

Marriage on the Rock 04

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] Welcome to Marriage on the Rock. Here's Pastor Marv Wiseman. Revisiting Vital Recommitments Early on in the first CD of Marriage on the Rock, the critical importance of husband and wife making a recommitment to each other and to God and His Word was not only explained but required in order to achieve the status of a Marriage on the Rock.

The only exception is if you and your maid have not lapsed into a negative relationship where a recommitment is needed. This would mean you have maintained your original commitment and you presently are enjoying and reveling in a Marriage on the Rock.

Well, good for you. We applaud you and we want you to spread your enthusiasm for marriage all around. For you, these sessions will be more of a mere review that can even deepen and strengthen yet more the great relationship you already have.

However, as mere mortals, we all understand how easy it is to let those honest, well-intended commitments that we made at the wedding altar slip away and slowly erode.

Very often without our even realizing they have until, until one day we wake up and ask, What happened? How did we get here?

[1 : 22] This relationship isn't working like it once did. It isn't fun like it used to be. Where did we go wrong? Well, if you find yourself here, you are certainly not alone.

But don't despair. Try to get together and have an honest discussion about it. Does your maid feel the same way? If so, would you too make sure the two commitments we often talk about are in place?

Because nothing good is going to happen in a marriage where you cannot or will not recommit to each other and to God and His Word. We are aware that the very idea may be a sore spot with either or both marriage partners.

You may be thinking, recommit to him? To her? You've got to be kidding. I am so hurt, angry, disappointed.

The last thing I even want to consider is a recommitment to them. Well, if either or both of you feel this way, there is only one reason for it. And that's the very reason this CD series originated.

[2 : 23] It's because of things said and done to each other called offenses that were never resolved and still hurt. A lot.

And as time goes on, unresolved offenses grow into resentment and bitterness. These negatives simply make it easier for new offenses to be committed both ways.

And the gap between husband and wife widens more and more. Emotional separation morphs into physical separation, which can escalate into, I don't like being married to this person, and I don't know why I ever married them in the first place.

But you certainly didn't feel like that when you did marry them, did you? Why not? Why so opposite now as compared to then? What happened? Offenses.

That's what happened. Painful, hurtful, unresolved offenses have built up over time and produced resentment and bitterness toward one another. And we are going to show you how to attack those negatives and resolve the unresolved.

[3 : 25] And this is why these recommitments are essential. You cannot do this without them. Have you both made them? And if not, are you willing to do so right now?

Recommitting when you don't want to. Let's try and get something straight right away about the nature of these twin recommitments we have been talking about, as to how and why both believing partners in a marriage should make them.

You may be asking, How can you make such a commitment when your heart isn't in it? By your heart not being in it, it is assumed you mean you just don't feel like doing that. You're too hurt, too

angry.

Is that it? Well, if it is, there's good news for you. Because you're not supposed to make that commitment with your heart or your feelings anyway. You make it with your will, your volition, not your emotions.

A commitment requires an act of your will. Others can make us feel a certain way by how they treat us. Others are involved in how we feel because they mightily contribute to our feeling the way we do.

[4 : 34] But you and you alone are in charge of your will. And when we engage our will to make a commitment, as is done at the wedding altar, we use words like, I will and I do.

When uttering those two words, we are putting our personal moral integrity on the line, and we do it voluntarily as an act of our will with those promises that we are making.

Of course, the feeling is there and involved. But volition is a huge level above feelings. This is why we never ask a couple at the altar, Do you feel like you want to marry this person?

Well, today, amid such incredible shallowness, many think that the words of commitment, I will and I do, are just a ritual or tradition, that nobody really takes that seriously anymore.

Well, that goes a long way in explaining why so many marriages are in such deep trouble today, even among Christians. The commitment is to be made pledging our moral integrity. The recommitments are to be made pledging our personal moral integrity.

[5 : 41] Do we have any? Now is the time to find out. And as for not feeling like making the commitment, those feelings can be and will be reversed, provided both partners make the two recommitments spoken of, and they do so with their wills, coupling them with their moral integrity.

And, oh, by the way, it's the right thing to do. How do we know that? How can we say that? Because you already said that to each other when you were married.

Did you mean that? That was a moral promise and commitment made before witnesses. You publicly put your moral integrity on the line. You pledged, promised fidelity to one another as long as you both shall live.

Are you both still here? If so, you are locked in. You locked yourself in. Isn't that what you intended when you made those promises?

These were vows made to be kept, commitments made to be honored. And as is sometimes the case, things change, people change, poor treatment of one another causes one another not to honor that commitment, but to dread even the thought of it.

[6 : 52] And the thrill is gone. We are talking about getting that thrill back, that loving feeling. But how? Where does it begin? With the recommitment of the will.

And if you've already done that, let's move along. But if not, you're stuck where you are. Regaining that loving feeling.

When a boy meets girl and things start getting serious, so serious they begin to talk about spending the rest of their lives together because they want to get married.

Largely because they just can't stand being apart any longer. Remember that loving feeling? Why did they feel that way? Well, we say they were in love.

Feelings of euphoria. Ecstasy. Just because you were in the presence of this marvelous person. Both of these highly desirable emotions help to make life all the more worth living.

[7 : 57] What is it that produces those feelings? Well, granted, it is that mysterious magic that both sense while you are in each other's presence. All is well with the world.

You both think nothing could be better than marital bliss with this incredible person you love and for the rest of your lives. Question. Has anything happened so you no longer have those feelings?

If you do still feel that way, then you must have a marriage on the rock already and are enjoying it to the max. That is so unspeakably wonderful and more and more rare in today's world.

And yes, even among Christians, it is far more rare now than a generation or two ago. But if that loving feeling is no longer there for you, it probably isn't there for your mate either.

You may be just simply tolerating each other. But the loving feeling? Ha! You can forget that. That went south long ago.

