

## **Lesson Outline**

**I Recognizing Offenses**

**II Reacting to Offenses**

**III Responding to Offenses**

**IV Resisting Offenses**

**V Restoring the Offender**

**VI Contending, Contention, & Contentiousness**

## Offenses

This study the matter of OFFENSES that can occur between brothers and sisters in Christ and within our Baptist churches. While any casual observer would undoubtedly conclude that “offenses are just part of life,” the fact is the Lord intends otherwise. For example, read:

- Psalm 133:1 *<sup>1</sup>Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!*
- Ephesians 4:3 (from verse 1) <sup>1</sup>I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, <sup>2</sup>With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; **<sup>3</sup>Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.** <sup>4</sup>There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;
- I Corinthians 1:10(e) and more <sup>10</sup>Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; **but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.** <sup>11</sup>For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. <sup>12</sup>Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. <sup>13</sup>Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?
- I Thessalonians 5:13(b) from verse 11 <sup>11</sup>Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. <sup>12</sup>And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; <sup>13</sup>And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves. <sup>14</sup>Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

<sup>15</sup>See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

Many Christians either do not know how to handle grievances and offenses, or just do not follow the plain teaching of the Bible on the subject. As a result, much harm has come to the cause of Christ. Churches have split (or gone out of existence), fruitful lives have been made “castaway.” Read:

- I Corinthians 9:27 (from verse 24) <sup>24</sup>Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. <sup>25</sup>And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. <sup>26</sup>I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: <sup>27</sup>But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

An interpretation of I Corinthians 9:27 from

<http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/reaching-for-the-prize-john-barlow-sermon-on-christian-disciplines-32208.asp?page=3> on 10-25-2015:

Paul says:

- I AIM ... I DO ALL I CAN .... SO THAT I WILL NOT BE ..DISQUALIFIED ...
- I RUN THE RACE WITH MAXIMUM EFFORT ...
- I FOCUS ON THE RULES ...
- I DON'T RUN HALF-HEARTEDLY ....
- I DON'T VIOLATE THE RULES ...
- I DON'T TAKE... SPIRITUAL STEROIDS ..
- I STAY WITHIN THE RULES ....
- I COMPETE AS I AM SUPPOSED TO COMPETE... AND I RUN ..TO WIN.
- PERFECTION IS THIS LIFE IS A GOAL ... BUT NOT... AND ACHIEVEMENT ...

- IT IS SOMETHING THAT WE PURSUE .... BUT NEVER REACH ...
  - IT IS AN AWARENESS ... OF A NEED... TO BE BETTER ... TO IMPROVE  
....
  - TO KNOW ... THAT WHILE OUR POSITION IN CHRIST IS FIXED [saved]  
....
  - OUR CONDITION IS CONSISTENTLY IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT ....
  - BECAUSE WE ARE NOT WHAT WE SHOULD BE... WE ARE NOT WHAT WE ..CAN BE ....
  - WE ARE NOT ...WHAT WE WILL BE .. SOME DAY... WHEN WE ARE WITH THE LORD ....
  - **AN AWARENESS... OF THE NEED... TO PURSUE A BETTER... CONDITION.**
- I Timothy 1:19 <sup>19</sup>*Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:*

So..., sweet fellowship has been destroyed, and ultimately the preaching of the Gospel has suffered.

Therefore, this is a most necessary study for all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, the brethren, the Church, and the souls of men.

## I Recognizing Offenses

### A. Their Possibility

1. Read Luke 17:1 <sup>1</sup>*Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!*
2. James calls one who does NOT offend a perfect man. Read James 3:2 <sup>2</sup>*For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.*

**B. Their Source**

Read James 3:14-18 <sup>14</sup>*But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. <sup>15</sup>This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. <sup>16</sup>For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. <sup>17</sup>But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. <sup>18</sup>And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.*

This passage identifies a three-fold source of the sort of “wisdom” that gives rise to the offenses and the resulting envying, strife, and confusion:

1. Verse 15b – earthly (the World)
2. Verse 15c – sensual (the Flesh; also, read Galatians 5:19-21 <sup>19</sup>*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, <sup>20</sup>Oldolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, <sup>21</sup>Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.)*
3. Verse 15d – devilish

Note: An offense can be given OR taken (or both). In other words, the working of these three things that may be found in either party.

