

## Your Family Needs to Stop Being Offended

### I. A Definition

- Merriam-Webster says that “offend” can mean
  - to transgress the moral or divine law
  - to violate a law or rule: do wrong
  - to cause difficulty, discomfort, or injury
  - to cause dislike, anger, or vexation
  - violate, transgress
  - to cause pain
  - to cause to sin or fall — which Merriam-Webster notes is an obsolete usage of the word.
  - to cause a person or group to feel hurt, angry, or upset by something said or done
- And it’s those definitions and the accompanying ideologies that have caused so much misinformation and catastrophe in our nation, our churches, and our homes.

### II. An Opinion

- For this we’re going to quote an article entitled “Why People Take Offense” from a website called The Conversation. “
  - Most of us have felt offended at a remark made by a close friend or a random comment on our social media. Even worse, the chances are that we have experienced the shock of hearing that others were offended by our comments – despite the fact that we had no intention of hurting them. While no one can deny that certain words and actions can be offensive, the taking of offence is more complicated than that. As research findings in linguistics demonstrate, people are not necessarily offended when confronted with rude language, and they get offended for a range of different reasons. The words we use are not polite or impolite in and by themselves. Even the most offensive words . . . can be generously used among close friends, as in-group solidarity markers, without anyone ever taking it to heart. It is therefore the **context** that determines the offensiveness of our words. In the right context, we do of course take offence at explicitly rude language directed at us. But regardless of the words used, we also take offence at what was meant or implied rather than what was actually said.”
  - And then they include the ridiculous, yet completely believable example: (“Were you implying that I am not a good cook when you said pass me the salt?”)
- According to the World, I’m allowed to get offended when I determine that your action or word is in conflict with what I *expect* or what I believe to be right. In those moments you’ve offended me.
  - According to Merri-Web it’s possible for me to say or do something that would “cause a person or group to feel hurt, angry, or upset.”
  - According to this dictionary, the offended feeling arises *from* the word or action. What I said or did *caused* you to feel offended.
  - According to Merriam-Webster, you’re the victim. I used hurtful words that hurt you. You couldn’t help but be hurt because I used offensive language.
  - But remember what The Conversation said? “As research findings in linguistics demonstrate, people are not necessarily offended when confronted with rude language” — or we could even say “offensive language” — and they get offended for a range of different reasons. The words we use are not polite or impolite in and by themselves. Even the most offensive words can be generously used among close friends, as in-group solidarity markers, without anyone ever taking it to heart. It is therefore the context that determines the offensiveness of our words.”

### III. The Truth

- Proverbs 19:11
  - If we understood the word “offense” from a modern perspective, this would be all we need to close the book on this discussion. This passage supports two realities: 1. An offense does not need to result in feeling offended, and — in fact — 2. The better choice is to overlook the offense (aka: not feel offended). But there’s more going on here that we need to understand.
  - First, the Hebrews word translated “offense” in the ESV is translated “transgression” in the NASB. Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary says of this word that, “Basically, this noun signifies willful deviation from, and therefore rebellion against, the path of godly living.”
  - We get into trouble when we take our modern conceptions and force them into the text. This verse is not talking about a subjective feeling of offense.
- Matthew 17:26; Mark 9:42; I Corinthians 8:7-13; Romans 14:23
  - The Greek word translated offend is the same word from which we get our English word “scandalize” which Merriam-Webster defines as “to offend the moral sense.”
  - However, *skandalizō* actually refers to metaphorically putting a snare or stumblingblock in someone’s way. In fact, instead of “offend,” the word is frequently translated “stumble.”
  - These passages have absolutely nothing to do with my brother or sister in Christ *feeling* offended. It has to do with me actually sinning against them by causing them to stumble into sin.
  - Here’s an absolutely vital takeaway. Assuming that you’re using a quality translation or version of the English Bible, the *vast* majority of times you see the word “offend” or one of its conjugations, you *absolutely* must not read it to mean a feeling of offense.
  - The biblical words translated offense — and even the English word itself — did not originally refer to a feeling. It had everything to do with an objective trespass or transgression.
- Now the question is whether or not the Bible informs us about how we should feel when someone sins against us.
  - The Bible has so much to say about how we respond to emotions. Are you being tempted to fear because of what someone said? God talks about how we should respond to fear, and it doesn’t include wallowing in it.
  - Sadness? Anger? Yup, the Bible is very clear how we’re to respond in sadness and anger. We’re to glorify God. Sinful anger and sadness isn’t allowed.
  - Does the Bible have anything to say about how we should respond when people treat us poorly? Romans 12:17-20

### IV. Some Applications

- We can almost guarantee that your family has an unbiblical understanding of what it is to be offended.
- Satan and the World are desperately trying to either convince you and your family that it’s not only okay to be offended, but that you can’t help it.
- You and your family absolutely must submit to God. That includes how we are to feel and act when someone sins against us.
- We must reject this unbiblical view of offense.
- We must know God and strive to respond to life’s difficulties (and the people causing them) in Christ-conforming ways.
- We must teach our children to do the same.