

**I. STANDING AGAINST COMMON ATTACKS**

- A. The Devil is a personal Devil not just a concept of evil, he is real and his forces are real. The Apostle Paul tells us that we are in a fight against demonic forces and not against people or circumstances (Eph. 6:13). If we do not keep ourselves aware of that fact then we can frequently find ourselves overcome by temptation and spending energy fighting against people; even people we love. I am not giving a comprehensive breakdown of how spiritual warfare works, though we will look at some helps. I want to identify three common avenues of attack that hit all of us; offense, anxiety and depression, and to give some insights into how we can stand against these in the heat of the battle.

*Eph 6:12-17 “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground...put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground...Stand firm then, with...truth...take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God .*

- B. We must understand that these are common, they are mean, meant to hurt, we will have to fight them a thousand times in our lives and they are overcome-able.

**II. YOU ARE IN A SPIRITUAL FIGHT: THE FIGHT OF OFFENSE**

- A. We have to know and identify who we are fighting. They are all attacks of Satan and you can overcome them in Jesus’ Name. There is no such thing as a fight against people or circumstances, that isn’t real. While that is most often our normal thought that is the veil that the Enemy wants us to have so that we will fight against each other and war in the flesh against whatever is in our way.
- B. The way that demonic attacks work is that flaming arrows are fired at you and when they hit, you instantly feel a heightened demonic energy and intensified temptation toward whatever sin was in that quiver.
- C. We are called to stand and not falter. We are told to resist the devil and we are promised victory if we will identify that it is attack, call it out and press through by drawing near to God in humility.

*James 4:6-10 “But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.” Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you...Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.”*

- D. The most deceptive and dangerous of common demonic attacks, offense. Being offended in this life is completely unavoidable. You will be attacked with offence, but being attacked isn't sin, agreement with an attack is sin. The question isn't will you and I ever have to fight against offence, it is entirely a question of how we will handle offence when it comes our way.
- E. Offense is perhaps one of the meanest attacks because of how sneaky it is. The arrow of offense fills us not only with offense but also with a sense that we are justified to be offended and so this justification then keeps us in the sin of offense and we feel right about it. This is a very unique attack and it makes it very dangerous to our hearts.
- F. If we are offended it's probably because something actually happened. Something that is important to us was taken, stepped on or otherwise "fussed" with. Something bad either happened or at least something bad happened as we perceived it whether real or unreal. Our hearts then rage against whatever we can most quickly identify as the source of our discomfort.
- G. I'm not saying that a bad thing didn't happen, maybe it did. I'm saying that the Lord tells us we can't let offence be the response of our heart and that offence is the exact plan that the Enemy has for us; it's exactly what he wants, our being offended at each other, at God or at our circumstance is total victory for kingdom of Hell. The reality is that we laid down our rights when we chose to follow Jesus.

***Gal 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.***

### III. CONSEQUENCES AND BLESSINGS OF OFFENSE

- A. Jesus said that we will be blessed if we are not offended at the way He runs His kingdom. His ways, His word and His delay perfect leadership of life all come into the crosshairs of accusation many times in our mind because things don't go the way we want. Jesus addressed the issue of offense that arises when God doesn't do things the way we think they would/should go.
- Luke 7:20-23 "When the men had come to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?'"...Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."***
- B. In reality all offence is really offense at God because He is the one who told us never to be offended. Anything that we would direct our offense at is something that He permitted to happen and so it always comes back to God. What starts as offence with a person ends up with offence at God because He let that person do that thing to us.
- C. If we don't work through offense, it will become a "landing strip" for accusation. Offense and accusation work in tandem. "When we allow offense to stay without resistance we are like the flight crews with lights giving pilot of accusation a place to pull up to the gate."

*Rev 12:10 for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.*

#### IV. PRACTICALLY DEALING WITH OFFENSE

- A. We identify the anger in us first. This allows us to begin to forgive quickly. Set your heart to respond as Jesus and not drink the cup of bitterness that was given to Him on the cross.

*Mt 5:22 “But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.”*

- B. Go to the one who offended you or the know may be offended. Seek to find a loving and respectful way to communicate feelings.

*Mt 5:23-24 “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.”*

- C. Keep short accounts with people.

*Mt 5:25 “Settle matters quickly with your adversary.”*

*Eph 4:26-27 “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.”*