[9 : 02] Why? What happened? I'll tell you what happened. If you've lost that loving feeling, it's always because of the same thing.

It's the way you have come to treat each other over the years. It's the offenses. Hurtful things done to you by them and done by you to them.

Things that were never resolved. Things that you left for time alone to resolve them. But time doesn't do that. It's not supposed to do that.

Oh, time does lessen the pain of the offense. And as more time goes by, it does get less. But the hurt remains. And every time you mentally replay it, that old familiar pain returns.

And it's supposed to. Because offenses not properly resolved go underground. They linger and fester and they definitely work on reducing that loving feeling until the feeling is gone and all that's left is what you've got now.

[10:10] And it's not a marriage on the rock, is it? We're going to explore these vital dynamics and see how offenses are resolved biblically.

Because we want that loving feeling recaptured and thriving. It can be, you know. Yes, even amid those unresolved offenses. Because unresolved offenses can be resolved.

Yes, after all this time. And we propose to show you God's provision for doing that. Provided those commitments are in place, of course. Because that loving feeling is well worth recapturing.

Here comes the offense. Put very simply, and what we will be thinking every time we use the word offense, is just this.

An offense is the hurtful things we say and do that wound the spirit of the offended one. Most married couples have committed a passel of offenses, especially if married for several years.

[11:13] Husbands and wives cycle back and forth. Sometimes he is the offender and she the offended. Then the roles are reversed. The net effect is a decrease in their emotional togetherness.

In addition, neither party tends to realize what is happening until all at once it becomes obvious. What has happened to us? How did we get here?

We didn't used to be like this. Well, what happened was caused not merely by the offense or offenses, but that those offenses went unresolved.

And by that we mean no process was ever employed to make things right again. Each underwent a cooling-off process after offending each other verbally or through disrespectful treatment.

And they then barely acknowledged each other, perhaps for days. Because neither enjoyed the stress of continued silence and avoiding each other that much, one of the two usually began to thaw and the ice was broken.

[12:20] They may have even enjoyed a laugh about it and think that they are resuming their normal relationship. But they aren't. Offenses that are not resolved by way of a biblical resolution don't just go away.

Oh, they may be off the front burner, but they are not gone. Multiple offenses committed by each other, if not properly dealt with, produce a collective residual effect in one's spirit or psyche.

They are stored, warehoused, if you will. We can even mentally catalog them and bring them up again if needed in the heat of a new verbal conflict.

This may be true even after a lengthy time has passed since the offense was committed against us. What was said or done created a real hurt, an emotional wound, if you will, in our spirit.

Repeated offenses of a sufficient magnitude may leave the offended one with a seriously crushed spirit. They are emotionally overwhelmed by ongoing negative offenses and are simply beaten down and depressed.

[13:34] This greatly contributes to the emotional distance that may already be present and was begun by, guess what? Earlier offenses that were never addressed.

The couple may still be together in physical proximity, but can be miles apart in emotional togetherness. The kind that really counts and makes marriage so enjoyable.

This depression can be the case with the husband, the wife, or both. But life is too short and marriage too valuable to spend it this way, don't you think? We are going to pursue the methodology that will truly resolve those unresolved offenses that divide so many marriages and deprive them of what is rightfully theirs in a marriage on the rock.

Retaliating to the offense. Nobody gets very far into life without being on the receiving end of another's words or deeds that cause us emotional pain.

It's the offense. Human behavior, being what it is, we all are offended by others from time to time, and sometimes we are the offender, causing hurt or anger in others.

[14:51] So much about the outcome hangs in the balance and is determined by our response toward the one who offended us. How do we handle it when we are offended?

There are at least ten possibilities, and of the ten, we could identify only three that would be a godly response in keeping with the spirit of God, and the remaining seven are attributed to the flesh, which is a self-centered response, tending to escalate the problem rather than resolve it in a God-honoring way.

If you want a refresher regarding the flesh and spirit concepts, which are so critical, you can replay the segments on Marriage on the Rock CD number two. Understanding the dynamics regarding spirit and flesh are really essential to a Marriage on the Rock, as well as all other relational connections.

So, how do we handle it when someone offends us, whether our spouse, a co-worker, a neighbor, or whomever? What is your most likely response?

As you listen to the ten possibilities, see if you can identify the one or ones you would be most likely to implement. Here's number one of the gang of seven that belong to the flesh.

[16:07] It's called, Retaliate. They offend you, you offend them. Tit for tat. They insult and offend you, so you try to up the insult in what you come back with.

This almost guarantees the widening of the gap between the offended and the offender. They hurt you, you hurt them in return. We like to call it self-defense.

After all, aren't we entitled to defend ourselves? We don't want to be a doormat, do we? Have we no backbone? Well, let's allow the scriptures to answer for us.

Consider a couple of verses from Romans chapter 12. Verse 14 says, And verse 17, Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.

Respect what is right in the sight of all men. What is this? This is the response of the spirit, as opposed to the typical response of the flesh.

[17:13] The flesh is the natural response. The spirit is the supernatural response. For the believer, responding to someone hurting us by offending us does not give us the right to hurt them in return.

That's the natural fleshly way of responding. And while you as a Christian can do that, you have no business using that MO. You are called to a higher plane.

Retaliation is not acceptable and does not honor your Lord. Romans 12 also says, Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Item number one of responses to an offense is definitely of the flesh.

Let's take it off the table. Retaliation directed toward others.

We are in process of listing the ten most common responses people give when someone has offended them. We said seven of the ten are very common and very ugly.

[18:18] They are automatic responses from the flesh, our baser sort, than from the spirit which we are called upon to emulate. Now we consider the second of the ugly seven.

Number one was to respond in kind by giving it back to them, remember? Offending them in return, which of course heats up the issue and widens the emotional distance between the offended and the offender.

