

### I. INTRO/REVIEW

- A. If you learn it wrong, you'll live it wrong
- B. This is a challenging message
  - Offenses are the seeds that lead to separation

**Luke 17:1 (NKJV) Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to *him* through whom they do come!**

The Greek word offend: Skandalon. This word originally referred to the part of the trap to which the bait was attached. The word signifies laying a trap in someone's way.

The idea: Someone is trying to trap you, and the bait is offense

- An offense is an event. Offended is a decision.
- An offense is an event, but offended is a path—don't take the bait

- C. Don't take the bait

**Matthew 24:10-12 (NKJV) <sup>10</sup> And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. <sup>11</sup> Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. <sup>12</sup> And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.**

- The enemy's plan is for you to have a cold, hard heart that's unresponsive to love

### II. YOU'RE DIFFERENT

- A. A healthy checklist

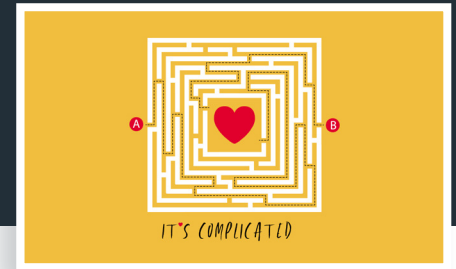
**Ephesians 4:31-32 (TLB) <sup>31</sup> Stop being mean, bad-tempered, and angry. Quarreling, harsh words, and dislike of others should have no place in your lives. <sup>32</sup> Instead...**

**John 18:36-38 (NLT) <sup>36</sup> Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world."**

**Ephesians 4:31-32 (TLB) <sup>31</sup> Stop being mean, bad-tempered, and angry. Quarreling, harsh words, and dislike of others should have no place in your lives. <sup>32</sup> Instead ... be kind to each other ... tenderhearted ... forgiving one another...**

### III. FORGIVENESS

- A. You have to be intentional about forgiveness



### B. Christianity is often difficult because we don't appreciate the fundamentals

- Fundamentals are the core/primary principles that everything else is based on
- Fundamentals are rarely natural
- Fundamentals need to be practiced, corrected and perfected
- Forgiveness is a fundamental principle of the Kingdom of God

### C. When it's personal

**Matthew 18:21-22 (NLT)** <sup>21</sup> Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" <sup>22</sup> "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!"

- How often? How many times?
  - We have a limit, a level, that depends on how bad or how much pain we feel

### D. Jesus gives us a glimpse of how His kingdom works

**Matthew 18:23-25 (NLT)** <sup>23</sup> "Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. <sup>24</sup> In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. <sup>25</sup> He couldn't pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt.

- You owe me, and I'm going to make you pay
  - When expectations are unmet, you owe me

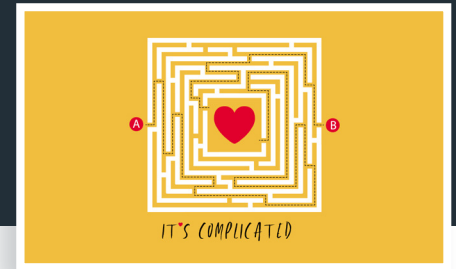
**Matthew 18:26-27 (NLT)** <sup>26</sup> "But the man fell down before his master and begged him, 'Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.' <sup>27</sup> Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.

- Forgiveness instantly changed the man's future
- Forgiveness isn't about what they deserve, it's about what the King desires

**Matthew 18:28-29 (NLT)** <sup>28</sup> "But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment. <sup>29</sup> "His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it,' he pleaded.

## IV. RELEASING THE DEBT RELEASES YOUR FUTURE

### A. Unforgiveness will affect you and your future



**Matthew 18:30-35 (NLT)** <sup>30</sup> But his creditor wouldn't wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full. <sup>31</sup> "When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. <sup>32</sup> Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup> Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?' <sup>34</sup> Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt. <sup>35</sup> "That's what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart."

- B. It's not worth it to hold it
- It may not be your fault, but it is now your responsibility.

**Ephesians 4:31-32 (TLB)** <sup>31</sup> Stop being mean, bad-tempered, and angry. Quarreling, harsh words, and dislike of others should have no place in your lives. <sup>32</sup> Instead be kind to each other tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God has forgiven you because you belong to Christ.

- C. Our debt had been canceled
- Be kind to one another
  - Be tenderhearted
  - Forgive one another
  - Just as God forgave you
  - Because many of us are "working" for God's forgiveness we try to make others work for our forgiveness
- D. Turn it upside down
- God forgave you
  - Forgive one another
  - Tenderhearted
  - Be kind to one another