

METRO U

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New Testament Mission Baptist Church

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Fall Semester Syllabus

September 14 – November 16, 2022

Metro U is an educational opportunity offered by the Metropolitan New Testament Mission Baptist Church. Its inaugural launch was in September 2017 and the 2022 Fall semester will mark its Tenth semester of study.

The 2022 Fall Semester presentation outline is as follows:

SESSION	DATE	SESSION TOPICS
1	September 14, 2022	Lest We Offend Them – Pt. 1
2	September 21, 2022	Lest We Offend Them – Pt. 2
3	September 28, 2022	[Small Groups Session]
4	October 5, 2022	Forgiveness You Don't Give, You Don't Get – Pt. 1
5	October 12, 2022	Forgiveness You Don't Give, You Don't Get – Pt. 2
6	October 19, 2022	[Small Groups Session]
7	October 26, 2022	Revenge the Trap – Pt. 1
8	November 2, 2022	Revenge the Trap – Pt. 2
9	November 9, 2022	Escaping the Trap – Pt. 1
10	November 16, 2022	Escaping the Trap – Pt. 2

THE BAIT OF SATAN

BY JOHN BEVERE

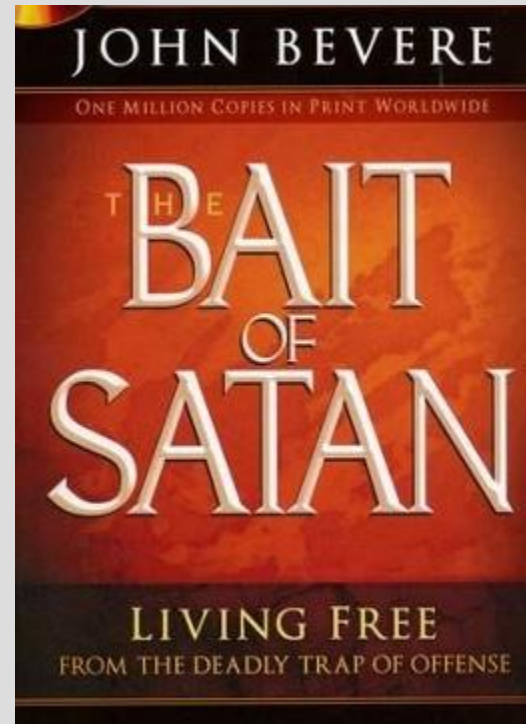


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LEST WE OFFEND THEM

What Does it Mean?

S T U M B L E

To trip in walking or moving in any way; to err; to slide into a crime or an error; to *obstruct* in progress; to cause to trip or stop; to confound, to puzzle, to perplex. Note: The word offense comes from the Greek word *skandalon*, which carries the meaning of a “stumbling block:-- something that becomes a hindrance and causes people to fall away from their faith in Jesus Christ.

POWER POINT

“We should make it our aim not to cause another to stumble because of our personal liberty. What we do may even be permissible according to the Scriptures. But ask yourself: ‘Does it seek the edification of another or myself?’”

-John Bevere (The Bait of Satan)

LEST WE OFFEND THEM

1. Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Lord of heaven and earth. If any one had a right to be served, He did. Yet He said He "...did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

a. Slowly **read** Philippians 2:5-8. Take time to think about what rights Jesus actually surrendered and write them out.

b. **Read** John 13:1-17. What did Jesus do to the disciples? What does it signify and what does it say to you personally?

LEST WE OFFEND THEM

Putting It into Practice

THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE OF LOVE

Few subjects have been talked about, written about, or sung about more than love. Now, I'm not talking about the "love" you may have for chocolate chip cookies or the family dog. I'm talking about the all-powerful, unconditional, everlasting love of God through Jesus Christ. Love is a universal language that goes beyond all barriers of race, religion, culture and speech. Christ's sacrificial love living in us is the only remedy for our natural inclination to be proud, self-centered and numb to the needs of others.