The second is like it, but instead of venting back to the offender, we vent on someone else.

Someone who had nothing to do with the offense we suffered.

One example might find an employee being berated and deeply offended by his boss, but since he can't risk retaliation toward his boss for fear of being fired, he waits till he gets home and takes it out on his wife and kids, or perhaps a co-worker who is his subordinate, or a clerk who is serving him at the local hardware store.

He may be so angry and stung by what his boss said to him. He's going to lash out at somebody, so woe to anyone who crosses his path. Admittedly, and thankfully, not everyone is wired this way, but many are.

[19:38] We all know of extreme cases where one is loaded with perceived hurts, wounds, and offenses that he deems it acceptable to lash out at everybody.

He takes an automatic weapon into a school or crowded public place like a theater or a mall and fires indiscriminately upon innocent people who are total strangers and had nothing to do with all the hurts he is lodging in his spirit.

This is an extreme form of retaliation that, in the perpetrator's mind, gives him a chance to get back at all those who offended him in one way or another.

He never had the courage to actually pursue a resolution to the one who actually offended him at the time they did so. He merely mentally warehoused all the hurts and perceived hurts others

inflicted upon him over the years and chose a bizarre way of getting even with all of them collectively by inflicting great harm on others.

This, of course, is irrational, and all normal people are utterly aghast at this shocking behavior and the undeserved pain and heartache that is inflicted upon those innocents who had nothing to do with his hurts.

[20 : 59] What's the cause of all of this? Well, of course, it's sin and it is also produced by unresolved offenses that smolder and smolder until breaking out in an open flame of rage.

It's an extreme example of venting on others when we have been offended. It's as ugly as humanity can get, utterly self-centered and reeking fully of the flesh of man.

Getting Even with the Offender If we didn't have a problem with the negative fleshly responses of the first two, let's see how we fare with the third. We are dealing with each of the ten possible responses we implement when someone offends us, hurts us by what they said or did.

These first seven, of which this is the third, are all generated by the flesh and we are all very capable of exhibiting them. If we walk in the flesh as believers and not by the Spirit, these are the likely responses we will manifest.

Number three is silently vow to ourselves to get even with that so-and-so. We may dream of ways to secretly retaliate via sabotage or something, a secret plan to somehow hurt them.

[22 : 29] All kinds of possibilities may course through our mind and we can mentally savor each one, even fantasize as to how it might go. This, of course, reduces us to plotters and schemers, which in themselves are very unbecoming of anyone who considers himself a Christian.

We should be curtailed and even rebuked by the scriptures we profess to believe. They tell us to not return evil for evil. Remember Romans 12 and Romans 8?

Couple with those Romans 13 and you shall love your neighbor as yourself and love does no wrong to a neighbor. Yes, but what if your neighbor has already done wrong to you?

What's wrong with payback? Nothing at all, provided it is the Lord who conducts the payback and not you. You do not have the right of payback.

Thus saith the scriptures. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God. For it is written, Vengeance is mine.

[23 : 36] I will repay, says the Lord. So, it may very well be that someone offended you deeply and treated you shabbily. It happens because fallen people are fallen people and they do what fallen people do.

They hurt one another. But none of us are truly capable of repaying that hurt in a just and equitable way. This is because we don't know all the dynamics of the situations, although we usually think we do.

God is the only one who really does. So, just leave it to Him. God will settle scores that need to be settled and He will do it in the right way at the right time.

It is only pride and crass arrogance that can cause us to think we know best and to seek our own revenge. Truth be told, we just don't know nearly as much as we think we do about anything.

Oftentimes, we are startled to learn we don't know certain things about ourselves, much less others. So, leave the offender to God.

[24 : 49] Number three is another tool of the flesh, avoided like the plague. Remember, vengeance is mine. I will repay, saith the Lord.

Our responsibility is to believe Him and leave it with the Lord. Tell others of the offense.

This response is so common and automatic, we really feel the necessity of pursuing it. Instead of utilizing number one and offending the one who offended us or number two by venting and offending someone else or number three plotting and scheming for revenge, we go with that which really does sound justifiable.

Here it is. We tell others about the terrible things so and so said or did to us. After all, others have a right to know what a terrible person is the one who offended me.

I'm using this as a response because we are always looking for sympathy and we're looking for allies. That is, we are trying to make others look unfavorably toward the offender, even as we do.

[26 : 06] Maybe then, they would even treat that person who offended us in an unkindly way, which of course is precisely what they deserve since they treated me the way they did.

This methodology is rampant in families, neighborhoods, the workplace, schools, and, uh, oh yes, let's not forget the church.

The tell others about it game reminds us of James 3 and what is said about the destructive power of the tongue. actually the tell others response could be classified along with the retaliation mode. Telling others may well be a form of retaliation also. It's more indirect and covert rather than overt, but the idea is still payback and to injure those who have injured us.

The tell others mode simply seeks to enlist allies to help you with the payback. Do you see the possibility of the one who was offended actually being a bigger problem?

[27 : 15] Maybe far bigger problem than was the one who was the original offender. They, the offended one, may already, unbeknownst to them, wear a label of a gossip as seen by others.

These fleshly motivated people can wreak absolute havoc in a family, school, workplace, or church. And one would not be surprised that nearly everyone listening is probably thinking of a particular person they know who comes to mind when describing this one who tells others.

This, the fourth response, is as the first three, generated by the fleshly part of our Christian being as opposed to the spirit. Galatians reminds us that if we walk in the spirit, we will not fulfill the desires of the flesh.

The failure to do so leaves nothing but the flesh open to us. What will it be as a believer? We operate from the flesh or the spirit in our response to those who hurt us.

There is no middle ground. What is not spirit is flesh and vice versa. You must choose for yourself which it will be. Galatians 5, by the way, reminds us as to what each produces.

