

# NO OFFENSE TAKEN

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As he retells his story, for the umpteenth time, he wants to make sure that you get offended with him. Aware that he's recruiting you, wanting you to take sides with him against a common enemy, you do your best to listen objectively. By the time he's finished with his tale, you're wondering why the people he's described are still alive. Hitler, Stalin and Ida Amin were small fry compared to the people that wounded this poor man. Anyone who has experienced what he's been through deserves a purple heart. It's hard to imagine that people could be so vicious. You're on the verge of tears and ready to vindicate this victim of ecclesiastical brutality when your poor friend says, "and because of that I haven't been to church in the past twenty years." It happened twenty years ago, but he can tell you about it like it happened yesterday. You know people who beat terminal cancer three times in the past twenty years and this guy is still carry the wounds of an offense that occurred twenty years ago. He wasn't wounded in a drive-by-shooting or stabbed by an angry passerby. He wasn't infected with AIDS by a rapist and left for dead in a back alley. He experienced none of these things, but it might have been better if his wounds were merely physical. He was offended. Someone violated him with their words, causing him pain and leaving him with a wound that has festered for twenty years. He is resentful and angry, and anyone who doesn't side with him against his offenders instantly becomes his enemy.

In 2 Samuel 15, an offended embittered young man leads an insurrection against his father. It did not start with flashing swords and flying javelins, but with **acts** of kindness and winning **words** that were done and spoken with ill intent. "So Absalom stole away the hearts of the men of Israel" (15:6). As David leaves town he teaches us what it takes to face insurrection and personal attack.

- I. **PURPOSE MUST TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER POSITION (2 Samuel 15:13-15).** David refused to retain the throne at the expense of Jerusalem's destruction. He did not gain the throne by military might, but was exalted by God. What God gives us must be kept by trusting God.
  - A. David valued God's purpose more than his position.
  - B. David valued God's people (Israel) his position
  - C. David valued God's place (Jerusalem) more than his position.
  
- II. **THE ARK WAS NOT HIS POSSESSION (2 Samuel 15:24-29).** David did not view the Ark as his possession. It was a symbol of God's presence and belonged to the nation, not the king. David chose to put his trust in God, not in the symbol of God's presence.
  - A. The Tithe belongs to God.
  - B. The anointing belongs to God.
  
- III. **SEEING GOD'S PURPOSE EVEN IN THE MIDST OF PROBLEMS (2 Samuel 16:9-14).** David saw the purpose of God in the actions of his enemies. Joseph said, "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good." God give me the ability to hear your voice even when the enemy is speaking.

**Conclusion:** The twofold secret to David's victory was, in NT terms, death to self, humility – total recognition of his dependence upon God and total reliance upon God.