THE SPIRIT OF OFFENCE

How the Heart Is Closed by What It Will Not Release

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Preface

Offence is a quiet trap.
It does not announce itself. It does not knock. It comes dressed as a fair complaint, a justified hurt, a word that should never have been spoken.

I wrote of familiarity — of how honour is eroded by what becomes too common. But I have watched something follow familiarity like a shadow. What the heart first takes lightly, it soon takes offence at.

I have seen it in churches, in ministries, in families, and in friendships that once burned bright.
Many who walked away did not walk away over doctrine.
They walked away over a wound they would not release.

This book is written to the one who has been hurt — and to the one who soon will be.
Offences will come. Jesus said so. But you were never made to be caught by them.

In these pages you will find a simple call: Do not take the bait.

May these words find the place where the trap was set.
May they open what offence has closed.
May your heart be free again — free to receive all that heaven sends.

— Emmanuel Mukisa

CHAPTER

1

The Nature of Offence

Offence is not first a feeling.
It is bait.

The word the New Testament uses is *skandalon*. It was the bait-stick of a trap — the trigger on which the bait was set. The creature does not see the trap. It sees the bait. It reaches for what looks like its due, and the moment it takes hold, the trap springs shut.

That is offence.
It looks like your right. It looks like justice. It looks like something you are owed — an apology, an explanation, recognition, honour. You reach for it, you take hold of it, and the trap closes around you.

Jesus did not say offences might come. He said, "It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!" (Luke 17:1).
The bait will be set. In the home, in the church, in ministry, in friendship — it will be set.
People will speak carelessly. Leaders will make decisions you do not understand. Brothers will fail you. Words will be said that should never have been said.

But hear this: whether the bait is set is not in your hands. Whether the trap closes is.

Notice what Jesus said next. He did not leave the warning standing alone. In the same breath He gave the answer: "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him" (Luke 17:3–4).

Take heed to yourselves. Not to the one who offended you — to yourselves.

The warning is about the trap. The command is about your heart. Jesus knew the bait would be set, so He told you what to do before it came: speak plainly, forgive freely, and keep forgiving.

Seven times in a day. That is not a man who keeps a record. That is a man who refuses to carry one.

The trap does not close on the one who sets the bait. It closes on the one who takes it. That is the deception of offence. The offender may walk away and sleep well; the offended carries the trap for years. The wound was given in a moment. The offence is kept by choice.

Offence is subtle because it feels righteous. No one who is offended believes himself to be wrong. He believes himself to be wronged. And so he guards his offence as though it were a treasure, when it is a snare.

Scripture shows us another kind of heart. "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Psalm 119:165).

It does not say nothing will happen to them. It says nothing shall offend them.

The bait is set before them as it is set before anyone else. But it finds no hand reaching for it. Their love for the Word has set their hearts where offence cannot reach.

This is the heart God has given you in Christ. You are a new creation. The love of God has been shed abroad in your heart. You were not made to be trapped.

The bait is not your choice.
Taking it is.

CHAPTER

2

From Familiarity to Offence