**C. Their Cause**

**Some of the reasons given in scripture as to WHY people are offended are:**

1. **The TONGUE** - Read James 3:2-10 <sup>2</sup>*For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. <sup>3</sup>Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. <sup>4</sup>Behold also the*

*ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. <sup>5</sup>Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! <sup>6</sup>And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. <sup>7</sup>For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: <sup>8</sup>But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup>Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. <sup>10</sup>Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.*

- a. Gossip and tale bearing will separate the best of friends. Read:
    - (i) Proverbs 16:28 <sup>28</sup>A froward [ a person difficult to deal with; contrary ] man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.
    - (ii) Proverbs 17:9 <sup>9</sup>He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.
  
  - b. An angry man stirs up strife. Read Proverbs 29:22 <sup>22</sup>An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.
2. **Masters** – Read James 3:1-2a <sup>1</sup>My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. <sup>2</sup>For in many things we offend all. [ i.e., not many should become teachers, my brothers, knowing that we will receive a stricter judgment ]

This word “masters” is referring pastors, rulers. Read:

- Hebrews 13:7 <sup>7</sup>Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.
- Hebrews 13:17 <sup>17</sup>Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.
- Hebrews 13:24 <sup>24</sup>Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.
- I Timothy 5:17 <sup>17</sup>Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

Preaching can offend people, especially sound preaching. Read:

- II Timothy 4:3 <sup>3</sup>For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;
- Isaiah 30:9-10 <sup>9</sup>That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: <sup>10</sup>Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits:

3. **The WORD** - Read Matthew 13:21 <sup>21</sup> Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. [Description of one whose mind is so stirred as instantly to welcome the word with joy, but who, when subjected to the testing influence of affliction, abandons his faith and relapses into his former condition. Such an one is without root in his own inner being.]

Also, read:

- a. John 6:56-61 <sup>56</sup> *He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.* <sup>57</sup> *As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.* <sup>58</sup> *This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever.* <sup>59</sup> *These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.* <sup>60</sup> *Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?* <sup>61</sup> *When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, **Doth this offend you?***
- b. Matthew 15:10-12 <sup>10</sup> *And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand:* <sup>11</sup> *Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.* <sup>12</sup> *Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the **Pharisees were offended**, after they heard this saying?*
4. **The CROSS** - Read Galatians 5:11e <sup>11</sup> *And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.*
5. **The LORD** - Read:
- a. Matthew 11:6 <sup>4</sup> *Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:* <sup>5</sup> *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.* <sup>6</sup> *And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.*
- b. Matthew 13:57 (from verse 54) <sup>54</sup> *And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were*



*astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? <sup>55</sup>Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? <sup>56</sup>And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? <sup>57</sup>And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. <sup>58</sup>And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.*

6. **Contrary Doctrine;** Read:

- a. Romans 16:17 <sup>17</sup>Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences **contrary to the doctrine** which ye have learned; and avoid them.
- b. I Corinthians 11:18-19 <sup>18</sup>For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. <sup>19</sup>For there must be also **heresies** [an opinion profoundly at odds with what is generally accepted] **among you**, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

7. **Meat.** Read:

- a. I Corinthians 8:13a <sup>13</sup>Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.
- b. (Liberty of believers) Romans 14:20 <sup>20</sup>For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.