[28 : 36] The flesh produces bad, the spirit produces good. Respond by absorbing the offense.

Response number five that some will implement is very common among people who have been offended with a very phlegmatic or laid-back personality. It's simple and it seems easy enough, but it too is a fleshly response.

Here it is. Just forget the offense. Don't let them get to you. Ignore it. Dismiss it. Don't lose any sleep over it. Just absorb it.

Soak it up and go on. No doubt only a few can do this or even want to. And one who responds to hurts from others in this fashion is one who will go to any length to avoid a confrontation of any kind. They can and often do absorb a lot of abuse, perhaps from several sources. In fact, they can become a punching bag for bullies and people who just like to pick on others.

[29 : 45] These are the offenders who are eager to have fun at someone else's expense. And these two are found in every school and workplace. Sometimes adult offenders are more juvenile than the children.

So, if a person has thick enough skin and broad enough shoulders to just take it and take it and take it, what's wrong with that? As long as they're willing and foolish enough to take it, isn't that a spiritual thing?

It certainly isn't retaliation. No. It's absorption. And aren't we supposed to take ill treatment from others without retaliating?

Well, it's true. We are not to return evil for evil. But what about returning good for evil? What about being kind toward those who spitefully use you?

How do we show love toward those who are perpetual offenders toward you and others? If our goal is to be reconciled so as to be on good terms with our offender, how can that be done by absorbing their offenses?

[30 : 56] Even though the offender may mistreat with offenses, and even consider us an enemy or at least not a friend, how are we to respond in the way of the spirit and not the flesh?

Are we not called upon to love them and do good toward them? Do we love them enough to approach them about the offenses? Approach them in a kindly way, not in a hostile manner? Admittedly, this is hard to do, which is why it is hardly ever done. This is because we care more about our comfort or discomfort than we do about our love for the offender.

This is a major reason why so many rifts and separations are never healed. We just don't care enough or love enough to approach the one who dishes out the offenses.

This is what makes absorbing offenses without responding in the right way, the way of confronting with a view to reconciling, a choice from the flesh, not the spirit.

[32 : 04] We may pride ourselves by not retaliating in kind, but we do neither the offender nor ourselves any right by mere absorption.

response by warehousing the offense. Number six of typical responses toward those who have hurt and offended us is much like number five that dealt with absorption.

Remember, their response was to ignore the offense and the offender. Response number six is its cousin. It's just stuff it. It's like we have a huge mental warehouse in our human spirit and we just find a space for the most recent offense from whomever and we store it there.

It's located next to a host of other offenses that we have received over the years. It's an accumulation of hurts and wounds and scars we have warehoused from early childhood. and they have all contributed to the person we are and they along with yet future offenses will help make us what we will yet be. The problem with stuffing or warehousing the offense, you know, just like the absorber previously, is that the hurt doesn't go away.

[33 : 29] We still keenly feel the pain the offense causes every time something happens to remind us of it. So, even if we do, so long as we are willing to just bite the bullet and live with the hurtful memories, isn't that a noble thing?

If we are willing to live with it, how does that hurt anyone else? But, consider this. Do we think we can live with the painful memories of past offenses without harboring some, maybe a lot, of resentment and ill feelings toward those who hurt us?

What are your thoughts about those people when they come to mind? Probably not good. Maybe even years after the offense. And is it a good thing to live with compiled resentment that we have warehoused over the years, maybe even decades?

Don't you think that harboring resentment, maybe ill and bitter feelings toward others, also takes a toll on your psyche and your inner human spirit?

And, is there a difference between resenting someone who hurt us and carrying a grudge? And, is it an acceptable thing to do that? Offended people who are warehousing past hurts become a kind of captive to the person against whom they hold resentment.

[34 : 54] It's kind of like hating or resenting them from a distance. Does this not sour or embitter our own spirit? There's nothing spiritually or mentally healthy about storing away past offenses.

They clog the spirit like cloresterol clogs the arteries. Well, maybe that's not a good analogy, but you get my point. Resentment and bearing grudges would certainly have a negative influence on our inner being, our inner peace, and tranquility.

All the more reason to persist in a true resolution that will allow for a full and honest reconciliation between you, the offended, and the person who committed the offense.

It's the toughest thing to do, but it's the best. Warehousing offenses belongs to the flesh, not the spirit. Respond by waiting for an apology.

This is our final consideration regarding the wrong way, that is, the way of the flesh in responding to someone who has hurt us. The offense may have been small, medium, or large.

[36 : 14] Remember, maybe it was a dart or an arrow, perhaps even a spear, that really deeply hurt us. Hurt us in an excruciating way. You may even feel that no one has been hurt like someone hurt you.

Lots of offenses are perceived that way by the party on the receiving end. One thing that would at least help with the pain and disappointment you feel would be if the offender would offer a sincere apology.

Even then, it wouldn't be easy to forgive them, but at least you would try. But how can you if they won't even tell you they're sorry? Maybe they aren't sorry at all.

That possibility makes their offense all the more hurtful, doesn't it? So, short of taking action and going to them to advise them of how you were hurt, what can you do but wait for an apology?

So, you wait, and you wait, and you wait. How long? Weeks? Months? Years?

[37 : 19] Years? You fear they may have completely forgotten about what they did or said that injured you so deeply. And if they have forgotten, there will be no apology, that's for sure.

And if that's the case, why don't you just forget it too? But you can't, can you? So, you tell yourself, maybe you're just being too sensitive.

Well, maybe you are. But do you sense an increasing resentment in your spirit about the way they treated you or what they said or did?

If you do, that means the hurt is still registering while you are still waiting for the apology that may never and probably won't ever come. Is this a good thing?

Maybe you're not even entitled to an apology. Maybe you're just making too big a deal out of the whole thing, do you think? So, how do you feel in your spirit about that person who hurt you?