A WORD *from* THE WISE

"The essence of Christ's love is that it is sacrificial....Jesus told His disciples, 'Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends' (Joh 15:13). Identifying Himself as the Good Shepherd, He proclaimed, 'I lay down my life for the sheep....No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord' (John 10:15,18). Sacrificial love is rarely easy or fun. To love people as Christ loved may cost you some time, money, energy, comfort, and convenience. And yet John, the apostle of love, challenges us, 'Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers' (1 John 3:16). As the grateful recipients of sacrificial love, we must love sacrificially."

-Josh McDowell & Norm Geisler

LEST WE OFFEND THEM

Prayer of Commitment

Father, I ask You to forgive me for being selfish—for being more concerned about my rights and what I want instead of considering those around me (speak out any specific person the Holy Spirit brings to your mind). I don't want to be a stumbling block to anyone. Give me a greater hunger for You. I want to want You more than anything else in life. I want to understand and experience Your love for me more than ever before. And out of our relationship, I want to have a greater love and compassion for those around me—believers and unbelievers alike. Teach me how to be a true servant—one who walks continually in love and humility. Thank You for Your mercy, for my failures and for grace to grow into the image of the greatest servant of all—Jesus. In His Name I pray, Amen!

SMALL GROUP STUDY

FORGIVENESS: YOU DON'T GIVE-YOU DON'T GET

What Does it Mean?

FORGIVENESS

The Greek word for *forgive* primarily means “to send forth, send away; to remit or forgive debts or sins, completely *cancelling* them.” To receive forgiveness “signifies the remission [release or discharge] of the punishment due to the sinful conduct; the deliverance of the sinner from the divine penalty.” Forgiveness also involves the complete removal of the cause of offense, based upon Jesus becoming our substitution—the atoning sacrifice that appeased God’s wrath for our sins.

FORGIVENESS: YOU DON'T GIVE-YOU DON'T GET

1. The desire and ability to forgive others begins with receiving God's forgiveness for our own sin. Just like everyone needs to shower or bathe regularly to be cleansed from physical dirt, we all need forgiveness regularly to be cleansed from spiritual dirt, or sin.
 - a. What do you think your life would be like if you were forbidden to take a shower, wash your hair, or brush your teeth for a month? What if it was like that for the rest of your life?

FORGIVENESS: YOU DON'T GIVE-YOU DON'T GET

Putting It into Practice

FORGIVENESS: DON'T LIVE LIFE WITHOUT IT!

Essentially, when we get saved (become born again), we are filled with an overabundance of *love* and *gratitude*. We walk around with a supernatural love in our hearts for virtually everybody we come in contact with. However, over time we begin to forget how wretched we once were when we first came to Christ—we forget the depth of the dirt that God pulled us out of and the things He forgave us of. To a degree, we subconsciously begin to assume the goodness in our lives is something we have produced on our own—we begin to think our lives are blessed because of something we did. Pride seeps into our soul and begins to blind us to the reality that our lives are what they are because of God's mercy, grace and forgiveness.

the truth is, "...we have all become like one who is unclean [ceremonially, like a leper}, and all our righteousness (our *best deeds* of rightness and justice) is like filthy rags or a polluted garment... (Isaiah 64:6 AMP). Yet, God stands ready to forgive us again and again—even for the same sins we have done repeatedly. How often does God forgive you? Probably more than you can count. He doesn't get tired of forgiving us, and He doesn't want us to get tired of forgiving others.

Take some time to go before the Father in prayer. Even if you have been hurt very deeply by someone and are finding it hard to forgive them, ask the Lord to help you "want to want" to forgive them. God will honor your efforts and bring healing to your heart from hurt you have suffered.

FORGIVENESS: YOU DON'T GIVE-YOU DON'T GET

POUR IT OUT ON PAPER

Take some time to **write a letter** to the person who has hurt you. After you express the pain in your soul over what they did, apologize for holding onto unforgiveness toward them. Let them know that you forgive and release them. End the letter by *blessing* them with God's best for their lives. You may or may not mail this letter, but taking the time to write it will work wonders within your soul. May God's grace be with you.

FORGIVENESS: YOU DON'T GIVE-YOU DON'T GET

JOURNAL YOUR JOURNEY

When you forgive someone else, you're actually doing yourself a favor. How? Well, when you forgive someone else, you obey God *and* you release the feelings of anger that are making you miserable. If you are still angry about something that happened yesterday, last week or last year, isn't it time to let it go and go on with your life? You can't change what happened yesterday, but by walking in forgiveness you can make today and tomorrow a whole lot better and brighter.

