
bible study devotional
overcoming offense
garden assembly
CHURCH

1 Samuel 25

Abigail, David, and Nabal

Start by reading 1 Samuel 25. Take your time, and read it a few times if you need to. As you read, ask the Lord to reveal areas where you might relate to this story.

In 1 Samuel 25, David is wronged by Nabal, and his hurt quickly turns into anger and a desire for revenge. Abigail reminds David that he doesn't have to let someone else's foolishness determine his response. Instead of taking matters into his own hands, David chooses to trust God with justice. The story challenges us to recognize that being hurt is not the same as having permission to retaliate, and someone else's sin doesn't have to become ours.

Reflection

1. What did Nabal do that offended David, and why do you think David's reaction escalated so quickly?

2. Have you ever had a situation where someone else's actions were wrong, but your response was beginning to become wrong too? What happened?

3. What do you think Abigail meant when she reminded David that he was "fighting the LORD's battles"? How can offense distract us from what God has actually called us to do?

4. What does it look like practically to trust God with an offense instead of seeking revenge or trying to make the other person "pay"?

Genesis 37-50
Joseph

Start by reading Genesis 37-50. Take your time, and read it a few times if you need to. As you read, ask the Lord to reveal areas where you might relate to this story.

Joseph was deeply wronged by the people closest to him. His own brothers betrayed him, sold him into slavery, and essentially erased him from their lives. Yet years later, when Joseph had the power to retaliate, he chose a different response. He acknowledged the reality of what they had done while recognizing that God had been working even through their evil. Joseph's story reminds us that forgiveness doesn't deny the hurt; it releases our need to make someone pay and trusts God with what was done to us.

Reflection

1. Joseph had plenty of reasons to hold onto bitterness. What do you think could have happened to Joseph if he had allowed his brothers' actions to define his life?

2. When Joseph finally had power over his brothers, what does his response reveal about the difference between forgiveness and revenge?

3. Joseph says, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good" (Genesis 50:20). How can we acknowledge that something was genuinely wrong while still trusting that God can redeem it?

4. Is there an offense in your life that you are still waiting for someone else to make right before you can let it go? What would it look like to give that situation to God instead?

The Book of Jonah

Read the book of Jonah. We are asking you to read the whole book but it is relatively short! As you read, ask the Lord to reveal areas where you might relate to this story.

In Jonah, the Lord commands the prophet Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh to call its people to repentance, for their evil was great. Instead of obeying, Jonah flees from his task and goes the opposite direction, away from Nineveh and across the sea, eventually ending up in the stomach of a great fish. He does finally make his way to Nineveh and the people of the city do turn from their evil and cry out to the Lord, and the Lord relents of his anger towards them. The final scene of the book offers a scathing evaluation of Jonah's heart and the rightfulness of his anger.

Reflection

1. What causes Jonah to take offense with the Lord?

2. For this series, we are defining offense as the entitlement attached to being hurt. What entitlement was Jonah holding on to in this story?

3. What do you think a healthy response looks like when the Lord is the one who offends us?

4. Ask the Lord to reveal if his character has created any hardness or offense in you.

1 Samuel 18:6-16 and 1 Samuel 24

David and Saul

Read 1 Samuel 18:6-16 and then 1 Samuel 24. These passages offer two opposing responses to offense. As you read, ask the Lord to reveal areas where you might relate to this story.

The first passage shows the beginning of Saul's jealousy at David's success in battle and praise from the people. His jealousy grows and Saul seeks to kill David. As he evades Saul though, David has multiple opportunities to kill Saul - one opportunity of which we see in 1 Samuel 24. Despite this, David never does, as he still acknowledges Saul as the Lord's anointed and allows the Lord to be judge over their dispute.

Reflection

1. Part of the reason Saul is afraid of David is that the Lord was with David but had departed from Saul (v. 18:12). Saul fails to acknowledge this is due to his own disobedience (1 Samuel 15). What might a right response to Saul's offense look like?

2. In 1 Samuel 24, the reader could argue that some retaliation against Saul would be justified, yet David "overcomes his offense" and lets Saul go. How is he able to do this?

3. Ask the Lord if there are areas in your life that you need to hear his voice in order to lay down your own offense.

Luke 17:3-4 and Matthew 5: 21-26

Jesus Teaching

Read Luke 17:3-4, and Matthew 5: 21-26. These passages depict some of Jesus teaching on offense. As you read, ask the Lord to reveal areas in your life where you might relate to this story.

Jesus teaches that when someone offends us, we should address the wrong honestly, willingly extend forgiveness towards them when they repent, and be willing to forgive repeatedly. He warns against allowing anger to grow into hatred, encouraging us to seek reconciliation and make peace with others rather than holding grudges. Jesus also calls us to love our enemies and pray for those who mistreat us. Ultimately, His teaching shows that we should handle offense with humility, forgiveness, love, and a desire for restored relationships rather than revenge.

Reflection

1. What ways do these teachings from Jesus differ from how the world teaches us to react to others when they offend us? How do they differ from how you typically respond?

2. What do you think a healthy response looks like when someone offends you?

3. Is there someone you need to forgive and bless?

Matthew 27:32-44 and Luke 23:34

Jesus on the Cross

Read Matthew 27:32-44 and then Luke 23:34. These passages display Jesus' reaction to being offended in real time. As you read, ask the Lord to reveal areas in your life you may relate to this story.

In Matthew 27:32–44, Jesus was mocked, insulted, and ridiculed while suffering on the cross, yet he did not respond with anger or retaliation. Instead of defending himself or seeking revenge against those who offended him, Jesus endured their cruelty with humility and patience. In Luke 23:34, Jesus demonstrated the ultimate response to offense by praying, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Jesus responded to offense with forgiveness, love, and mercy rather than bitterness, showing us that even in our deepest pain, we can choose to forgive those who hurt us. Jesus, in real time, lived out his teaching on anger, retaliation, and loving your enemies from the sermon on the mount.

Reflection

1. Looking at Jesus' example on the cross, what might it look like to respond differently the next time you experience offense?

2. What would it look like to bring that hurt to the Lord and choose forgiveness, even if the other person has not apologized or changed?

3. What is one practical step you can take this week to honor God in the way you respond to those who hurt you?