[38 : 20] Are there good, compassionate feelings, or are they negative and resentful? Is that good? All the while you may have been waiting for them to take the initiative by coming to you and apologizing, you could have gone to them to air out the issue, gained a sincere apology from them, extended genuine forgiveness to them, and both of you could have been enjoying a sincere reconciliation, all the while you were waiting for an apology.

If you have second thoughts about taking the initiative, or why you should, please consult Matthew 18.15. That's Matthew 18.15.

Powerful stuff. It talks about who should take the initiative for an offense that has been committed. This passage, in and of itself, could resolve a great many offenses if it were only applied.

It is the spirit that will apply it. The flesh will not. An unthinkable response, part one.

In dealing with possible responses we should have to an offense, or perceived offense someone commits against us, this response may just be the most difficult of all.

[39 : 50] It's probably natural to, at the first, recoil from this as being even a possibility. Actually, this is the eighth possible response of the ten, and it's the first one that can be considered a response from the spirit rather than from the flesh.

All the rest, those first seven we have considered, were fleshly responses, and they are the most often implemented by the offended person.

Think of that. We are saying, seven out of ten possible responses, seventy percent of the responses we exhibit when someone offends us, are of the flesh, not of the spirit.

Does this suggest any clue as to why so many relationships are lacking? Does it provide any clue as to why so many churches split and splinter?

Is there a clue here regarding terribly unhappy marriages, even among Christians? Seven out of ten possible responses are a wrong response when someone offends us with their words or deeds?

[41 : 02] Can we not see how a wrong response actually compounds the original offense and even widens the gap of the relationship? Almost makes us wonder how it is that many are even on speaking terms, doesn't it?

Well, we said this one, number eight, may be the toughest response of all to deal with, and here it is. You are the one offended.

What someone said to you really got to you. It hurt a lot. And here is what you need to consider. Are you ready for this? Maybe they spoke the truth, and you had it coming.

This would admittedly be a bitter pill to swallow, but it at least deserves thoughtful and careful consideration. Please understand, we are not saying this is the case.

We are only saying it deserves thoughtful consideration as to its possibilities. One may be thinking that if they deserve what someone said or did to them, why did it hurt so much?

[42 : 10] But we have all heard the expression, truth hurts. Ordinarily, when someone says something that offends us, we automatically assume we didn't deserve that, and the offender had no right to say it.

And that may well be true, and often is. You may have been unjustly offended by them. You didn't deserve it, and it wasn't true, and you should never have been hurt in that fashion.

This is why we say, give it careful and prayerful consideration as to whether their offense was supported by facts, and whether than being offended, you should have been thankful.

Am I serious? I am, and I speak from authority as one who has been there. Join us upcoming for the conclusion of this response number eight.

An Unthinkable Response, Part Two We continue dealing with response number eight, and it is in two parts because of its difficulty.

[43 : 20] Considering the possibility that we were offended, maybe deeply so, and very hurt by what someone said, maybe a spouse or close friend, which of course makes the pain even greater, perhaps our response should be, after swallowing hard, to say, maybe I had that coming.

Maybe what they said that so offended me was in fact spot on. They were right in what they said. Maybe they didn't say it in a very nice way, poor word choice and all that, and they even said it in unmistakable anger.

But what I must do in the midst of my hurt is to honestly ask myself, is it true what they said to me and about me?

Is it true? Did I, in fact, have it coming? Some listening now may even be offended at my suggesting this is a possibility.

That's all I'm proposing. It's a possibility, and we need to search our heart and mind to honestly say it is not true. At least we need to do that. And if we do conclude there is truth in what we took offense to, are we big enough and gracious enough to admit it, even to ourself?

[44 : 40] Or do we persist in denial and a defensive posture? In my 55 years plus as a Bible teacher and pastor, I've been on the receiving end of stinging offenses that hurt very much.

After reflection and honest heart searching, I had to conclude my critic and their offense was actually accurate. I did have it coming.

I could choose then to protect my ego, defend myself, and deny that there was any truth whatever in the offense. That was my immediate reaction, along with anger, of course.

But somebody must have been praying for me because I shortly revised my position from denial and self-defense to one of gratitude. A humble gratitude.

Someone cared enough to tell me the truth about what they saw in me. My defensiveness actually gave way to thankfulness. It was, after all, constructive criticism that I sorely needed.

[45 : 47] And what's more, I'm still not beyond constructive criticism. A lot of people don't care enough about us or love us enough to level with us. And that's the truth.

Proverbs 27 says, Faithful are the wounds of a friend. In this case, my friend was Barbara, my first wife to whom I was married for nearly fifty years before her untimely death.

Sure, it hurt. But she did me a huge favor and hit the nail on the head. Plus, I know it was not easy for her to tell me those things. Yet, she loved me too much not to tell me.

This may or may not be the response you should have toward someone who hurt you by telling you what turned out to be true. But, brethren, think on these things. Respond by Approaching the Offender, Part 1 So far, we have considered eight possible responses we might exhibit when someone hurts and offends us by what they said or did.

Out of the eight, only one is acceptable and produced by the Spirit. The other seven are products generated by the flesh. The flesh is our fallen, self-centered, Adamic nature that gets us all into so much difficulty and heartache.

[47 : 12] This response, like the last one that asks ourselves to consider the possibility that the hurtful things said to us were deserved by us, we had it coming. And if we conclude that, we should accept it as revealing, constructive criticism and make the adjustments in our attitude and actions to affect changes.

Now, this possible response is about as difficult as the last. And here it is. You need to approach the one who offended you and hurt you with the goal of airing out the issue so that an honest and righteous reconciliation can be realized.

This doesn't happen very often. And I say that to our shame. The principle given by our Lord in Matthew 18, 15 should be far more employed by believers than it is.