8. **Neglect.** Read Acts 6:1d 1And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

#### D. Their Danger

1. The danger of a root of bitterness. Read Hebrews 12:15 <sup>15</sup>*Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;* This has a two-fold effect:
- It will TROUBLE “you”.
  - It will DEFILE “many”. Like a spreading canker.
2. Read II Corinthians 12:20 <sup>20</sup>*For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:*
- The danger of a “Church Tumult”. Note: The downward spiral into chaos from what began between two Church members:
- Debates – takes two – involves a difference
  - Envy – feeling become involved
  - Wrath – tempers begin to flair
  - Strife – the difference has now become an issue
  - Back biting – unkindness enters the fray
  - Whisperings – the matter is spread to others
  - Swelling – the whole church body becomes involved
  - Tumult – a “knock down – drag out” begins

There are steps between debates and strife. People have to choose to go down this path.

## E. Their Nature

Offenses may generally be classified as either:

### 1. Private Offenses – between individuals.

These matters arise on a one-to-one, couple-to-couple, or family-to-family basis. They are private and should remain so.

a. Read Matthew 18:15 (**Jesus speaking**) <sup>15</sup>*Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. The instruction of this scripture is to go and tell him his fault between thee and him **alone**.*

b. Read Proverbs 25:9 <sup>8</sup>*Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame. <sup>9</sup>Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another: <sup>10</sup>Lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away. [NIV: <sup>9</sup>**If you take your neighbor to court, do not betray another's confidence, <sup>10</sup>or the one who hears it may shame you and the charge against you will stand.]***

### 2. Public Offenses – those that affect the church.

These are open matters which, for the sake of the Church and the offender, must be dealt with publicly. Such offenses include:

a. Immoral conduct. Read I Corinthians 5:11 <sup>11</sup>*But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.*

## b. Disorderly conduct.

- (i) II Thessalonians 3:6 <sup>6</sup>Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.
- (ii) II Thessalonians 3:11-12 <sup>11</sup>*For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.* <sup>12</sup>*Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.*

## c. Unruly Conduct.

- (i) I Thessalonians 5:14a <sup>14</sup>*Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.*
- (ii) Matthew 18:17c (from verse 15 – Jesus speaking) <sup>15</sup>*Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.* <sup>16</sup>*But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.* <sup>17</sup>*And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: **but if he neglect to hear the church,** let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*
- (iii) Hebrews 13:7 <sup>7</sup>*Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. [ "conversation" means one's relations to a community as a citizen, i.e., citizenship. ]*

d. Heretical Conduct.

- (i) Titus 1:13-14 <sup>13</sup>*This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; <sup>14</sup>Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.*
- (ii) Titus 3:10 <sup>10</sup>*A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject;*
- (iii) Romans 16:17 <sup>17</sup>*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*

e. Arrogant Conduct. III John 9-10 <sup>9</sup>*I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. <sup>10</sup>Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.*

f. Unfaithful Conduct. Hebrews 10:25 <sup>25</sup>*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

## II Reacting to Offenses

Offenses are often compounded when they are not dealt with scripturally, when people react then respond. Some of the ways this can occur are:

A. Violating the Privacy Command

## B. Failing of the Grace of God

## C. Retaliating

Human (Adamic) nature will seek to “payback” the offending brother in order to satisfy self.

1. Read Proverbs 24:29 <sup>29</sup>*Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I [God] will render to the man according to his work.* There are two (2) things we should NOT do:
  - a. Say “I will do to him as he hath done to me.”
  - b. Render to the man according to his work. God will take care of that.
  
2. Read I Peter 3:9 (and more) <sup>9</sup>***Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise [instead] blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.*** <sup>10</sup>*For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: <sup>11</sup>Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. <sup>12</sup>For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*
  
3. Read I Corinthians 6:1-7 <sup>1</sup>*Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? <sup>2</sup>Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? <sup>3</sup>Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? <sup>4</sup>If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. <sup>5</sup>I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? <sup>6</sup>But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. <sup>7</sup>Now therefore there is utterly a*

*fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?*

Rather than take another Church member to court, for the sake of Christ, it would be better to take wrong. (!)

