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Avoiding The Snare Of Offense  
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We have been learning about things in life which will hinder us, causing us not to reach our destiny and receiving the things that God wants to bless us with. He has a plan and purpose for each of our lives. There will be challenges along the way which might cause us to be discouraged and give up, but if we will continue to follow God, we will reach our destiny.

There are principles which we need to know in order to overcome hindrances. In dealing with offenses, that have come over a period of many years and have become a way of life for us, causing us to be "victims", makes us feel like we have been wronged all the time, we have never done anything wrong and it is always someone else's fault, people being around us will detect this attitude that we have and it will hinder us from receiving from God in later years. We will usually become very critical and judgmental.

We have learned in previous teaching from 1st Timothy that he had become very successful in his church, but there have been challenges and now Paul is encouraging him on how to proceed with the church and the people there, stirring up the gift that was in him, keeping out of strife, being gentle, a teacher and patient with difficult people. There were Christian people opposing themselves, because they believed others had wronged them, they had deception working, hearing with selective hearing through a filter on their mind, they were in opposition to the truth, the word of God is the truth and being in opposition makes them in opposition to God. There has to be repentance, not just saying they were sorry, but having a complete turn around. When this deceptive spirit is around, it brings pride, everything that happens is always about them, they become manipulated by a "religious spirit". Someone who is controlled by this spirit is going to begin to flow and move under the law and hold everyone under this standard and grace is gradually factored out. It becomes a works mentality.

If we are opposing ourselves, we have been taken captive by the devil to be used by him at his will, even though we are Christians on our way to heaven. The devil is going to use that person to cause division, offense, hurt and resentment in the church. This is the purpose of the adversary in taking a Christian captive with boundaries and confinement, they can't go beyond the barriers. They are like the children of Israel, they can't get to the promised land, are unable to receive the blessings from God, they begin to spread division and unbelief, they are doing the devils will. They are behaving themselves like mere unchanged men, not going anywhere, just living like people in the world.

2 Tim 2:24-26 "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, 25 In \*meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are

\*\*taken captive by him at his will." KJV

\*meekness is teachable, controllable, strength in control, coachable

**\*\*Being taken captive means "to be taken captive alive and put in confinement, behind bars in a box, having perimeters or boundaries, they can't get out."**

2 Tim 2:24 "Run away from infantile indulgence. Run after mature righteousness—faith, love, peace—joining those who are in honest and serious prayer before God. Refuse to get involved in inane discussions; they always end up in fights. God's servant must not be argumentative, but a gentle listener and a teacher who keeps cool, working firmly but patiently with those who refuse to obey. You never know how or when God might sober them up with a change of heart and a turning to the truth, enabling them to escape the Devil's trap, where they are caught and held captive, forced to run his errands." MESSAGE

2 Tim 2:24 "A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people." NLT

2 Tim 2:26 "And that they may come to their senses [and] escape out of the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him, [henceforth] to do His [God's] will." AMP

How do we get out of the snare and go further in the kingdom of God? We want to move into the supernatural power of God and break the barriers. We want to live in His life of abundance. This snare keeps Christians from being who they really are, it is a pattern, has a victim mentality wherever they go, with this spirit working in them, they are still the victim.

How do we break this pattern and get out of this "victim" mentality? The following scriptures tell us what needs to be done in order for us to be forgiven. Paul also teaches us the importance of forgiveness in 1st and 2nd Corinthians regarding a man who had sinned and that the people in the church needed to forgive and restore him to fellowship and unless this happens, the enemy will come in and take advantage. We want to put ourselves in a position where God can flow through us and we can begin to walk more in His favor and goodness.

Mark 11:25 "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." KJV

Mark 11:25 "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him and let it drop (leave it, let it go), in order that your Father Who is in heaven may also forgive you your [own] failings *and* shortcomings *and* let them drop." AMP

Having ought against someone is a type of murmuring and complaining and unless we are willing to forgive others, we will not be forgiven by our Father. Through Jesus there is forgiveness, but unless we forgive, we will not be partakers of what is available to us, our growth will be stunted spiritually. If we are still talking about offenses from years past, it is apparent that we have not forgiven, deception will cause us to pick up the offense, begin to talk about it again. We must let it drop, leave it and let it go.

2 Tim 2:15 "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." KJV

Heb 12:15 "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;" KJV

Heb 12:15 "Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many." NLT

Offense, unforgiveness and bitterness are poison, not only does it poison us, but everyone that we are around. When we forgive any offense, we let go, drop it and leave it.

The following scriptures are Jesus teaching regarding behavior that has not been forgiven and has become a live style, being judgmental or having a critical spirit seeing the other persons problems but not our own.

Matt 7:1-5 "Judge not, that ye be not judged. 2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. 3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? 5 Thou \*hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." KJV

\*hypocrite means to play a part in a play, be somebody that you are really not, deception

Matt 7:1-5 "Don't pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults— unless, of course, you want the same treatment. That critical spirit has a way of boomeranging. It's easy to see a smudge on your neighbor's face and be oblivious to the ugly sneer on your own. Do you have the nerve to say, 'Let me wash your face for you,' when your own face is distorted by contempt? It's this whole traveling road-show mentality all over again, playing a holier-than-thou part instead of just living your part. Wipe that ugly sneer off your own face, and you might be fit to offer a washcloth to your neighbor." MESSAGE

Matt 7:24 "These words I speak to you are not incidental additions to your life, homeowner improvements to your standard of living. They are foundational words, words to build a life on. If you work these words into your life, you are like a smart carpenter who built his house on solid rock. Rain poured down, the river flooded, a tornado hit—but nothing moved that house. It was fixed to the rock." MESSAGE

Jesus is teaching in the scriptures regarding loving our enemies, being generous and forgiving, non judgmental and is referring to people that have never dealt with offense.

