

No Offense

Why Does God Allow Offense?

September 27, 2026

Introduction

Aloha everyone! I'm Mark and I want to welcome you to our service. Today we are continuing our series, *No Offense* based on John Bevere's, *The Bait of Satan*. Jesus said that it would be impossible for no offenses to come. Meaning every single one of us will face opportunities to be offended. But we also discovered that what starts as a seed of offense eventually produces the fruit of bitterness, resentment, betrayal and even hatred. And then our love, and our joy, and our passion grows cold. We can't carry love and offense at the same time. "But Pastor Mark," you say, "What if I have a legitimate reason to be offended?"

Last week we looked at the story of Joseph, whom many of us would agree had every right to be offended. He was betrayed by his brothers and sold into slavery at a young age, he was framed for a crime he didn't commit, and he was wrongly imprisoned for years of his life. But Joseph didn't take the bait of offense. He didn't allow offense to cause him to grow bitter but trusted in God to make him better.

All of us will have opportunities to become offended. And those opportunities will always cause us to grow in one of two ways. We will either grow bitter or we will grow better. Offenses never leave us the same, they will always transform us. We will either become resentful, isolated, and cold or we will become stronger, more humble, and faith-filled. How many of us want to grow better not bitter? So how do we do that?

Well in Week 1 we talked about how Satan uses offense. Satan knows he cannot overpower us so instead he baits us into doing his will using the trap of offense. Once we take the bait we then react in a way that feeds the darkness rather than the light. So Satan uses offense. But did you know that God also uses offense? I don't mean He authors offense. But He uses those things that might offend us to accomplish His work in us. So the key to growing better is to partner with what God is doing in the midst of offense rather than fall into Satan's trap.

In the book of James, James writes to the Church during a very dark period in their story. He writes,

¹ *"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings," (James 1:1 NIV).*

You see the persecution of Christians and the Church had gotten so bad that believers were having to run for their lives. They were having to scatter. This was during a very dark chapter of their story so they were no doubt wondering what God was doing in the midst of their trials. How many of you have ever been in a dark period of your life where you cried out and asked, "God, what are you doing?"

James is writing to the Church in order to show them what God is doing in the midst of their trials. He's pulling back the curtain as if to say, "You see what's happening in the natural, but here's what God is doing in the spirit." This is one of my life verses,

² *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,"*
(James 1:2 NIV).

1. JOY IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF PAIN, BUT THE PRESENCE OF HOPE.

This verse gives me so much hope and has gotten me through so many dark seasons. But let me first begin by stating what James is not saying. When James says, “Consider it pure joy” he is not saying, “Feel only happiness.” This can be confusing because when we use the phrase “Pure Joy” in modern terms we typically mean “Nothing but Happiness”. Like “How was your wedding day?” “Oh, it was pure joy!” We mean nothing but happiness. “Hey, how did the kids like Disney Land?” “Oh, it was pure joy!” In other words, we loved it, nobody was sad, everybody was happy all the time, it’s the happiest place on earth, (Unless you were the one paying for it). But that’s typically what we mean when we say “Pure Joy”.

So you can see how unnatural that sounds when projected onto this verse. Like when we face trials. “Hey, I heard you lost your job. How are you holding up?” “Oh, pure joy! Yea no, I love that for me. It’s great. I only wish they would’ve fired me sooner.” So when James says, “Consider it pure joy,” he isn’t saying that when you go through trials you should feel nothing but happiness about them. He’s not telling us to put on a smile, suppress our emotions, or try to convince ourselves that it isn’t painful.

Notice the word, “Consider.” James isn’t telling us to feel it, he’s telling us to consider it. He’s talking about how we regard what we’re going through, the lens through which we choose to see it. This is different than how we feel about it. We are not dismissing our emotions. Having faith doesn’t mean that you suddenly stop experiencing difficult emotions. The Bible gives us permission to grieve, to lament, to be angry, and disappointed. Scripture tells us that Jesus wept? Why? Didn’t He know God was good? Didn’t He have faith to believe it would work out in the end? So often, as Christians, we convince ourselves that if we experience grief, or sadness, or anger, or frustration, it must mean that our faith is in trouble or that God is not good. So we mask our true emotions when we come into Church. But Jesus welcomes people just as they are. He receives us in our brokenness, our desperation, our frustration, and even our doubt. If Church isn’t the place where we can remove the masks and become authentic with how we’re feeling, then we’re not accurately reflecting the love of Christ.

So if “Consider it pure joy” doesn’t mean “Feel only happiness”, what is James saying? To consider it pure joy means, that despite how difficult the situation, or how painful your feelings, you still have hope that God is at work. It is not denying the severity of your circumstances or the depth of your emotions but it is the assurance that God will produce something good through this. It’s saying, “This is hard, but God is hard at work.” “I am grieving, but God will turn my mourning into dancing.” “This hurts, but God is producing purpose through my pain.” “They intended to harm me, but God intended it for good.” It’s Jesus weeping because His close friend has died knowing full well that God is going to raise Him back from the dead! Do you see how both those things can be true? I was talking to a man who recently lost his mother. We’ll call him Tommy for the sake of the story. And Tommy was finding it difficult to cling to hope in the midst of his grief. So I told him, “Two things can be true at the same time. Tommy the Christian can be hopeful knowing his Mom is in heaven. But Tommy the son can be heartbroken knowing his Mom is no longer here.” God invites us to bring our pain to Him so that He can create something from it.

2. OUR JOY COMES FROM KNOWING THAT GOD IS PRODUCING PERSEVERANCE FROM OUR PAIN.

² *“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,*

³ *because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.” (James 1:2-3 NIV).*

God is always at work in our pain. That word for “testing” refers to the process of refining precious metals. Like when a silver worker places the silver in intense heat and all of the impurities rise to the surface so he can remove them. And he repeats this process over and over again until the silver is so pure he can see His reflection in it. In the same way there are impurities in us, there corrupt value systems in us, there is idolatry, and when we go through intense situations all of these things that usually stay buried under the surface rise to the top. And if we’ll let Him, God will remove these things from our heart until He’s able to see Himself in our reflection. Peter uses this same terminology in his epistle.

⁶ “In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed,” (1 Peter 1:6-7 NIV).

Like James, Peter says that our trials serve to refine our faith. When gold is pure it is soft and pliable. But when you have a lot of other elements in there it becomes an alloy — a mixture of metals. If you were just looking at it from the outside you may not be able to tell the genuineness of the gold. It’s only when you place it in the fire that the intense heat reveals the impurities. All of us have things buried inside of us that get revealed when we’re in the fire. And many of these things are revealed when we go through difficult trials and suffer offense. But if we let God remove those impurities our faith will be proven genuine and God will replace our hardened heart with one that is soft and pliable.

Group Discussion Questions:

1. Do you believe God is always at work in the midst of our trials? How can we find hope in knowing God never wastes a hurt?
2. Have you ever found it difficult to express your true feelings or emotions in Church circles? Why do you think it is difficult at times?
3. How can we partner with God in the midst of our trials so that He can refine our faith? Is there a way to circumvent the refining process?