#### D. Withdrawing

Read Luke 15:28 [brother of the prodigal son] <sup>28</sup> *And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him.* [to go into the feast prepared for the prodigal son]. Offended believers often likewise withdraw. They will:

- Resign their ministries
- Quit the church
- Back off their support [and tithings]

While claiming to do so in order to avoid other problems. In reality, they are seeking to punish others. Ultimately, it is the Lord (and his work) that will suffer.

#### E. Taking Up an Offense

1. Read I Corinthians 3:3 <sup>3</sup>*For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?* Being carnal (controlled by the flesh, the old Adamic nature) produces:
  - a. Enving
  - b. Strife
  - c. Divisions

2. Read Proverbs 26:17 *<sup>17</sup>He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears. [meddles with strife not belonging to him.]*

Also, read Psalm 15:3 *from verse 1) <sup>1</sup> Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? <sup>2</sup>He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. <sup>3</sup>**He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor.***

What a child of God does when he or she is offended should be totally different from what a lost person might do. Why?

Read I Peter 2:23 (from verse 11 which summarizes the Christian life)

*<sup>11</sup>Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; <sup>12</sup>Having your conversation [life style] honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. <sup>13</sup>Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; <sup>14</sup>Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. <sup>15</sup>For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: <sup>16</sup>As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. <sup>17</sup>Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. <sup>18</sup>Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. <sup>19</sup>For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. <sup>20</sup>For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. <sup>21</sup>For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should*



*follow his steps: <sup>22</sup>Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: <sup>23</sup>Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:*

### III Responding to Offenses

The Bible (New Testament) outlines four (4) “laws” for dealing with offenses between church members and believers in general:

#### A. For the Offender – **The Law of Confession**

1. Read James 5:16 <sup>16</sup>*Confess your faults [not sins] one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*
2. One who has committed an offense has but one valid decision to make, namely to confess his error. All other decisions are worthless until this is done and completed.
3. A sound rule to follow when we offend is:
  - a. Confess personal sins to God personally.
  - b. Confess private offenses to the offended party.
  - c. Confess public offenses publicly to the Church.

#### B. For the Accused – **The Law of Initiative**

1. Read Matthew 5:23-24 (from verse 22, Jesus speaking) <sup>22</sup> *But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca,*

[vain, empty, worthless, only found in Matthew 5:22 . The Jews used it as a word of contempt. It is derived from a root meaning "to spit."] *shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.* <sup>23</sup> *Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;* <sup>24</sup> *Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; **first be reconciled to thy brother,** and then come and offer thy gift.*

It is imperative we FIRST be RCONCILLED to our brother.

2. Our “horizontal” relationships affect our vertical relationship with God. Before we offer a reconciliation “gift” to God, we must be reconciled with our brother.
3. We should follow this command anytime we become aware that a brother has been offended by us. Failure to do so on the grounds that “I have not done anything wrong” usually exacerbates the problem(s). IT IS OUR DUTY TO GO, even if we doubt we are at fault!

#### C. For the Offended – **The Law of Forgiveness**

The word “forgive” comes from the Old English “forgiefan” – for, “away”, giefan, “give”. It literally means to “give away” or to “put away” an offense.

1. Read Matthew 18:21-22 <sup>21</sup>*Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?* <sup>22</sup>*Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until ***seventy times seven.****

According to this verse, we are to forgive an offending brother seventy times seven. Note: This does not mean 490 but this is an oriental idiom meaning “endlessly!” [idiom = a group of words established by usage as

having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words (e.g., rain cats and dogs, see the light).]

2. Read Matthew 18:23-25 <sup>23</sup> *Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. <sup>24</sup> And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. <sup>25</sup> But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.*

Jesus's parable (above) teaches us that the basis of our forgiving others is God's gracious forgiveness of OUR great debt.

