

## **The Bait of Satan**

***“One of the hardest areas in which to trust God is in the matter of justice. When we perceive an injustice, we want to see the guilty party punished. We want justice to prevail, especially if we are the victim. We become impatient if we are not avenged quickly. Yet God warns us that vengeance is not our prerogative. We are to desire justice, but we are not to seek vengeance (Micah 6:8). When someone offends us, our responsibility is to respond to the offense with forgiveness (Mathew 5:44). God takes the responsibility to see that justice is done. God love people too much to allow sin to go unchecked.” Henry Blackaby***

Dear Intercessors,

**The Bible says that in the end times many will be offended.** We read in Matthew 24:10-12 in the Amplified Bible, *“And then many will be offended and repelled and will begin to distrust and desert (Him Whom they ought to trust and obey) and will stumble and fall away and betray one another and pursue one another with hatred. And many false prophets will rise up and deceive and lead many into error. And the love of the great body of people will grow cold because of the multiplied lawlessness and iniquity.”* We must consider the seriousness of these verses. Because of the increasing lawlessness, many hearts will grow cold. There will be an increase in betrayal, in hatred and in cold love. We must be very careful as intercessors to be unoffendable in all our relationships. Carrying an offense in the end times is extremely dangerous.

**In reality in day-to-day life with all its challenges, we are tempted to be offended by other people.** They hurt us. Life does not turn out as expected. People misunderstand us or don't treat us as we think they should. I read a story from a highly respected intercessor and author, Francis Frangipane, who had a great opportunity to get offended when he was not recognized and greeted at a conference by the main leader. All the other ministers and their wives were personally greeted but Francis and his wife were bypassed. He was embarrassed and was tempted to be offended. But he learned through that offending situation to know how others feel when overlooked and to turn the offense into an opportunity to become more Christlike. He said this:

***“The occasions for taking offense are practically endless. Indeed, we are daily given the opportunity to either be offended by something or to possess an unoffendable heart. The Lord's promise is that He's given us a new heart: a soft, entreatable heart that can be filled with His Spirit and abound with His love.”***

**God's desire for us is an unoffendable heart.** He wants to use every possibility of offense as an opportunity for us to become more like Christ. Taking offense against another person will only turn into bitterness and unforgiveness. It will hinder our prayer life and affect every other area of our life. The devil will use it to bring division, ruin our relationships and make us totally ineffective. We often tell missionaries that their biggest struggle on the mission field will be in the area of relationships. It is the same with intercessors. **We must realize that offense is the bait of Satan.**

**The devil sets up traps in our lives to try to bring offense.** Our pastor once preached a sermon about how the devil tries to set these traps up. The word “offend” is “skandalon” and means “to cause me to judge unfavorably”. It's the movable stick or trigger of a trap. To illustrate this point, he attached mousetraps to his body and slowly tried to walk around the church. The traps were weighing him down. The traps of offense are often small things. They are oftentimes little offenses that cause our hearts to grow cold. Maybe someone fails to meet our expectations or we don't like the personality of someone in authority. Someone might hurt us by something they said, and we react out of pain. Little offenses turn into big boulders that we stumble over. It is very dangerous to harbor little offenses.

**I remember how a small offense became big during my first year on the mission field.** New missionaries in training often worked in the dining room serving food to the rest of the crew and staff. I worked with several other ladies serving food on a missionary ship with 300 people from over 40 countries. It was

quite a challenge to feed 300 hungry people at sea when the ship was rocking and rolling during a rough voyage. One of the ladies working with me had the same shift, and her cabin was right next to mine. We both had very different personalities and came from different parts of the world. We did not work the same way. She wanted to serve the food quickly. I wanted to greet the people as they came to eat. These personal differences caused great irritation and offense that became the bait of Satan. Time went on and we both were feeling an undercurrent of tension. **We were beginning to let small offenses become bigger boulders.**

Finally I knew that we needed to talk about these offenses. One day I went to her cabin and we began to share with each other how we each felt. As we talked, all of a sudden we began to understand one another from a different point of view. We prayed together and our relationship completely changed. We were able to bring to the surface and repent of those underlying offenses that the enemy had turned into big boulders. In an amazing way we were each set free, and our relationship was strengthened. **God had given us a new heart towards one another.**

## **How can we walk through life successfully and avoid the traps?**

***“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26).***

**The Son of God came to set us free.** Jesus could have easily been offended by all of mankind. He faced every possible opportunity for offense, and yet He forgave. We can do the same because the Bible says that God will give us a new heart. How can we walk through daily life and avoid these traps of offense? How can we be unoffendable?

- **We need to listen carefully to our thoughts** - These are like silent conversations in our heart. Has someone or some situation caused us to be offended? These ongoing conversations can be destructive. They are dead-end conversations that get nowhere. We must guard our heart and listen carefully.
- **We need to learn to release others** - We must learn to forgive from the heart and not seek revenge. This takes time, and we must work at it until it works into us. Then our secret dialogue begins to change. We need God's grace to forgive. He will help us to forgive and pray for our enemies. We may need to talk, repent or pray with that person.
- **We need to walk around the traps** - We must live carefully and wisely. These are end-times. Satan will use every opportunity to bring offense. We must not minimize the danger of harboring an offense. We need to walk through life carefully because these set-ups are everywhere. They are Satan's bait to try to trap us.
- **We need to crucify our carnal flesh** - We must use every offense as an opportunity to die to our selfish ways. We need to use these offenses as an opportunity to become more christlike.
- **We need to focus on God** - Jesus is our example. He will give us a new heart. When we let ourselves get offended, we are focusing on self instead of God. We need to look up and ask God for help. We need to focus on His attributes and worship Him. He will help us through every offensive situation. He will bring justice into our situation.

***God is absolutely just, and only He can ensure that justice is fully carried out. If we are impatient and seek revenge, we presume that we are wiser than God, and we reveal a blatant lack of trust that God will do the right thing. Only by trusting God's sovereign wisdom will we be free from our anger and preoccupation toward those who have committed evil. If we refuse to trust God's justice, we become enslaved to bitterness and anger. We must guard our hearts and trust God to exercise His judgment against those who oppose Him.” Henry Blackaby***

I will be having surgery on Tuesday, March 13, 2007 and would appreciate your prayers that it will be successful.

Together in the Harvest,

Debbie Przybylski  
Intercessors Arise  
[deb@intercessorsarise.org](mailto:deb@intercessorsarise.org)  
[www.intercessorsarise.org](http://www.intercessorsarise.org)

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