And the reason it isn't is because we really don't believe what Christ said and demanded in Matthew 18. Our view is that someone who offended us should come to us.

We shouldn't have to go to them. And we won't by George. Let him come to me and apologize. I'm not going to run after him. You realize, do you not, that such is all of the flesh and nothing of the spirit.

[48 : 35] And if it's contrary to what Christ said, it has to be of the flesh. Simple enough. How is it to be decided who is to go to whom? Christ never even hinted we were to wait, to demand, to expect the other party to come to us.

We are to go to them. Think of it this way. The one in the know is the one to go. The culprit here that prevents an honest reconciliation is pride, ego, and insistence on saving face.

We would rather lose a brother or sister's fellowship than to lose face. This has flesh written all over it, top to bottom. It not only prevents ruptured relationships from being healed, it perpetuates ruptured relationships and intensifies resentment and bitterness in both strange parties.

In essence, who cares who's right or wrong? The likelihood is that both are. What matters is getting the rift healed so that reconciliation is affected.

The best case scenario is that when two brethren or two sisters realize an estrangement has taken place, both parties are eagerly willing to take the first step and they meet each other while each is on the way to the other's house.

[49 : 59] This is the way of the spirit, not the flesh. We don't see much of this today, which explains at least in part the abysmal loss of Christian influence in our world around us.

Respond by Approaching the Offender Part 2 We are considering the difficult but necessary way of responding to someone who has offended and hurt us to the extent of creating a rift or an estrangement in the relationship.

It may be between husband and wife, relative, co-workers, or neighbors. It's especially critical where believers are concerned because we, of all people, are supposed to not only understand the process but be eager to implement it.

The Apostle Paul speaks of forbearing one another in love and endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. It's in Ephesians 4. In Romans 15, he speaks of the Christians at Rome being able to admonish one another.

The Greek calls it *nuthéo*, from which our word *nuthetic* comes. It has reference to a believer being able to confront, approach, or admonish one another.

[51 : 18] This is not done from a haughty or superior attitude, but from a godly and humble disposition. It is holding one another accountable and doing it graciously.

The purpose in the confrontation must always be one of love and humility. We are not to take the role of being another person's Holy Spirit. That job is already taken by the real Holy Spirit.

This has reference to approaching, confronting another in the spirit of meekness and gentleness with a view to addressing things that are wrong and making them right.

And this is a two-way street. We may go to another about an offense, and next time someone may come to us about an offense. This is all for the accountability and health of the believers and their fellowship.

When such a godly and scriptural approach takes place, Matthew 18 tells us, We have gained our brother. That means our differences are settled, and everybody is happy.

[52 : 23] Everybody but Satan, the adversary. And of course, he never wants to see anybody happy. He only wants everyone at each other's throats. But godly responses generated by the spirit rather than walking in the flesh always seeks to restore, reconcile, forgive, and bless rather than curse.

The only thing that prevents that is believers walking in the flesh rather than the spirit and thus produce the ugly list of the works of the flesh in Galatians 5.

For Christians who are married, we need to be reminded that more than adequate spiritual assets are made available to all believers to make and sustain a wonderful, deep, strong, loving relationship between husband and wife.

Such is intended to be the norm, not the exception. If statistics tell us anything, that is reversed today, to our shame. The joyful, fulfilling relationships between husband and wife that is supposed to find both deliriously in love and encouraging and enjoying their marriage to the max is rather the exception than the rule.

Don't settle for anything less than a marriage on the rock. All you need to have one is already provided. The Seven Easy Fleshly Ways Praying for the one who offended you, as well as for yourself, is the tenth and last option we will consider.

[54 : 04] No doubt more responsive options could be undertaken, but it seems that these ten are surely among the most common. Be reminded that of the ten possible responses we can give to a hurt or offense that someone has committed against us, only three of the ten can be called justifiable, desirable, and generated by the spirit rather than the flesh.

The other seven are very common responses, but none of them can be considered a godly response. And this negative nasty seven all tend to prolong or worsen the rift, but they are all the easier responses to make.

It's easy to retaliate in kind toward those who have hurt us. It's easier to hurt someone else as a result of our being hurt. It's easy to vow to get even with someone who offended us.

It's easy to tell others how so-and-so hurt us. We not only gain their sympathy, we may even recruit them to our side as an ally. And it's easy to simply do your best to forget, just dismiss the hurt they inflicted on you.

It's easy to just store the hurt away in the mental warehouse of our spirit and replay it at will, you know, relive the hurt so we can keep it alive. It's even easy to sit back and wait on the offender to come to us with a humble apology, seeking our forgiveness.

[55 : 29] And this also sounds spiritual, but in reality, it's just a cop-out for action. Any or all of the foregoing seven possible responses toward someone who has hurt us are easy to do.

They are, in fact, the courses of action, or perhaps we should say inaction, that people prefer. And why is this? We should all understand that the flesh always looks for the easiest way out. Seventy percent of the time. Seven out of ten times when we are hurt by someone who offended us in word or deed, we will respond in the easiest but wrong manner in dealing with the situation. This tells us why so many respond to wrong hurts in an equally hurtful manner. The inevitable result is the widening of the rift between the offended and the offender. So much so that the situation may produce two offenders and two offended, and the rift gets even wider. Friendships are injured, perhaps permanently, and marriages, yes, even among Christians, can be absolutely devastated, sometimes damaged beyond the willingness to even attempt to salvage.

[56 : 51] And to think, there are three godly spiritual responses available, so that the nasty seven we just considered need not be utilized.

And we will focus upon those three upcoming. Remember, it's always easiest to go the way of the flesh. That's why most do.

The way of the Spirit might appear hard, but in implementing it, you have the Spirit of God to aid you. The Three Hard Ways of the Spirit, Part 1 We just dealt with the seven easy ways out of a situation when someone has hurt us, offended us by what they said or did.

