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**Lesson Three: When a Brother or Sister is Offended.**

**Introduction.** We saw in our previous lesson the kind of attitudes that should characterize relationships between brothers. These principles show brothers in Christ how to interact with one another. One of the most serious threats to proper relationships can come when something happens that causes an offense between brethren.

**I. The Biblical Definitions of “Offense.”**

A. The Greek word translated “offend” is *skandalizo* (σκανδαλίζω) meaning “to put a stumbling block or impediment in the way, upon which another may trip and fall” (Thayer). This can refer to action that leads another to sin.

1. What should one be willing to do to avoid “offending” a brother (Romans 14:19-23)?

In the context, what would such offense cause?

B. Sometimes it can also refer to simply being upset by another. A secondary meaning of *skandalizo* (σκανδαλίζω) is “since one who stumbles or whose foot gets entangled feels annoyed” it can mean “to cause one displeasure at a thing…to make indignant…to be displeased” (Thayer).

1. Whom did Jesus say would be “blessed” (Matthew 11:1-5)?

In the context, how might one be “offended” by Jesus?

Did Jesus cause people to sin?

2. Why were those from Jesus homeland “offended” (Matthew 13:53-58)?

3. Why were the Pharisees “offended” by Jesus (Matthew 15:7-13)?

Was he causing them to sin?

How is it that they were “offended”?

**II. Offenses to a Brother.**

A. Types of offenses.

1. How might a brother or sister “offend” another in the primary sense of this word?

2. How might a brother or sister “offend” another in the secondary sense of this word?

B. Biblical solutions to these problems.

1. Guard our influence with others. Explain the phrase “have regard for good things in the sight of all men” (Romans 12:16-18):

How can this be compromised?

2. Have a willingness to sacrifice liberties. Under what circumstances does Paul command someone to eat and not to eat (1 Corinthians 10:24-33)?

What should be our attitude toward the conscience of a brother or sister?

3. Assume the best about the other person. Explain the phrases “believes all things, hopes all things” (1 Corinthians 13:4-6):

How can this be demonstrated when we have been offended?

4. Talk to the person. What should we do if a brother has “sinned against” us (Matthew 18:15-17)?

Does gossip harmonize with this command?

5. Forgive one another. What must be does if someone has a “complaint” against another (Col. 3:12-13)?

Whose example are we to follow in this?

Explain the command to “bear with” one another:

6. Be patient with one another. Explain the term “longsuffering” (Eph. 4:1-3):

What might demonstrate impatience with a brother or sister?