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DVD Session One

WHEN YOU RECEIVE AN OFFENSE

In preparation for these discussion questions
and the DVD lecture, **please read:**
Chapter 1, “Satan’s Mixed Bag of Offenses”
Chapter 2, “The Blinding Power of an Offense”

From the Author

WHEN AN OFFENSE festers in our hearts, we cannot confine it within our souls. Instead, it spills over in ways we don’t even realize. It’s like burning incense in a dormitory. The smell cannot be confined; rather it escapes the dorm room and wafts down the hallway, into the washrooms, and all the way to the front door.

Just so, our bitterness spills over into other relationships no matter how determined we are to keep it confined to a single room within our soul. Nursing an offense quite literally blinds us to our own faults, forces us to have skewed relationships, and warps our self-perceptions.

Ultimately, the path to healing is to follow Christ’s example.

WHEN YOU'VE BEEN WRONGED STUDY GUIDE

“When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly” (1 Peter 2:23). This may be a worn-out cliché but it’s true: you have to give it to God.

ENGAGING THE TOPIC

Answer these questions while watching the DVD and reading the book.

1. An _____ is a stumbling block, something that is thrown into your life and keeps you from following God.
2. _____, unless they are given up, never leave our souls.
3. A person who maintains an offense lives within a wall of _____.
4. Those who maintain bitterness become blind to their own _____.
5. Whatever you don’t _____ you pass on.
6. A person who maintains an offense frequently seeks _____.
7. A person who maintains an offense can become a _____.
8. A person who hangs on to an offense succumbs to _____.

OPENING ACTIVITY

Purpose: To help the group think about the pervasiveness of a festering offense.

Supplies: A bag of microwave popcorn; a microwave.

Activity: Tell the group you'll be cooking some popcorn, but they must keep themselves from smelling it. There are only two rules: no one may leave the room while the popcorn is popping, and no one may turn off the microwave. Otherwise, they can take any measure they can think of to keep from smelling the popcorn.

Alternate: Coffee, incense, or a strong scented candle can be used if popcorn is not available.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What moments of betrayal do you recall most vividly from books, movies, and television shows? Why did those scenes make an impact on you?
2. List the five types of offenses Satan uses to keep us bound.

WHEN YOU'VE BEEN WRONGED STUDY GUIDE

3. Read Proverbs 18:19. How have you seen this principle illustrated in your life and relationships?

4. Read 1 John 2:9–11. What are some ways this kind of hate manifests itself in our Western culture? What are some ways this kind of hate manifests itself in our church culture?

5. Discuss the idea of vengeance. Is it ever appropriate for followers of God to avenge themselves after an attack or an offense? Why or why not?

6. Read Ezekiel 14:1–5. How is refusing to let go of bitterness equivalent to idolatry?

7. What benefits do we receive by holding on to offenses and bitterness? Why do we do it?

8. If you are willing to discuss them, what moments of betrayal do you recall most vividly from your past? Have you let go of those offenses, or are you still holding on to the bitterness they caused?

GOING DEEPER

Read Psalm 55 out loud.

1. Discuss the emotions specifically mentioned by the author, as well as the imagery he uses. How do you react to them?
2. Notice the requests the author gives to God (verses 1–2, 9). Are these appropriate for a follower of God?
3. What event caused David to write this psalm? (See verses 12–15.) How does this foreshadow the experiences of Jesus (a descendant of David)?
4. What is the turning point of this psalm—what verse shows David’s posture and emotions moving in a different direction? What direction is he moving to?
5. How would you summarize David’s conclusions at the end of this psalm? (See verses 22–23.) What would it take for you to say and feel something similar?

WHEN YOU'VE BEEN WRONGED STUDY GUIDE

PERSONAL REFLECTION

It's one of Jesus' most frightening proclamations: "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire" (Matthew 5:21–22).

On one hand, we know that Jesus' words are true because we have been wounded by the words and actions of others. We have felt the brunt of our brother's anger and the sting of our brother's insults. We have been betrayed. We bear the scars of broken promises, broken confidences, rejection, false accusations, and abuse.

On the other hand, we know that Jesus' words are true because we have taken aim with words and actions of our own. We have unleashed our anger on our brother; we have cried "You fool!" We have betrayed. We have delivered broken promises, broken confidences, rejection, false accusations, and abuse.

The result is an ever-increasing cycle of offenses given and offenses received, with no end in sight to be achieved through our own resources.

Do you have the courage to turn to Jesus and break free?

Engaging the Topic answers:

1. offense
2. Offenses
3. bitterness
4. faults
5. forgive
6. vengeance
7. destroyer
8. idolatry