Get alone with the Lord in a quiet place and ask Him to show you anyone you are holding offense against. Look back over the names you wrote down in the *Putting it into Practice* section of Session 1 to jog your memory. When you see someone's face, name or actions parade through your mind, ask God to specifically forgive you for holding onto unforgiveness against them. Forgive them... Release them...Then *bless* them.



REVENGE: THE TRAP

1. Jesus was severely mistreated by the Jewish leaders, Roman officials and soldiers who crucified Him. Yet, He didn't retaliate or try to avenge Himself. He knew why He had come to earth, and the Holy Spirit confirmed that it was time to lay his life down (see Matthew 20:28; John 12:23-24; 18:4).

- a. **Read** Isaiah 53:3-7, Matthew 26:62-63 and 1 Peter 2:23. describe how Jesus responded to the unfair treatment He received.

- b. What do these verses speak to you in light of the situations you are dealing with?

REVENGE: THE TRAP

Read these Scriptures on anger and write out the wisdom worth remembering in each verse.

SCRIPTURE	Personalize the <i>wisdom worth remembering in each verse.</i>
Psalms 37:8	I will
Proverbs 14:16-17	I will not
Proverbs 15:1	I will
Proverbs 16:32	I will
Proverbs 22:24-25	I will not
Proverbs 29:11	I will
James 1:19	I will

REVENGE: THE TRAP

Putting It into Practice

CLASS IS NOW IN SESSION!

Corrie Ten Boom said, “The best learning I had came from *teaching*.” So, for this week’s activity, pretend that you are the teacher. Your class is not just made up of any students—it is filled with people you deeply love and don’t want to see fall into the fatal trap of offense.

Take a few moments to stop and think. What would you share with your closest and dearest friends to avoid the trap of offense? What is helping you stay free from offense? List three or more specific things the Lord has taught and revealed to you through these sessions. Include any Scriptures that He has made alive to you along the way.

REVENGE: THE TRAP

Prayer of Commitment

Father, I come before You recognizing that I have a desire to get even with some of the people who have hurt me. I now realize that I don't want to seek revenge and be tied to them for the rest of my life. Therefore, I ask You to forgive me for holding onto unforgiveness toward _____ (the person who offended you). By Your grace, I choose to forgive and release _____ (person's name). They don't owe me an apology or anything else. They can't pay me back for the pain they caused in my life, but You can. I release them into Your hands. You and You alone are the Judge—not me. You are all-knowing and will judge them and me fairly. I don't want any roots of bitterness in my life. Your Word says that even if I only have a little faith, I can still speak to the deeply rooted tree of offense, and it will be uprooted and thrown into the sea. (see Luke 17:1-6.) so that's what I do. The only roots I want in my life are ones that go deep down into You and Your everlasting love. From now on, I ask You to help me deal with my anger quickly and not "stuff" my feelings inside my soul. May I run to You for wisdom and grace to deal with the issues that confront me. I give You permission, Holy Spirit, to fiercely confront me the moment I think about not forgiving someone or avenging myself. Thank You, Father, for hearing and answering my prayer. In Jesus' name, Amen!

NOTES

ESCAPING THE TRAP

What Does it Mean?

EXERCISE

Exertion made for the sake of training or physical fitness [or spiritual fitness]; a task or problem done or practiced to develop skill, The Greek work for exercise in Acts 24:16 is *askeo*—a word which generally signifies “to take pains, endeavor, exercise by training or discipline,” in an attempt to keep one’s conscience void of offense.

1. As Jesus clearly pointed out in Luke 17:1, it is impossible for offenses not to come. Therefore, if you are going to live free of offense, it is going to take ongoing effort—effort Paul compares to *exercise*. Exercise is something few of us like to talk about, much less do. Yet, it is a powerful and needed tool to provide us with a healthy body and soul.

ESCAPING THE TRAP

Read these Scriptures regarding different types of spiritual training. Write out the kind of exercise described in each verse; state how involved you are and the benefits associated with each one.