3. An unforgiving spirit withholds our Father's forgiveness of our own trespasses. Read Mark 11:25-26 <sup>25</sup> *And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. <sup>26</sup> But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.*

Also, read Matthew 6:15 <sup>15</sup> *But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

4. We are commanded to forgive one another. Read Ephesians 4:32b <sup>32</sup> *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

**This UNCONDITIONAL, COMPLETE, and UNDESERVED forgiveness.**

Also read:

- Psalm 103:10-14 <sup>10</sup> *He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. <sup>11</sup> For as the heaven is high*

*above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.*

*<sup>12</sup>As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. <sup>13</sup>Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. <sup>14</sup>For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.*

- *Isaiah 38:17 <sup>17</sup>Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.*
- *Isaiah 44:22 <sup>22</sup> I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.*
- *Jeremiah 50:20 <sup>20</sup> In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.*
- *Micah 7:18-19 <sup>18</sup>Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. <sup>19</sup>He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.*
- *Colossians 1:14 <sup>14</sup>In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:*

Note: Often Christians will say “I can forgive but I cannot forget!” True, we do find it hard to forget. However, if we remember a past offense, we can also remember a past forgiveness. That’s the key.

**The forgiven life is the forgiving life!**

D. For every Church Member – **The Law of Love**

1. Read John 13:34-35 <sup>34</sup> *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* <sup>35</sup> *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* This is the “LOVE COMMANDMENT” that we love one another.
2. Read John 15:12 <sup>12</sup> ***This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.*** This defined by Christ “have loved you.”
3. Read I John 3:14 <sup>14</sup> *We know that we have passed from death unto life, **because we love the brethren.** He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.* We have the full capacity for demonstrating this kind of love because of our salvation.
4. Read I Peter 4:8a <sup>8</sup> *And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: **for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.*** [Charity: the act of giving money, food, or other kinds of help to people who are poor, sick, etc.] **Charity is this kind of love. It will cover a multiple of sins.**
5. Read I Corinthians 13:5b <sup>5</sup> *Doth not behave itself unseemly, **seeketh not her own,** is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;* Christ-like love always seeks the welfare of others.
6. Read Colossians 3:14 <sup>14</sup> *And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.* CHARITY is the bond [super-glue] of perfection.

## IV Resisting Offenses

People react to offenses differently. In any given group (large enough) there is bound to be someone who is “thin skinned,” who takes offense very easily – just as there will be someone else who never seems to get offended no matter what, who takes everything in stride. The majority of people fall somewhere in between.

The question is: “How can we offense-proof our life? Consider the fact that offenses will come, that these offenses have the potential of causing much harm, and should be scripturally dealt with when necessary. But, how can we minimize their impact? Here are some Biblical suggestions:

### A. Adjust your focus

We are more easily offended by others when our focus is SELF-centered.

#### 1. Develop a Biblical Prospective

Read Psalm 119:165 <sup>165</sup>*Great peace have they which love thy law: **and nothing shall offend them.***

#### 2. Develop a Ministry Prospective

a. Read Philippians 4:2a <sup>2</sup>*I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, **that they be of the same mind in the Lord.***

b. Read Philippians 1:27 <sup>27</sup>*Only let your conversation [life style] be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, **with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;***

3. Develop a Bond-Servant [ **a person bound in service without wages - a slave or serf** ] Perspective.

Read I Corinthians 6:19 – 20 <sup>19</sup>*What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, **and ye are not your own?*** <sup>20</sup>**For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.**

B. React in love.

1. Let Love Rule Your Life

- a. Read I Corinthians 13:5 (from verse 4) <sup>4</sup>**Charity** *suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,* <sup>5</sup> *Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;*
- b. Read I Peter 4:8 <sup>8</sup> **And above all things** *have fervent **charity** among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.*
- c. Proverbs 10:12 <sup>12</sup>*Hatred stirreth up strifes: **but love covereth all sins.***

2. Seek the Welfare of the Offender

- a. Read Matthew 5:44 and more. <sup>44</sup> *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;* <sup>45</sup> *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.* <sup>46</sup> *For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?* <sup>47</sup> *And if*

*ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? <sup>48</sup> Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

- b. Read Romans 12:20-21 <sup>20</sup>*Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. <sup>21</sup>Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

**Note:** It is well to “consider the source” when we are offended. It may be that the offender is a babe in Christ. It may be necessary to make allowances when the offenses come about as a result of physical, emotional, or spiritual distress.