The reason so many take one of the seven easy ways to respond is simple. They're easy. Isn't it only natural to take the easiest route in dealing with a situation about personal relationships, especially as personal as a marriage?

But for believers in Christ who want to operate via the Spirit, not the flesh, the natural way is not God's way. His way is supernatural. It's supernatural, but still hard.

[58 : 09] This is response number eight of the ten listed, and it belongs to the way of the Spirit, not the flesh. Here it is. First and foremost, we begin to pray earnestly for that person or persons who offended us.

But, you say, that's hard to do. Well, of course it's hard to do. That's precisely why more people don't do it. Remember? We all tend to want the easy way.

You know, one of the seven we talked about earlier. Indeed, it is hard to pray for another person who has wounded us down deep where it really hurts. In the flesh, we much prefer to pound them, not pray for them.

But then there is that pesky verse in Matthew 5 setting forth the axiom that believers are to pray for them that despitefully use you and even persecute you.

Are you serious? Pray for someone who persecutes you? Bless those that curse you? Who said that anyway? Well, his name was Jesus.

[59 : 11] And he not only told his followers to do it, but he did it himself also. And that's hard. Really hard. Sure it is. Why do you think most people don't do it?

It's hard. This is the spiritual response, and it's always hard. But it's the right thing to do. It's a supernatural spirit's response to an offense, not a natural response generated from the flesh. Well, what if you don't feel like praying for them? Most likely you don't. But we are not to pray for our offenders because we feel like it, but because it's the right thing to do.

We do it because it's the responsible spiritual thing to do that has nothing to do with how you feel. And can you believe this? Seriously praying for someone who has hurt you can actually help change those negative feelings toward them.

It's hard to want to get even with someone you're praying for. It's hard to retaliate toward someone for whom you are praying. There is a way God can use our prayers for someone else to actually affect a change in the one who is praying.

[60 : 26] Very often we have a choice toward a rift created by being part of the problem or part of the solution. Honestly, praying for someone who might be regarded an enemy can start the process to make them a friend.

Someone has said the best way to rid yourself of an enemy is to make him a friend. But there's nothing natural about this. It's supernatural all the way. And it's hard. As we said, this is why most people, even Christians, do not do it.

But it's still the right thing to do. Jesus said so. The Three Hard Ways of the Spirit Part 2 The first hard thing we should do in response to someone who has offended us is to pray for them.

Pray for yourself too, that the Lord will grant you wisdom in dealing with the situation, because our objective should always be for restoration and reconciliation. It is no victory for a rift between parties to be further widened or terminated altogether.

Such is dishonoring to the Lord for Christians to carry on that way. While you are praying, ask God to search your heart to make sure what the offending person said or did wasn't deserving on your part.

[61 : 45] Of course, there may have been no real basis at all for what they said or did to you, and you are puzzled as to why they did it. At the same time, some people who offend others, including you by their hurtful attitudes and actions, may be dealing with some very serious and painful issues of their own.

An old saying contains a lot of truth sometimes. Hurt people hurt people. And oftentimes, people who abuse and hurt others with their tongue or deeds are themselves deeply hurt people.

Nobody is saying it's okay to hurt people because we have been hurt. We can't legitimize their behavior or justify it. Sometimes it does help a lot toward explaining it.

The hurt of their offense upon you doesn't make your hurt go away simply because the person who hurt you has been hurt themselves. But it does lessen our pain.

Everybody has a story. Everybody has their own emotional bumps and bruises, disappointments and offenses that others have leveled upon them. We never know sometimes what someone else has on their plate that they are dealing with.

[62 : 58] And it's only natural to not even care about that or them because we are so focused on our hurt and how they have offended us. This, too, is natural to feel that way.

But be reminded, we are not to function from the natural but the supernatural. The natural way fulfills the desires of the flesh, while the supernatural the desires of the spirit.

It is to this decidedly different and supernatural kind of life and attitude and actions that we as Christians are called upon. No? Of course it isn't easy.

It's hard. And as we said, this is precisely why so many do not do it or do not even want to do it. It's hard. So we make all kinds of excuses as to why we don't do it, couldn't do it, or shouldn't do it.

More often than not, it's all nothing but a cop-out on our part. The second response toward someone who has hurt us is critical. Praying for them and for us can have the positive effect of altering our own attitude as well as the attitude of the offender.

[64 : 09] It's remarkable how praying for someone can create a more desirable and positive atmosphere and chemistry to try and affect a reconciliation. We cannot emphasize the important distinction between handling these issues God's way, which is generated from the spirit, as opposed to our way generated from the flesh.

Could we possibly ever think our way is superior? The Three Hard Ways of the Spirit Part 3 Out of ten possible responses we may exhibit toward others who have hurt us, we noted the first seven as wrong, natural, and flesh-generated.

Yet, they are the easiest and almost the automatic responses we select. This is the main reason they are so often used. They are easy. The flesh always wants the easy way out, never the right way.

And by the way, non-Christians don't even know what we are talking about. The dynamics of flesh and spirit might as well be a foreign language as far as they are concerned. But for believers, this should be standard operating procedure.

Thus far, we have considered seven wrong responses of the flesh and two of the three right responses of the spirit. The ratio is about right, seven to three.

[65 : 32] There are usually about two wrong responses for every right one. The flesh has always outnumbered the spirit. The natural has always outnumbered the supernatural.

The third right response to a wrongful offense is also very difficult, as are the other two. One was to pray for your offender, and two was to consider the painful possibility you had it coming.

We briefly explored both, and we have saved perhaps the hardest of all for last. And it is really tough. No place here for spiritual wimps.

