

## **The Bait of Satan.**

### **Introduction.**

The spiritual temperature around us is increasing. As hopelessness increases, people will look for hope. I am already hearing stories of people asking Christians about the hope they see they have.

The enemy of our souls, Satan and those spiritual forces that serve him know their days are numbered. Like a wounded bear in its death throws, the bear, which will soon perish, is perhaps more dangerous in the short term than a healthy one. In the same way, the demonic, in its death throw, becomes more dangerous.

The demonic, knowing the spiritual temperature is increasing, wants to take out as many Christians as possible. He is looking for “chinks” in our armour, and one of his main tactics to render us useless on the battlefield is offence.

Every person will have to deal with offence. The Father works through offences to reveal the depth of mercy, grace and forgiveness we’ve received so that we can be transformed into the likeness of Jesus. The demonic seeks to use offence to destroy us and those around us.

C.S.Lewis, in his parody, “The Screwtape letters”, has Uncle Screwtape, a senior devil, mentoring his junior demonic nephew in how to destroy the faith of his Christian “patient”

*“Your patient must demand that all his own utterances are to be taken at their face value and judged simply on the actual words, while at the same time judging others with the fullest and most over-sensitive interpretation of the tone and context and the suspected intention...Once this habit is well established you have the delightful situation of a human saying things with the express purpose of offending and yet having a grievance when offence is taken...”*

Dealing with our hurts and offences can bring healing, freedom, and release in our own lives, the very thing that Jesus declared he had come for (Luke 4:18-19). It can also put us in touch with the enormity of our hope in Jesus, making us better carriers of Christ’s hope in a lost world.

### **The book.**

This series is based on John Bevere’s book, “The Bait of Satan.” One Christian pastor friend of mine told me he thinks every Christian should read it every year because of its ability to help us continue to live out of the mercy and grace of God.

I would encourage you to read or listen to it if you can. At the time of writing this, there were good stocks at Koorong and Amazon. You can also listen to it as an audiobook.

## **How to use this study.**

For each small group time, we will use the Lectio Divina method. If you are not familiar with this, it goes like this.

## **P-R-A-Y**

### **Pause.**

We will pause using a worship song and/or scripture to pause and thank God for his mercy, forgiveness and grace.

### **Rejoice and Reflect on God's word.**

We will pick one or two passages pertinent to the topic presented on the previous Sunday. We will read the passage out a couple of times. We will then invite each person in our group to say that word or phrase jumped out at them. We'll then have a couple of group reflection questions to allow us to consider what the Holy Spirit might be saying to us.

### **Ask.**

As we read God's word and talk together, the Holy Spirit will speak to us, inviting us to trust and obey God. When this occurs, we often see that we don't have the mental, emotional, spiritual or physical resources we need. This is where we can simply ask God to do what only he can do whilst being surrounded by those in our small group who want to pray with us in our request.

### **Yield**

After we have asked for help, the Holy Spirit begins to show us how to walk what we've prayed out. If you get clarity about what's next, it's great to share it with your group. If you don't know the next step, a great question to ask each other is, "What would you need to know about the next step?"

Finally, we finish by praying together about what the Holy Spirit has revealed, yielding our will to his will.

## **Week 1. Massive offence** (if you are reading the book, look at Chapter 1&2).

*Jesus made it very clear that it is impossible to live in this world and not have the opportunity to become offended. Yet most believers are shocked, bewildered, and amazed when it happens. We believe we are the only ones who have been wronged. This response leaves us vulnerable to a root of bitterness.*

*Therefore, we must be prepared and armed for offences, because our response determines our future.*

John Bevere, Pg 6. "The bait of Satan."

### **Pause in Yahweh's presence together.**

Take some time to meditate on a verse in a psalm that reminds you of God's faithfulness.

### **Reflect on a scripture**

And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you...And then many will be offended, betray one another, and hate one another. 11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. Matthew 24:4 &9-11

### **What stands out to each person in your group about this passage?**

A couple of weeks ago, Joel spoke about deception as we looked at the broader topic of discernment. Joel said there were three places in the bible where we are deceived: Satan, others and ourselves. All three are represented in this passage.

What response, thought or feeling does it invoke in you when you consider each of these "deceivers?"

- Satan
- Others
- Yourself

Giving into any of these deceiver's results is designed to achieve the same result, that the agape'/love of believers would grow cold. Agape Love is God's divine love. As human beings, unconditional love is something we cannot do ourselves.

2. When we give into offence, so when we give into offence, what is it that is really "growing cold?"  
(If you're not sure, consider Ephesians 4:30)

When someone has hurt us, we can feel justified in hanging onto the unforgiveness surrounding that hurt. When we do, several things happen.

- We lose sight of what God has forgiven us for
- We put ourselves in God's judgment seat
- And as a result, we leave ourselves open to demonic attack.

**Ask.**

What has the Holy Spirit revealed to you this week? Where do you need to ask for his help (remember the Holy Spirit is called the helper John 14:26).

Take a few moments to pray and chew on this prayer David penned:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.” —Psalm 139:23- 24.

Ask God, “Is there any offense in my heart? Am I holding on to un-forgiveness toward someone who has hurt or disappointed me? Please show me, Lord. In Jesus’s name, Amen.” Be still and listen. What is God revealing to you? Write down any names and situations that come to mind.

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**Yield.**

Take a moment now and release these people and situations to the Lord. Ask Him to forgive you for holding on to offence and invite Him into your heart and circumstances. What He reveals, He will heal as you let Him into your life. Jot down anything else God is speaking to you. Remember that the pain may not leave immediately, and that’s okay. This prayer of release is a step of faith.