**Note:** Confronting the offender in a scriptural manner is often most beneficial to him, inasmuch as God will use the incident to produce spiritual growth. (For this reason, overlooking a matter is not the right thing to do.)

C. Give it over to the Lord

Sometimes the best course of action is to “take it on the chin.” This is usually a measure of our maturity – the more Christ-like we become, the less we will allow offenses to affect us.

1. Make Every Attempt to Avoid Taking Offense

- a. Read Romans 12:17-18 <sup>17</sup>*Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. <sup>18</sup>If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*



- b. Read Proverbs 19:11 <sup>11</sup>*The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.*
  
  - c. Read Colossians 3:13 <sup>13</sup>*Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*
  
  - d. Read Matthew 5:38-44 <sup>38</sup> *Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: <sup>39</sup> But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. <sup>40</sup> And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. <sup>41</sup> And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. <sup>42</sup> Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. <sup>43</sup> Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. <sup>44</sup> 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;*
  
  - e. Read Hebrews 12:3 (accepted as being written by Paul) <sup>3</sup> *For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*
2. Let the Lord Settle Scores
- a. Read Romans 12:17-19 <sup>17</sup>*Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. <sup>18</sup>If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. <sup>19</sup>Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, **Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.***

- b. Read I Thessalonians 5:18 <sup>18</sup> *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*
- c. Read II Samuel 16:5-12 <sup>5</sup> *And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came. <sup>6</sup> And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. <sup>7</sup> And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial: <sup>8</sup> The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man. <sup>9</sup> Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head. <sup>10</sup> And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so? <sup>11</sup> And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him. <sup>12</sup> It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day.*

**Note: This was David's greatest victory! The Lord used this unsavory and offensive incident to work on David's character.**

**Commentary [[http://biblehub.com/commentaries/2\\_samuel/16-9.htm](http://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_samuel/16-9.htm)]: 16:5-14 David bore Shimei's curses much better than Ziba's**

flatteries; by these he was brought to pass a wrong judgment on another, by those to pass a right judgment on himself: the world's smiles are more dangerous than its frowns. Once and again David spared Saul's life, while Saul sought his. But innocence is no defence against malice and falsehood; nor are we to think it strange, if we are charged with that which we have been most careful to keep ourselves from. It is well for us, that men are not to be our judges, but He whose judgment is according to truth. See how patient David was under this abuse. Let this remind us of Christ, who prayed for those who reviled and crucified him. A humble spirit will turn reproaches into reproofs, and get good from them, instead of being provoked by them. David the hand of God in it, and comforts himself that God would bring good out of his affliction. We may depend upon God to repay, not only our services, but our sufferings.

## V Restoring the Offender

Scripture give clear guidance on how to deal with offenses which cannot be overlooked or forgiven without speaking to the offender.

**Read Matthew 18:15-17** <sup>15</sup> *Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.* <sup>16</sup> *But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.* <sup>17</sup> *And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*

- A. **When?** “... **if thy brother shall trespass against thee...**” We cannot set everyone straight on everything. We should only act when we personally are the one offended.
- B. **Who?** “... **thee and him alone.**” It is important that we examine our own life first:

1. Is the offense justified? Read Matthew 7:3 <sup>3</sup> *And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*
  
2. Am I right with God? Read Galatians 6:1 ( "Ye which are spiritual" ) <sup>1</sup> *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

C. **Why? "thou hast gained thy brother."**

Our goal should not be to win the battle, but to win our brother. Restoration is the reason for action.

