

witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Romans 8:16). Peace is a great indicator that we are free, but if we are not free, then we can ask the Holy Spirit to show us what is connected and then deal with that issue.

10. If the wound has been cleansed, then we can call upon the Lord to fulfill his promise to us through Jesus to heal us of emotional wounds and emotional bruises. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18-19). We can do this based upon the fact that Jesus was our offense substitute. “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:4-5).

11. Ask God to take away any hardness that you have in your heart toward anyone including yourself and God and to give you and new tender heart. “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26). We need to be sensitive to the feelings of others.

12. Jesus also tells us to even bless the person who has offended us. “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” (Matthew 5:44).

Furthermore, when the disciples questioned Jesus about forgiveness, he said that an individual should forgive the offender 7 times in a day. The disciples responded with, “Lord, Increase our faith.” Jesus then expressed that faith is going beyond what is expected. “So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do” (Luke 17:10).

Don't Forget

1. God is for us and not against us. “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).

2. God gives us the GRACE (the will and power) to forgive and overcome the offenses. “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).

3. God is able to work all things together for our good and His glory. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

Whole Person Counseling

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Overcoming



Jesus: “Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!” (Luke 17:1).

The reality is that people will bring offenses to us. Our parents may offend us, our friends will offend us, strangers will offend us, the local church may offend us, and we may even feel that God, at times, may offend us. Of course, Jesus spoke of Peter, his close friend, “But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” (Matthew 16:23). Satan will use people to bring an “offense” against us. The “offense” is a trap or stumbling block to our Christian walk.

“A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle” (Proverbs 18:19).

Carrying an offense toward others, God, or self is like carrying a loaded weapon around in your car with the safety off. You hit a bump in the road and the weapon discharges and wounds or kills someone.

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 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" (Hebrews 12:14-15).

1. We need to recognize some symptoms of being offended. Here are a few symptoms: **anger**, a **critical spirit**, **depression**, **aggression** (lashing out at others), **emotional pain**, **sadness**, a **withdraw** from God or others, a **failure to make eye contact**, and **unforgiveness** are major symptoms. Even various **physical ailments** may be connected.

2. We should **PRAY** and ask God to show us where there are offenses in our lives. David declared, "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom" (Psalms 51:6). David prayed, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my disquieting thoughts: And see if there be any way of pain in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalms 139:23-24). (a literal translation).

3. To overcome offenses, we should understand that the root to the offense is holding on to what we consider to be our personal rights which we have not yielded to the Lord. "Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:7-8). In one sense the devil can not steal from us what we don't own. Therefore, we should transfer what we are hold on to back in to the hands of the Lord.

4. We should purpose by the grace of the Lord to forgive anyone who has transgressed what we consider to be our

personal "rights".

Unforgiveness gives the devil legal ground to attack us. "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:26-27). When we are angry past sun-down, we leave the door open to the devil to come into our soul (mind, will and emotions) and set up a stronghold of lies within which the enemy may reside. Jesus gives us a stern warning. "And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses" (Matthew 18:34-35). The tormentors are evil spirits.

Jesus said, "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15).

5. We should also put the judgment of any living offenders into God's hands as Jesus did when he was being crucified and as Stephen did when he was being stoned to death ask God to also to forgive the offenders. "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots" (Luke 23:34). "And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep" (Acts 7:60).

6. We should then ask God to forgive us for any wrong attitudes that we have held

toward the offender. These would be attitudes of unforgiveness, anger, bitterness, resentment, or revenge. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). This is part of getting a clear conscience before the Lord.

7. We may need to go to the person who has offended us and ask that person for forgiveness especially if we have openly expressed a wrong attitude or action toward that person. "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matthew 5:23-24).

8. Recognizing our own spiritual weakness, we should **ask** God to take back the personal ground that the enemy has taken in our lives and **then** we should take the authority that God has delegated to us and in the name of Jesus bind and kick out any evil spirits. "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 18:18). The word translated "bind" means to restrain and the word "loose" means to allow, release, or undo. When we give the enemy the eviction notice, God enforces that eviction notice.

9. It is wise to validate that the enemy has left and is not chained himself to another spirit or experience. We can ask the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Truth to validate that we are free. "The Spirit itself beareth