Scripture	Exercise/Discipline	Are you active in this? If so, how and what benefits are associated with it?
Psalm 34:14; 1 Peter 3:11		
Matthew 6:16-18		
Matthew 5:14-16; 28:19-20		
Acts 24:16; Ephesians 4:26-27		
Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 4:8		
Ephesians 6:18 1 Thessalonians 5:17		
Ephesians 4:32		
2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16		
Ephesians 6:11-17		

ESCAPING THE TRAP

Putting It into Practice

SUMMARIZING THE STEPS

Forgiveness is not making excuses or explaining why someone did what they did to you. Forgiveness is not forgetting about the offense and believing that time will heal the hurt. Forgiveness is not asking the Lord to forgive you for being angry and enraged at the person who hurt you. And forgiveness is not denying you were hurt or downplaying your wound in the light of what other people have suffered. Forgiveness is recognizing that you are hurt and what the person did to you was wrong—period. As an act of your will you choose to forgive their offense, cancelling the debt they owe you, just as God the Father cancelled your debt through faith in Jesus Christ.

SEVEN STEPS TO FORGIVENESS

1. Admit that you were hurt by _____ When they _____ to you.
2. Ask God to forgive you for holding on to the offense and unforgiveness toward _____
3. As an act of your will, choose to release and forgive _____
4. Ask God to remove any roots of bitterness in your soul and heal the wound(s) with His intense love.
5. Take back the soil of your soul that was once infected by offense and rededicate it to Jesus.
6. Pray a heartfelt prayer of blessing over the person who hurt you, asking God to bless them with the kind of things you'd like to see in your own life.
7. Thank and praise the Lord for His mercy, grace and forgiveness doing a wonderful work in you!

ESCAPING THE TRAP

JOURNAL YOUR JOURNEY

If you are holding on to offense because someone hurt you or they hurt someone very close to you, it is time to break free. God has ordained your steps to be studying this curriculum and working through this workbook and journal at this very moment in your life (see Psalm 37:23; Proverbs 16:9). He is deeply and desperately in love with YOU! He wants nothing to stand between you and Him—including unforgiveness toward someone who has hurt you.

A WORD *from* THE WISE

“Our healing is dependent on our *willingness* to forgive those who have hurt us. If you ... choose not to forgive, then you’ll spend the rest of your life fighting the results of having missed the blessing. Healing cannot take place. On the other hand, if you *forgive*, the hurt feelings can be put behind, and you can find a fulfilling life.”

-Gary Smalley & John Trent, PH.D.

ESCAPING THE TRAP

POINTS TO PONDER

Ask yourself: Am I **offended**—am I irritated, aggravated, annoyed, or disappointed with. . .

- My wife or husband? My ex-wife or ex-husband?
- My father or mother? My brother or sister?
- A family member, friend or neighbor?
- A former teacher, professor or community leader?
- My pastor or a church leader? My former pastor or church leader?
- My boss, supervisor or co-worker? My former boss, supervisor or co-worker?

Ask yourself, Am I **ready** to. . .

Release them, forgive them and pray a blessing over their life?

- Tear up the tally sheet recording their wrongs and cancel the debt they owe me?
- Let Christ enter my wound and clean out the cancerous contamination of offense?
- Begin exercising to keep my conscience free from offense toward God and others?

ESCAPING THE TRAP

Cleansing Prayer of Forgiveness & Release

Heavenly Father, I come before You once again asking You to bring to my mind all the people I need to release and forgive. (Be still and write any names that come to mind.) Remind me of what they said or did to me that hurt me. (Write their actions next to their name. If tears well up in you, let them flow. They help cleanse the wound.) Please forgive me for holding on to unforgiveness toward _____ and wash me clean with the blood of Jesus. As an act of my will, I forgive and release _____ (name each person individually). Just as Jesus asked You to forgive the people who sinned against Him, I ask You to forgive these people who have sinned against me. I choose to BLESS and not curse them—spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally. I ask You to bless them with good things. And every time I am reminded of what they did, please give me the grace to pray for them and not judge or criticize them with my mind or mouth. Thank you, Father, for this awesome revelation on offense and for giving me a new lease on life! In Jesus' name, Amen!

NOTES
