

VICTORIOUS LIFE CHURCH BIBLE STUDY: "THE BAIT OF SATAN" BY JOHN BEVERE. PASTOR WILLIAM A. LEE, JR. LESSON THREE- CHAPTER TWO: MASSIVE OFFENSE

QUESTION: WHO IS THIS BIBLE STUDY FOR AND WHO IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON TO FOCUS ON IN THIS SERIES?

"IF THE DEVIL COULD DESTROY US WHENEVER HE WANTED TO, HE WOULD HAVE WIPE US OUT A LONG TIME AGO."

**"CHAPTER 3
HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN TO ME?**

**Joseph said to them“But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good.”
—GENESIS 50:19–20**

In the first chapter the Author grouped all offended people into two major categories

(1) those who have been genuinely mistreated.

(2) those who think they have been mistreated but actually were not.

In this chapter he addresses the first category, those who have been genuinely mistreated. The difficulty with dealing with these persons and where the enemy sneaks in is, the idea that one has a reason and a right to be offended. Again, the key to getting victory over the spirit of offense is to not allow oneself to buy into it and have it, and its fruit get into our spirit and soul. There are many ways in which people can become offended that are not so obvious, like being offended at places. The actor spoke of knowing someone who was so offended at the town in which they lived that they griped and complained about it constantly. Others have gotten offended at their car saying things like, “This car’s nothing but a piece of junk.” They spend much of their time complaining about their car. Still others have harbored offense at someone who has been dead for decades. A woman in a church told her pastor about being molested at the age of seven or eight by an uncle. Although he died thirty or forty years ago, this woman, who is now in her

sixties or seventies, is still offended and thinks about her uncle every single day. She is wasting her life sulking over the fact that he hurt her, but there is nothing she can do that can make him repay her. After all, what can he possibly do when he is no longer alive? There is nothing that can be done, there is no action that can be taken that will repair the damage that he did. Justice and peace can only be received from one place, and that place is Jesus. But as long as she holds onto the offense, she will never find peace or contentment.

Question: If you've been genuinely mistreated, do you have the right to be offended?"

To answer this question we are directed to look at one of the Bibles most powerful stories and characters, The Story of Joseph.

Summary of Events in Josephs Life

- * Given a Coat of Favor by his Father
- * Given two Dreams by God which he shared with his family
- * Thrown into a Pit and Sold into Slavery by his Jealous Brothers
- * Falsely Accused by Potiphers Wife after refusing her advances and thrown into an Egyptian Prison
- * Interprets a Dream for a fellow inmate who when after he is released fails to. Remember Joseph for two years.
- * Finally brought out of jail before Pharaoh where he interprets his dream and is made second in command in all of Egypt.

PERFECT HINDSIGHT

The author points out the fact that as we read the account of Joseph's story, most of us know the outcome. It is a very inspiring story when you know the ending. But that is not how Joseph

experienced it. So, imagine in your heart and mind's eye that it was you going through all of this without knowing the final chapter of the story.

Question: What do you **HONESTLY** think your reaction might've been?

As the author moves through the story he gives us things to consider and know that will help us to ward off the spirit of offense as it tries to cripple us in our destiny.

God is in Control

Perhaps when Joseph had his dreams he saw them as a confirmation of the favor on his life. He had not yet learned that authority is given to serve, not to set you apart. Often in these training periods we focus on the impossibility of our circumstances instead of the greatness of God. As a result we are discouraged and need to blame someone, so we look for the one we feel is responsible for our despair. When we face the fact that God could have prevented our whole mess—and didn't—we often blame Him.

Question: Can you think of a time that you went through something that caused you to question the goodness of God, the fairness of God or even caused you to wonder if you were cursed?

IMAGINE THE THOUGHTS THAT WERE GOING THROUGH JOSEPH'S MIND:

- * I have lived in accordance to what I know of God. I've not transgressed His statutes or nature.
- * I was only repeating a dream God Himself gave me. And what's the result?
- * My brothers betray me, and I'm sold as a slave!
- * My dad thinks I'm dead and never comes to Egypt to find me."

To him the bottom line was his brothers. They were the force that had thrown him into this dungeon. Maybe he entertained thoughts of how things would be different once he was in power, when God put him in the position of authority he had seen in the dreams. How different it all

would be if his brothers had not aborted his future. **How often do we hear our brothers and sisters fall into the same trap of assigning blame?** For example:

* If it weren't for my wife I would be in the ministry. She has hindered me and ruined so much of what I have dreamed."

* If it weren't for my parents I would have had a normal life. They are to blame for where I am today. How come others have normal parents and I don't? If my mom and dad didn't get divorced I would have been much better off in my own marriage.

* If it weren't for my pastor repressing this gift in me I would be free and unhindered. He has kept me from fulfilling my ministry destiny. He has turned the people in the church against me."

* If it weren't for my former husband, my kids and I wouldn't have all this financial trouble."

* If it weren't for that woman in the church I would still be in favor with the leaders. With her gossip, she has destroyed me and any hope I had of being respected."

The list is endless. It is easy to blame everyone else for the problems you have and imagine how much better off you would be if it had not been for all those around you. You know that your disappointment and hurt are their fault."

The author continues to emphasize the following point and encourages us to always keep it in mind when we have been mistreated and truly have offensive events come in our lives.

"Absolutely no man, woman, child, or devil can ever get you out of the will of God! No one but God holds your destiny. "

Joseph's brothers tried hard to destroy the vision God gave him. They thought they had ended it for Joseph. They said out of their own mouths,

"Come, therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit. . . . We shall see what will become of his dreams!" (Gen. 37:20, emphasis added).