Here it is. You go to the person who offended you. You approach them. This is not to be done out of anger, nor a desire to tell them off, nor haughtily, nor accusingly, nor demanding, but with a meek and humble spirit.

And no, that doesn't mean you come kowtowing or groveling. If you sense any of those feelings in your heart, then this is not the time to approach them, as you'll only make matters worse.

[66 : 41] This should be bathed in prayer and accompanied with a desire to clear the air between you, so your relationship with this person will not only be healed in this area, but strengthened and more greatly appreciated.

And lest you think it can't be done, with God all things are possible. Yet, even God does not overpower people's volition, and you have control only over yours, not that of the offender. You make the honest, good-faith effort toward reconciling and leave the results with the offender and God. If the offender is fleshly oriented, they will likely rebuff your efforts.

But that is on them, not you. And I think this is why the scriptures say in Romans 12, If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Did you get that? If it be possible, so long as it is up to you, live peaceably with all men. We may be sure that men is generic and includes women as well, wives as well.

[67 : 49] We are to bend every effort on our part to be conciliatory toward any with whom we are at odds. Divine provision is made to do this, and it is supernatural, but still depends upon our cooperation.

It's tough, but it's the right thing to do. Salvaged relationships are God's priority.

After a fresh emphasis on the necessity of those who need to make or remake a commitment to their mate, like you made when you were married, and for those who need to remake a commitment to God and His word, like you made when you trusted Him, and what you are to do when you don't feel like making those recommitments, we began to explore the dynamics of the offense and our response to the offense.

We all say and do things to each others, to husbands and wives, to parents, to kids, to friends, to neighbors, and they to us that hurt, that offend. So, then what?

What is our response to those hurts? We listed and explained ten of them, and discarded the first seven as being the most natural and the easiest to utilize. But they are all wrong and fleshly motivated.

[69 : 11] Yet, they are easy to do, and that's what makes them attractive. They're easy to do, and they are as wrong as they can be. We then went on to describe the last three of the ten, and warned you they are tough to do, and this is why they are often left undone.

Nobody wants to do the hard stuff. We all want the easy way out, don't we? But the easy way is the work of the flesh. The hard is the way of the Spirit.

Yet, God will be there for us in the hard way, not the easy way. The only help you get in utilizing the easy way is from the adversary, the devil, and he always tempts us to take the easy way out.

The Apostle Paul said of Satan in 2 Corinthians 2, that we are not ignorant of Satan's devices. That means we are on to him, or we ought to be, his schemes, his MO, his devices.

Satan has devices, a game plan. One of his devices is to always take the easy way out. Satan hates good relationships among the brethren, because God loves good relationships.

[70 : 27] Satan will sow discord, ill will, division, conflict, confusion, anything to injure or end good relationships, and he especially despises good marriages founded upon the rock Christ Jesus.

If he can destroy a Christian marriage, the bonus for him is a lot of collateral damage that extends beyond the two parties of husband and wife.

Relational dynamics are so very important. God has placed such a premium on relationships that he actually sent his Son to this earth for the express purpose of reconnecting a broken relationship. The happiest, most well-adjusted and fulfilled people in all the world are not those with the biggest house, the most income, or the most prestigious positions.

They are those with the most solid and secure relationships. This is what life and living are really all about. Relationships, whether good or bad, is always determined by how people treat each other.

[71 : 34] In our fallen humanness, we can and do offend one another. Whether or not the offense is resolved will determine the quality of the relationship. You've been listening to Marriage on the Rock with Marv Wiseman.

The upcoming CD number 5 will be building on what has been addressed on the previous four CDs. If you have not heard the first four, you will be at a distinct disadvantage for benefiting from the fifth. Trying to gain a good understanding of any of those discs without having heard the contents of those previous to it may leave you with a lot of unanswered questions and real difficulty in trying to

connect the dots.

CD number 5 will deal with the first phase in the several steps that need to be taken to resolve an offense committed against another. Because our principal objective is for Christians who are married, we will assume our examples will focus on husbands and wives.

Yet, let's be clear, the principles governing the resolution of offenses between marrieds also works the same for friends, neighbors, relatives, or co-workers.

[72 : 52] The spiritual dynamics and assets that God has provided for those in Christ work across the board whether married or not. We are going to analyze terms that are rather common but very frequently misunderstood.

These terms, simple as they are, are absolutely essential for the resolving of offenses committed and the genuine restoration and reconciliation of injured relationships, particularly those of a marriage.

Each term or concept is part of a strategy, a game plan that needs to be implemented between the offender and the offended. In short, offenses that one party has committed against another, which in our examples will be between spouses, cannot be undone.

Like words that are spoken, they cannot be called back no matter how much you wish they could. This being true, the injured relationship will forever maintain the experience and memory of that offense because it is an undeniable part of their history.

Offenses, painful ones we commit against each other, cannot be undone. But this does not mean nothing can be done.

[74 : 11] Like our first parents' disobedience and sin, God never sought to undo it, but God did make provision whereby the effects of it could be and would be overcome.

This is the why of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Christ's death and payment for sin never attempted to undo the sin or its reality, but it did succeed in dealing with sin's consequences, namely, death.

While not undoing sin, Christ in his death made the payment to cancel sin's consequences. This is the very most gracious and glorious thing ever done, and it was done in the face of the reality of sin, not in any denial of its historicity.

One last concluding reminder. If the need to do so is there, are you on board with those two critical commitments we have emphasized all along?

Because without them, this cannot be made to work. God bless you, my friend. We trust you will be pursuing this with us. It is life-changing and marriage rejuvenating.

[75 : 30] You too, you too. We've been pursuing this with it. The800-MYeah The800-M man The800-Mhm The800-MYeah The800-M■4 The800-M8 The800-MATT The800-M parenting The800-M1 The800-M8 And the800-M8 The800-M8 This800-M8 The800-M8 The800-M8