CHRISTIAN AND JUDGEMENT

1 Corinthians 10:15 KJV

[15] I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.

It's vital for a believer to be able to judge and discern spiritual things.

Scriptures lend credence to this.

1 Corinthians 2:15 KJV

[15] But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

Judging here isn't the same as proving guilty or name calling.

It simply means to "weigh issues and themselves "

To know.

To understand .

To distinguish .

Some have quoted Jesus albeit wrongly.

Matthew 7:1 KJV

[1] Judge not, that ye be not judged.

Judge not ..,what? Who or how?

Context always bails out any seeming unclear text.

Proceeding verses will help.

Matthew 7:2-6 KJV

[2] For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

[3] And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

[4] Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

[5] Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

[6] Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Judge not hypocritically!

We mustn't judge with hypocritical motives or manner.

Luke's account adds another fact to this.

Luke 6:37-38 KJV

[37] Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

[38] Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

Verse 38 has suffered some very terrible interpretation in recent times. It has been used for money.

Jesus used it for judgment .

He says be merciful .

Merciful judgment.

He never forbade judgment .

He only asked not to condemn,
Rebuke, but not convict.

He speaks of judgment .

Matthew 7:15-16,20 KJV

[15] Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. [

16] Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

[20] Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

You won't know counterfeits without weighing issues.

Things they say. What they teach.

These is their fruit.

We must not judge motives.

Because ,men's hearts are beyond our reach.

1 Corinthians 4:5 KJV

[5] Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

However, we must discern teachings.

Teachers and what they communicate.

The work of ministers / pastors is to mature saints

Ephesians 4:11-13 KJV

[11] And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; [12] For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

[13] Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

When this happens, the saints can discern

Ephesians 4:14 KJV

[14] That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

No longer vulnerable to any form of teaching. They leave the level of excitement and uncontrolled worship of signs and wonders.

They aren't overwhelmed by a person's fame, money and thus can't discern

They hold the scriptures dearly. Just like the men in Berea did just before they believed.

Acts 17:11-12 KJV

[11] These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. [12] Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

They search, find out, investigate, think through the scriptures whether those things are true.

Miracles attest to the gospel.

Follow the believer.

The message.

Mark 16:17-18, 20 KJV

[17] And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

[18] They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover

. [20] And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

But must never replace judgment.

Scriptures remain our only proof of and for things done or said by men.

I mean scriptures rightly divided. 2 Tim 2:15

Just like Jesus did in Luke 24:25-27.

Allowing scriptures interpret itself.

Crowds must be reached but aren't proofs.

Crowds have been wrong.

In the four gospels (John 6, Luke 23:18)

Book of acts (acts13,14,16,19)

Even crowd of Ministers (Acts11,15)

Miracles must be worked but can't be the judgment .

Simon the sorcerer was such an example.Acts8:9-111

Same as the girl who had the spirit of divination acts17:16-17.

Believers need to be sound in doctrine .

Not feed on blogs and social media for discernment ,

Rather...the Word.

If after at least a year in your local church your only testimony are signs and wonders,you are treading on very dangerous and slippery grounds.

You need to be established in Gods Word.

Develop a ministry of prayer,the Word,gifts of the Spirit..

But above ALL...maturity to know your right from your left in spiritual matters .

Right from wrong.

Darkness from light.

Truth from lies.

Truth from nearly true!

Hope this blessed u?

Have a splendid weekend ahead..

Jesus is Lord,We Win!