D. **How?** Read Galatians 6:1 <sup>1</sup>*Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. We should go:*

1. In a spirit of meekness
2. Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Commentary from <http://www.bible.ca/ef/expository-galatians-6-1-10.htm>  
2/2016: Verse 1 - "Brethren, even if a man (this is the Christian man) is caught in any trespass (he is overtaken in a fault, he is walking after the flesh, he needs to be restored), you who are spiritual (the obligation is not placed on the church--the case is not assumed to have progressed that far--but it is to those walking after the Spirit), restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted (to turn aside after the flesh)."

The apostle sets the stage in this first verse for the subject of burden bearing. Someone is overtaken or overcome in a fault or sin. The subject is not

overcome with hunger or exposure to the weather, but rather to sin. This becomes even more obvious in the end of the verse when Paul warns the restorer to be careful for he might "also be tempted." The fault of the one needing restoration is the result of temptation, not physical needs.

E. What? We are to go:

1. Privately – Most offenses will be dealt with on this level. Read Matthew 18:15 *15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*
2. Plurally – This is limited escalation with “one or two more.” Those that are taken should not be sympathizers but spiritual (Galatians 6:1 “ye which are spiritual”). Normally, this will be a pastor. Read Matthew 18:16 *16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*
3. Publicly Matthew 18:17 *17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.* Only after all avenues have been exhausted should the matter become public. The church meets according to the manner of 1 Corinthians 5:4-5, 6:4-5, II Corinthians 3:6. CHURCH ACTION is the final arbitrator. Read Proverbs 18:17-18 *17 He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him. 18 The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty.*

## VI Contending, Contention, & Contentiousness

What happens when two brothers simple cannot agree?

### AN ACTUAL EXAMPLE FROM SCRIPTURE

In Acts 15:36-41, we read of a **SHARP CONTENTION** (verse 39) between Paul and Barnabas over the issue of John Mark.

From Acts 15 <sup>36</sup>And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. <sup>37</sup>And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. <sup>38</sup>But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. <sup>39</sup>**And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;** <sup>40</sup>And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. <sup>41</sup>And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

These men had been a great ministry team from the time of Acts 11:25.

Acts 11 <sup>25</sup>Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: <sup>26</sup>And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

Barnabas had been Paul's mentor in the ministry; they had traveled along many roads together; they had been effective in establishing many churches throughout Asia Minor. And now this conflict/dispute. (Obviously Satan hates evangelism, and would have gleefully used this incident to derail the proposed trip if he could.)

#### A. The Cause of this Contention

The issue was whether to take John Mark with them on their proposed journey.

1. This dispute differed from most conflict between believers.
  - a. Both men were actively serving the Lord – neither was half-hearted or cold-hearted (spiritual conditions which typically lead to conflict.)

- b. Both men shared an agreed upon common goal – verse 36 *<sup>36</sup>And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.*
  - c. Both men were “determined” – verse 37 *<sup>37</sup>And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. These men had “hazarded” their lives for the cause of Christ. They had counted the cost and knew what was in store for them if they went. Read Acts 15:25-26 <sup>25</sup> It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, <sup>26</sup> Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
2. We see two different “Temperaments” at work in this situation.
- a. Barnabas – the encourager (Acts 4:36 *<sup>36</sup>And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, the son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, <sup>37</sup>Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.*), who saw the POTENTIAL in others.

**Remember, Barnabas supported Saul (Paul) when no one wanted him.** Read Acts 9:26-27 *<sup>26</sup>And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. <sup>27</sup>But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.*

- b. Paul – the driven one (Acts 20:24 <sup>24</sup>*But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*).

Paul looked at an apostle's:

- (i) **performance** (Acts 15:38 <sup>38</sup>*But Paul thought not good to take him [John, whose surname was Mark] with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.*)

and

- (ii) **profitability** of others (II Timothy 4:11 <sup>11</sup>*Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.*).

3. It is interesting to observe what was missing in this contentious situation:
- a. There was NO doctrinal differences – they believed the same way.
  - b. There were NO clashes in purpose – they desired the same thing.
  - c. NO harsh or unkind words were exchanged.
  - d. There was no attempt by one to “dig up dirt” on another.
  - e. There was NO attempt to galvanize support from brethren to one side or the other.
  - f. In fact, NO offense ever actually occurred.



