

BAIT OF SATAN #6

“The 3 Things You Have To Know”

In Conclusion Of This Series

1. The most important thing in life is the quality of our relationships
2. The great destroyer of relationships is offences
3. The church that changes the world models is built on relationships and knows how to handle offences.

I. The 3 Things You Have To Know

A. The Most Important Thing In Life Is The Quality Of Our Relationships

1. Not money. Not success or fame. Not our personal pleasures.
2. Plenty of people have money; but their families are a mess. Many people are famous, but they've had multiple marriages. We have endless entertainments but many people don't have any true friends.
3. When you boil it all down, life is about relationship; as one cultural guru put it...

The quality of our lives is in direct proportion to the quality of our relationships!

4. This is because the God who created all things is a relational God.
 - a. There is ONE God in THREE persons.
 - b. Even within the mystery of the Godhead, there is relationship between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit!

“God is a sweet community within himself.”

Ern Baxter

c. The relational God creates man in His own image and likeness as a relational creature.

5. God made Adam perfect and place him in a Paradise; but then He said...

“It is not good for man to be alone.”

- a. We long for relationships and cannot be happy without them.
- b. This is why the greatest punishment for prisoners is solitary confinement.

3. The great poets write about relationships as an existential fact of life!

“No man is an island unto itself. Every man is a piece of the continent.”

John Donne, 17th Century English Poet

- a. We are born out of relationship (our father and mother)
 - b. We are born into relationship (our family)
 - c. We are born for relationship (marriage and friendships)
4. Since the beginning of time, men have gradually gathered together into cities..
5. So the 1st thing you need to know is that the most important thing in life is the quality of our relationships. The 2nd thing we need to know is that...

B. The Great Destroyer Of Relationships Is Offences

1. Offences are the “bait of Satan” all to one purpose...to destroy relationships.

- a. Between husbands and wives
- b. Between parents and children
- c. Between members of the Body of Christ

2. **The first murder in human history was Cain killing Abel his brother over an offence, which brought a curse upon himself:**

Gen 4:11-12

11 So now you *are* cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. **12** When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth."

- a. God’s judgment upon Cain was that he would be alone, a wandering vagabond.

b. The awfulness of being alone hit him quickly:

13 And Cain said to the Lord , "My punishment *is* greater than I can bear! 14 Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen *that* anyone who finds me will kill me."

- Offence cuts us off from prosperity
- Offence hides God's face from us
- Offence turns us into wanderers and vagabonds

4. Satan's master plan is always to use offences to break up relationships:

- a. When it's between a husband and wife, you get *divorce*
- b. When it's between neighbors, you get *lawsuits*
- c. When it's between nations, you get *wars*

5. Jesus Christ came to make it possible for us to have peace with God and with one another:

a. Our sin and commandment breaking was an offence to God and broke our relationship with Him; but Jesus came to make peace.

6. The great split in the early church was because of offences between Jews and Gentiles; but

Eph 2:14-16

14 For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. **15** He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. **16** Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.

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a.

So #1, The most important thing in life is the quality of our relationships

#2 The great destroyer of relationships is offences

And finally, #3...

C. The Church That Changes The World Is Built Upon Loving Relationships And Knows How To Handle Offences

1. The world is waiting to see the Church that can model relationships that work!

**"By this all men will know that you are My disciples,
if you have love for one another."**

John 13:35

- a. Not by our buildings
- b. Not by our services
- c. Not even by our signs and wonders!

2. The greatest testimony we can offer the world is our love for one another; relationships that work!

1 Corinthians 13:1-4

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. **2** And if I have *the gift of prophecy*, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. **3** And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

3. The church that changes the world has to model loving relationships; and the greatest enemy is offences.

4. So let me conclude this series with some personal pastoral insights.

II. Personal Pastoral Insights On The Local Church

A. Placement

1. Many Christians live in offences because they are in the wrong church.
 - a. They still believe in attending the church of their choice
 - b. Nobody ever told them that church choice is up to God

But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

1 Cor 12:18 NKJV

18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.

2. When you were born, God chose the family you were born into; when you are born again, God chooses the spiritual family where you will grow.

Those who are planted in the House of the Lord will flourish in the courts of our God.

Psalm 92:13

- a. You don't bring home a potted plant, change it from pot to pot every day and expect it to grow; so how do you expect to grow if you keep hopping around from church to church all the time? (Testimony)

3. Next to who you marry, where you go to Church is the most important relationship decision you make.

- a. No woman is perfect; and when you marry her, offences will come; but that's how God grows you up.

- b. No church is perfect; no pastor is perfect; but if God placed you in it, you stick it out through offences.

“Remember that if you are in the place where God wants you, the devil will try to offend you to get you out. He wants to uproot you from the place God plants you.”

John Bevere, The Bait Of Satan

4. The American church is weak and marginalized because of all the spiritual vagabonds bouncing around in it!

For you shall go out with joy and be led forth in peace.

Isaiah 55:12

a. How you go out of one church is how you go in to the next one.

b. When people leave a church offended and bitter, they carry it into the next church; and then we wonder why there's a lack of power.

5. When folks realize how important this is, they'll often ask...

HOW DO I KNOW I AM IN THE RIGHT CHURCH?

6. It's a good question because even though God chooses the church of His choice for us, He does give us some signposts about how to find it. After several decades of ministry, let me offer...

B. 5 Signposts Of Proper Placement In A Local Church

1. It will feel like "home".

a. We've purchased 7 homes in our 50 years of marriage; none of them were perfect; but we never bought a house that didn't feel like it could be a "home" to us.

2. It will feel "safe"; there will be relational credit history in place; in the leaders and among the members.

a. God's sheepfold is a safe place.

b. The leadership has relational "credit history" with a track record of healthy, long-standing relationships that have stood the test of time.

c. There is a sense you can trust the leaders.

3. The mission and core values will resonate with what God has already placed in your own heart.

a. If you find yourself in a place where you don't agree with the mission and the core values, you're in the wrong place.

4. There will be a sense of spiritual growth and "stretching".

a. God will never plant you in a place where you are the most spiritual person in the crowd

b. God will never plant you in a place so you can correct the leadership or re-direct the vision

c. God will plant you in a place where you can grow! The “pot” will be big enough for your roots to dig down deeper.

5. The services and fellowship will bring real “life” to you.

a. If you hate to go to church, you’re in the wrong church

b. But if you go and feel “life” flowing into you, that’s the right place.

c. If you do not feel you’re growing, it’s time to be going.

C. Relationships Grow Us Up

1. We never really grow up on our own!

a. One sure way to grow up is to get married!

b. The next sure way to grow up is to have children!

c. The same applies to spiritual growth and the church.

2. Every NT scripture about personal spiritual growth is always in a context of plurality, of relationship.

3. We can never grow to full stature apart from relationship to the “Body of Christ”.

D. Conclusion

1. If the quality of our relationships is the most important thing in life...

2. And if we know that offences are the bait of satan to destroy those relationships...

3. We have to fight for our relationships and never bite the bait of Satan, offences designed to destroy our relationships.

Happy wife, happy life!

TWO RULES FOR HUSBANDS

#1 Your wife is always right

#2 When you think she's wrong, slap yourself and re-read rule #1

Rule #3 Make your wife happy by telling her the 3 words every woman wants to hear: "Here's my wallet."