THE GATHERING: Pastor Dennis Sharp

SERIES: Overcoming Offense, Bitterness, and Unforgiveness:

PRIMARY TEXT: “The Bait of Satan:” by John Bevere

FOUNDATIONAL THEOLOGIES:

God is! The Bible never defends the existence of God; the Bible assumes the existence of God: “In the beginning God …”

“Without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him,* for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

“The fool has said in his heart, “*There is* no God” (Psalms 14:1).

God is good! (All the Time!) “And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone” (Mark 10:18. Cf. Matthew 19:17, Luke 18:19).

It has always been God’s purposive will that His name and His glory be proclaimed to all of created order. “Since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead” (Romans 1:20).

FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES:

Then He said to the disciples, “It is impossible that no **offenses** [*skandalon*] should come, but woe *to him* through whom they do come! 2It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. 3Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 4And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him.” 5And the apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith.” (Luke 17:1-5 NKJV).

“Strive for peace [*diokete* eager pursuit] with everyone, [Romans 12:18] and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it [*episkopeo* to exercise oversight] that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled” (Hebrews 12:14-15 ESV).

“For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:14-15).

“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31-32).

THESIS STATEMENT: It is the Father’s will that we should know the truth and that the truth should set us free; the trap of the enemy is to keep us bound and ineffective for the Kingdom. The bait for that trap is offense.

INTRODUCTION: Offense, bitterness, and unforgiveness, are three evil triplets that are guaranteed to put you in delay. This is a time of restoration. Our Father is going to restore everything the enemy has stolen. If you are walking in **offense**, bitterness, or unforgiveness, you need to renounce the lie that you came into agreement with and get yourself free! Only the truth will set you free and enable you to move into restoration and into your destiny.

RULES OF OFFENSE:

**“The first rule of offense: “If you can be offended, you will be offended!”**

**“The second rule of offense: "Don't ever intentionally be offensive!"**

1. Jesus said it is impossible for offenses not to come. Nearly every day we are mistreated by others—often by those closest to us. Left unaddressed, these wounds from past wrongs will wreak havoc in our lives, stealing our vitality and thwarting our purpose.

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1. Through this course, you will receive teachings and practical tools that will empower you to overcome offense, thrive in your relationships, and run toward your purpose.

“And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, 26and *that* they may come to their senses *and* *escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will” (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

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**Week 3 “How Do I Keep From Being Offended.”**

1. I will focus on the love of God for me.
“We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:9).
“Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:7-8).
2. I will maintain a deep relationship with the Father through Christ:
“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31-32).
3. I will focus on God’s purposive will above my own needs.
“It is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather *let yourselves* be cheated?” (1 Corinthians 6:7).
“You meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good” (Genesis 50:20).
4. I will pray for those who have harmed me. **Bevere Story**
“I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matt 5:45).
“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse” (Romans 12:14).
5. I will make a practice of praying, proclaiming, and practicing the truth.