## B. The Cure for this Contention

1. The importance of a Christ-like attitude. This was the KEY in this particular incident.

What is a Christ-like attitude?

- Read Phillipians 2:5 <sup>5</sup> *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*
- I Peter 5:5 <sup>5</sup> *Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*
- I Corinthians 3:21a <sup>21</sup> *Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;*
- Romans 12:10 <sup>10</sup> *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; [Preferring one another – i.e. outdo one another in showing honor]*
- I Peter 2:17 <sup>17</sup> *Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.*
- James 4:6 <sup>6</sup> *But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*

2. Sometimes separation is inevitable.

Sometimes Christians just cannot work together – especially when both parties are God-called leaders.

However, note:

- a. The issue was kept between Paul and Barnabas – it obviously did not spill over (escalate) into a “church issue.” Read Proverbs 17:14 <sup>14</sup>*The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with.* [i.e. starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.]
- b. Neither man dropped out of the ministry. Both men continued to serve the Lord effectively.
- c. Gods work did not suffer... in fact it multiplied. Two evangelistic teams instead of one. Furthermore, the original goal was met. Read Acts 15 <sup>36</sup>*And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.*
- d. **God sometimes uses difficulties and problems to rearrange and realign.**

Read:

- (i) Acts 1:8 <sup>8</sup> *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*
- (ii) Acts 8:1 <sup>1</sup>*And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.* <sup>2</sup>*And devout*

*men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. <sup>3</sup>As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. <sup>4</sup>Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.*

(iii) Genesis 13:7-9 *<sup>7</sup>And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land. <sup>8</sup>And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. <sup>9</sup>Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. <sup>9</sup>Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.*

- e. Broken relationships do not have to mean broken friendships. Read I Corinthians 9:6 *<sup>6</sup>Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?* [Paul refers to his old friend Barnabas in a ministerial capacity.]
- f. It is possible to have contention without be contentious? Sometimes men must agree to disagree, and that's alright (unless the issues is over doctrine or morals, etc.).

### C. Who Was Right?

Answer: Both were “right.”

1. Barnabas has his confidence in John Mark proven – II Timothy 4:11  
*<sup>11</sup>Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. **The young man had become profitable for the ministry.***

Note: PAUL WAS HAPPY TO ACKNOWLEDGE THIS FACT. There is no hint of him harboring a grudge. Or, having any lingering doubts about John Mark.

2. Paul’s expectation of profit and performance was achieved. His second evangelistic journey was world-changing.

### D. Who Won?

1. The Lord won – His work not only continued on but it doubled.
2. John Mark won – he was given a second chance, and went on to become a great servant of the Lord. John Mark went on to write the **Book of Mark** (the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gospel).
3. The “Lost” won – this contention actually lead to **the furtherance of the Gospel.**

Read Philippians 1:12 *<sup>12</sup>But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;*

Read Philippians 1:15 – 18 <sup>15</sup>*Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: <sup>16</sup>The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: <sup>17</sup>But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. <sup>18</sup>What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.*

[From: <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/can-you-please-explain-philippians-115-18...>

The overarching point of this passage is that God, in his gracious sovereignty, turns even prison and bad motives into the advancement of the gospel. “I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel” ([Philippians 1:12](#)).

But the most surprising thing about this text is the way Paul’s celebration of gospel truth overrides his sorrow at defective motives.

He rejoices that Christ is proclaimed. But some of the proclaimers are sinning as they proclaim, trying to afflict Paul by making him feel jealous that they are free while he is in prison.

What is more astonishing is that this sinful behavior is just the opposite of the way the gospel itself would incline a person to act. So they are hypocrites. They preach the gospel and then contradict in their very motives the gospel they are preaching.]

**Memory verse: Matthew 5:23-24** <sup>23</sup> Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; <sup>24</sup> Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.