



## Dealing With Hurt and Offence

### *What the Bible Says*

A hazard of the boxing ring is the distinct possibility of getting physically hurt. Every boxer, professional or amateur, knows the risk of, for instance, a broken nose, a cut eyebrow, being winded by a body punch or even being knocked out cold, risking long-term brain damage. A hazard of life generally though is also the distinct possibility of getting hurt in some way. Here, I am not referring to something as unsubtle as a black eye, but to the more insidious pain of inner hurt, and that crushing feeling of inward offence. To be human is to be sensitive. Being on the receiving end of a deliberate or accidental offence and consequently feeling hurt inside can be a great problem for us all at sometime. What do we do at such times? Does the Bible – God’s Word – address this issue? Yes it does. Consider the following:

1. **First of all, it is not wrong for us to feel hurt.** Mark 3:5 describes an occasion when the Lord Jesus himself *“looked around at them with anger, grieved by their hardness of heart.”* Then in 2 Timothy 4:14 Paul relates how *“Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm...”* If both the sinless Son of God and the great Apostle Paul winced with inward hurt then, we will too. We are only human and we are part of a fallen world. So whilst we do not welcome getting hurt, it is unrealistic not to expect it at some time. How though are we meant to react?
2. **The Bible teaches non-retaliation.** By this it warns us not to add fuel to the fire and make a bad situation worse. Jesus said in Matthew 6:39: *“But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.”* And Paul wrote in Romans 12:17, 19: *“Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all ... Beloved, never avenge yourselves but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’”* Vengeance then is God’s prerogative, not ours. It is natural, of course, to want to retaliate and ‘get even.’ But the Christian faith is not natural – it is a supernatural faith. God’s Holy Spirit, living within us, enables us to live and empowers us to live, think, act and not act, in a way and manner altogether differently from the normal.
3. **The Bible often reminds us that we have a Father in heaven** to whom we can turn when we get hurt – or in fact at any time. *“Call upon Me in the day of trouble.”* (Psalm 50:15) *“Cast your burden on the LORD and He will sustain you.”* (Psalm 55:22) In this, we have the positive example of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. How did he deal with personal offence? 1 Peter 2:23 tells us: *“When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered He did not threaten; but He trusted to Him Who Judges Justly.”* In leaving the personal abuse he received in God’s hand, Jesus has given us, his followers, an example to emulate.
4. **In praying to God about those who have wounded us,** is it wrong to pray that he will take vengeance upon them? Putting my head on the block, I would suggest that it is not necessarily wrong, not that I can ever recall doing this. Many of the Psalms are what are known as ‘imprecatory’ Psalms. In these, the Psalmist prays that God would avenge his enemies. It is certainly infinitely better to ask God for vengeance on our enemies than to take revenge ourselves, for we can be sure that God will never punish unjustly, or too much or too little, or be handicapped by wounded pride and personal prejudice as we are.

Remember too that in God’s dealings with us – including the harsher people and providences he sends our way – Psalm 145:17 holds true: *“The LORD is Just in all His ways, and kind in all His doings.”* Even our pain then will turn out ultimately for our blessing, for Romans 8:28 says

that without exception: *“We know that in everything God works for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose.”*

5. **Finally, no matter what internal scars we carry**, if we are Christians, we must always remind ourselves and rejoice that our Gospel is a Gospel of the forgiveness of sins. *“Christ died for our sins.”* (1 Cor 15:3) *“Your sins are forgiven for His sake.”* (1 John 2:12) Our sin offends almighty God, but in Christ he had mercy upon us.

Every Christian is a recipient of the mercy of God – a full and free forgiveness, gained by Christ’s undergoing the punishment for our sins, in our place, on Calvary’s cross. Surely, if we know that God, in Christ, has forgiven us all our sins, our attitude towards others will be that much more merciful. Hence Paul exhorted in Ephesians 4:32: *“Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”*

So, in this wonderful, but at times painful world, it pays to fix our eyes on Jesus and his redeeming love. The cross of Christ keeps everything that happens to us in its right perspective:

*Give me a sight O Saviour  
Of Thy wondrous love to me  
Of the love that brought Thee down to earth  
To die on Calvary*

*O wonder of all wonders  
That through Thy death for me  
My open sins, my secret sins  
Can all forgiven be*

*O make me understand it  
Help me to take it in  
What it meant for Thee, the Holy One  
To bear away my sin.*

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