

Overcoming offense is a daily battle!



7 The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. 8Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. 1 Peter 4:7-8

Overcoming Offense

This week I was deeply impacted by a statement made by Stuart Greaves in a teaching he was giving on John 15. Here's the essence of his quote in its entirety:

Jesus says (in John 16:1) "I have told you these things so that you will not stumble" Engaging with these truths (in John 13-17) actually equips our heart to keep us from being stuck in offense. Notice that I said 'being stuck in offense.' Jesus prophesies in Luke 17 that offenses will come. So, I actually

expect every day to get offended in some way, shape, or form. Most Believers try to spend their lives to not get offended - just give up on that already! Just engage in the real assignment that is not to stay offended but to actually engage in the grace of being very quick to extend forgiveness. A lot of people don't talk about forgiveness until they're completely wrapped up in bitterness. There actually is a place in the grace of God where on a regular basis we exercise the grace of extending forgiveness towards one another. Jesus says, "I have told you these things that you wouldn't stumble."

The part that stuck out to me was that we should give up on the idea of not getting offended on a regular basis. We will regularly have things that offend us. The key for us is to work the muscle of consistently extending forgiveness towards others. Dear saints we can't do this continually from the heart if we don't have a regular life-giving relationship of staying connected with (abiding in) Yeshua. I can't work up great kindness and love and gentleness from my overflowing reservoir of internal goodness. I don't have it in me! But, He has it in Him because that's who He is...and He will give it to me (and you) to extend to others as I fellowship with Him in my brokenness and spiritual poverty.

Stuart's statement gave me great hope because otherwise I feel like such a colossal failure with my regular struggles with big and littler (though they all seem big to me) offenses. Part of the latter days struggle for Messiah's Bride (see Matthew 24:9-13) will be this challenge to overcome (very significant) offense. In those days we will not be able to keep an unoffended heart if we aren't presently fellowshipping with Yeshua over our regular, significantly smaller, current offenses. This teaching has given me fresh resolve to come to Him in my great need so that I can receive what I need from Him. Only then will I be able to extend this grace and forgiveness to undeserving others from a place of great supernatural peace and even joy.

In closing, the 1 Peter 4:8 Scripture above calls us to keep loving (a consistent action) one another earnestly because this love will cover a multitude of (other people's) sins. If we're regularly connected with Yeshua's love towards us, we won't care about the other little offenses around us. It's like the couple who is on their honeymoon--they're not worried about the things around them (or back

home) that are going wrong. They really don't care. I realize I'm far from where I want/need to be in my connection with the Lord related to this. The ease with which I get offended just shows me my lack and great need. But, if I regularly come to Him in my weakness, He will help me and continue the process of changing me from the inside. This is great news, and the key is that we must come to Him.

Please pray for me to grow in this, and I'll be praying for you too!