They were out to destroy him. It wasn't an accident. It was deliberate! They wanted no chance of his ever succeeding. If the devil can get you to focus on offense, he is able to hinder you, and he will prevent you from increasing in the things of God. Becoming engrossed in offense places you in bondage to the devil. When you are focused on a past hurt or offense, you are not living by faith because faith focuses on the promise and not the problem. Faith focuses on the answer from God instead of the circumstance. Faith is single-minded—totally absorbed in one matter—God's promise. You either fix your eyes on what is good or what is bad, but you cannot give your attention to both simultaneously. In referring to a single-minded person, James 1:6-7 says,

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord.”

On the other hand, an offended person is always negative, focusing on the problem instead of the answer. Unlike a person of faith, an offended person centers his attention on what is bad instead of what is good.

Bevere directs us to imagine how Joseph might have responded if he were in the church today. He says, If he were like most of us, do you know what he would be doing? Plotting revenge. He would comfort himself with such thoughts as, “When I get my hands on them, I'll kill them! I will kill them for what they have done to me. They are going to pay for this. But if Joseph had actually had this attitude, God would have left him in that dungeon to rot! That's because if he had gotten out of prison with this motive, he would have killed the heads of ten of the twelve tribes of Israel. This would include Judah, from whose lineage Christ would descend.

Many offended people never really feel like they are treated quite good enough. They may even feel that the reason good things don't happen to them is because society is out to get them. As a result, they are constantly moving from one unpleasant situation to another. “For

instance, they move from one relationship to another, always complaining about the last person who hurt and disappointed them. This kind of behavior only perpetuates the cycle of offense. To break this cycle, you must reject the belief that everyone is out to get you. That is merely a lie from the devil and if you believe it, then you will play right into his trap. Refuse to expect something hurtful or wrong to be done to you. Don't allow the devil to keep you in that type of bondage. Living in offense can cost you your life, your family, your sanity, or your ministry."

Prison was a time of sifting for Joseph, but it was also a time of opportunity. There were two prisoners with Joseph, and both had vivid and disturbing dreams. Joseph interpreted both of their dreams with amazing accuracy. One man was to be restored while the other would be executed. Joseph asked the one about to be restored to remember him when he regained Pharaoh's favor. The man returned to Pharaoh's service, but two years passed with no word from him. It was yet another letdown for Joseph, another opportunity to become offended.

God always has a plan.

Moreover He [God] called for a famine in the land; He destroyed all the provision of bread. He sent a man before them—Joseph—who was sold as a slave" (Ps. 105:16–17)

Who sent Joseph? His brothers or God? Out of the mouth of two witnesses we see that it was God who sent him. Joseph said plainly to his brothers, **"It was not you who sent me."**

Hear what the Spirit is saying! As already stated, **no mortal man or devil can supersede the plan of God for your life. If you lay hold of this truth, it will set you free. But there is only one person who can get you out of the will of God, and that is you!"** Many people have been serving the Lord fervently and have come into difficult life situations because of being mistreated by either wicked men or carnal Christians. The truth is that they have been treated unjustly. But to become offended would only fulfill the enemy's purpose of getting them out of

the will of God. If you stay free from offense you will stay in God's will. If you become offended you will be taken captive by the enemy to fulfill his own purpose and will. Take your pick. It is much more beneficial to stay free from offense." We must remember that **nothing can come against us without the Lord's knowledge of it before it ever happens. If the devil could destroy us at will, he would have wiped us out a long time ago because he hates man with a passion. Always keep this exhortation before you:**

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."—1 CORINTHIANS 10:13

ANOTHER KIND OF BETRAYAL

Not many have suffered the treatment Joseph received from his brothers. It would not have been as painful if his enemies did this. But these were his brothers, his flesh and blood. They were the ones who were supposed to encourage, support, defend, and care for him. Could there be a worse scenario of mistreatment than that which Joseph endured?

DECLARATIONS

I refuse to let the inequities in my life cause me to become bitter and hopeless and to lead me to blame God for them.

Father God, You are in control of my life, and like Joseph, I choose to learn obedience through my trials.

Father, I will hold fast to Your promise and seek only You as I pursue the dream in my heart.

I will use this period of spiritual training in my life to focus on the greatness of my God instead of the impossibility of my circumstances.

Father, I have lived in accordance to what I know of You. I have not willfully broken Your laws. Therefore I will continue to hope in the fulfillment of my dreams.

Holy Spirit, fill me with Your power and keep me from placing the blame for my troubles on my loved ones or the other people in my life.

There is no man, woman, child, or devil that can ever get me out of the will of God! No one but God holds my destiny.

I will not allow the enemy to cause me to seek revenge upon those who have wronged me. I will remain free from offense so that the plan of God can be established in my life.

Father, enable me to remember that the times of trouble in my life are also filled with great opportunities for fulfilling my dream.

No mortal man or devil can supersede the plan of God for my life.

When I am treated unjustly by others, I refuse to become offended and thereby fulfil Satan's purpose to move me out of God's will.

Nothing can come against me without Your knowledge of it, O Lord.

No temptation will overtake me because my faithful God has already made a way for me to escape it.

God, You know every adverse situation that I will ever encounter, and I trust You to lead me to the way of escape in every situation.

I will not abort the fulfillment of God's promises in my life by my disobedience.