Luke 6:35-38 "I tell you, love your enemies. Help and give without expecting a return. You'll never—I promise—regret it. Live out this God-created identity the way our Father lives toward us, generously and graciously, even when we're at our worst. Our Father is kind; you be kind. 37-38 "Don't pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults—unless, of course, you want the same treatment. Don't condemn those who are down; that hardness can boomerang. Be easy on people; you'll find life a lot easier. Give away your life; you'll find life given back, but not merely given back—given back with bonus and blessing. Giving, not getting, is the way. Generosity begets generosity." MESSAGE

Luke 6:41-42 "It's easy to see a smudge on your neighbor's face and be oblivious to the ugly sneer on your own. Do you have the nerve to say, 'Let me wash your face for you,' when your own face is distorted by contempt? It's this I-know-better-than-you mentality again, playing a holier-than-thou part instead of just living your own part. Wipe that ugly sneer off your own face and you might be fit to offer a washcloth to your neighbor." MESSAGE

Paul is saying that we don't have the right to be judging others. We want mercy and grace for ourselves, but think that anyone who has offended us needs to be judged immediately, let God do the judging.

Rom 14:4 "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he

shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand." KJV

These scriptures are written to believers regarding judging others, there is one who is able to judge and that is God. The enemy tries to deceive and make us think we have failed, but because of Jesus and the blood that He shed for us, we are forgiven, His mercy wins over judgment and we are free.

James 4:11-12 "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. 12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" KJV

James 4:11-12 "Don't bad-mouth each other, friends. It's God's Word, his Message, his Royal Rule, that takes a beating in that kind of talk. You're supposed to be honoring the Message, not writing graffiti all over it. God is in charge of deciding human destiny. Who do you think you are to meddle in the destiny of others?" MESSAGE

James 2:13 "Talk and act like a person expecting to be judged by the Rule that sets us free. For if you refuse to act kindly, you can hardly expect to be treated kindly. Kind mercy wins over harsh judgment every time." MESSAGE

James 2:13 "For to him who has shown no mercy the judgment [will be] merciless, but mercy [full of glad confidence] exults victoriously over judgment." AMP

How do we forgive? Matthew chapter 5 speaks of forgiveness coming with the maturity of the believer, in Luke 22 Jesus teaches "Father forgive them", Acts speaks of Stephen asking the Father to forgive "lay not this sin" to those who were stoning him. Peter teaches us not to be speaking evil regarding others who have offended, but bless them. Being critical will effect our prayer life, we don't want to be sowing like those who have offended us, we want to pray blessings for them, since this is what we want to receive.

1 Pet 3:9-13 "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. 10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: 11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. 13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" KJV

1 Pet 3:9-13 "Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing. 10 For the Scriptures say, "If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies. 11 Turn away from evil and do good.

Search for peace, and work to maintain it. 12 The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns his face against those who do evil."13 Now, who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good?" NLT

1 Pet 3:9-13 "Summing up: Be agreeable, be sympathetic, be loving, be compassionate, be humble. That goes for all of you, no exceptions. No retaliation. No sharp-tongued sarcasm. Instead, bless—that's your job, to bless. You'll be a blessing and also get a blessing. Whoever wants to embrace life and see the day fill up with good, Here's what you do: Say nothing evil or hurtful; Snub evil and cultivate good; run after peace for all you're worth. God looks on all this with approval, listening and responding well to what he's asked; But he turns his back on those who do evil things If with heart and soul you're doing good, do you think you can be stopped? Even if you suffer for it, you're still better off. Don't give the opposition a second

thought. Through thick and thin, keep your hearts at attention, in adoration before Christ, your Master. Be ready to speak up and tell anyone who asks why you're living the way you are, and always with the utmost courtesy. Keep a clear conscience before God so that when people throw mud at you, none of it will stick. They'll end up realizing that *they're* the ones who need a bath. It's better to suffer for doing good, if that's what God wants, than to be punished for doing bad. That's what Christ did definitively: suffered because of others' sins, the Righteous One for the unrighteous ones. He went through it all—was put to death and then made alive—to bring us to God." MESSAGE

1 Pet 3:9-13 "Never return evil for evil or insult for insult (scolding, tongue-lashing, berating), but on the contrary blessing [praying for their welfare, happiness, and protection, and truly pitying and loving them]. For *know that* to this you have been called, that you may yourselves inherit a blessing [from God—that you may obtain a blessing as heirs, bringing welfare and happiness and protection]. 10 For let him who wants to enjoy life and see good days [good—whether apparent or not] keep his tongue free from evil and his lips from guile (treachery, deceit). 11 Let him turn away from wickedness *and* shun it, and let him do right. Let him search for peace (harmony; undisturbedness from fears, agitating passions, and moral conflicts) and seek it eagerly. [Do not merely desire peaceful relations with God, with your fellowmen, and with yourself, but pursue, go after them!] 12 For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous (those who are upright and in right standing with God), and His ears are attentive to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who practice evil [to oppose them, to frustrate, and defeat them]. 13 Now who is there to hurt you if you are zealous followers of that which is good?" AMP

The behavior we have been looking at, is of someone who has been carrying negative offense for years, bitterness, unforgiveness, resentment, they are mad at God and everyone else, probably don't like themselves. Drop it, leave it, let it go! Just drop it like God has dropped ours. We are to be restorers of goodness and blessings.