

## **OFFENDING OTHERS**

Proverbs 18:19 ... "A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city..."

It is nearly impossible for you to live your life day in and day out, without unintentionally offending someone. Please note the distinction "unintentionally," which means that you do not want to offend someone, but you may do so accidentally. My mother-in-law was one of the sweetest persons I've ever known. She did not have a mean bone or harsh word for anyone. Yet, some of her siblings believe she offended them in some manner. How is that possible?

Despite your good motives, a holy lifestyle, obedience to Christ, and consistent kindness, you might offend someone anyway. Not because of what you say or do, but because of the bitterness, resentment, or mean spirit of that other person. You may know someone who walks around with a chip on their shoulder and has little good to say about others. Perhaps you have an acquaintance or relative who is constantly angry or bitter about things...or life in general. No matter the good things you do or the kind words you say, there is a good chance that someone else will find offense in you, simply because they find offense in everyone. My mother-in-law's siblings engage in illegal and hostile behavior, but they still blame her for their misery. The difference between them is that she was a godly woman, but her siblings turned away from God many years ago.

I believe that in many instances, a person who feels offended is likely to be at fault, rather than the person he or she blames. As followers of Christ we have two responsibilities with regard to offense: 1) We must not intentionally offend others, and 2) we must not allow ourselves to become offended because of our own attitude. These are two responsibilities that you have full control of, but you can also ask the Holy Spirit to purify your heart and help you avoid offending others.

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