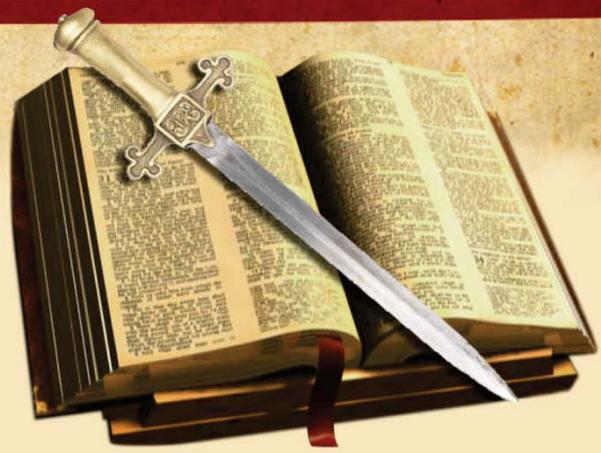


Setting Your Heart on the Kingdom



PHILEMON

Offenses, Failures and Rejection!

(The Principle of: Time and Reconciliation)

Philemon 23-25

He was young and zealous for God. As John Mark packed his gear, his heart raced with anticipation. This was his first big chance to do something great...travel with the famous Apostle Paul and his older cousin Barnabas to spread the Gospel of Christ to the world. As he made final preparations, his mind flashed to that incredible event five years earlier. He had personally heard Peter's testimony of his miraculous deliverance from prison (*Acts 12:12-17*). Mark couldn't wait to get into the middle of the action...to stand in the face of danger, defy death and declare God's power! But all that quickly changed. *Only a few weeks into the mission, Mark's courage fell apart!* He left and returned home scared, sick and disgraced (*Acts 13:13*). Then, to add insult to injury, Paul was so highly offended at him that he refused to take him on further missions. In fact, the issue became so heated that Paul and Barnabas broke fellowship and went their separate ways (*Acts 15:36-40*)! *John Mark had failed miserably and was rejected! He alienated both himself and his cousin from the great apostle Paul.*

Apostles are human too. They have intense feelings and tempers, just like you! They can be opinionated and argumentative, just like you! They offend, get offended and need reconciliation, just like you! Yet in the midst of their humanness they have an incredible anointing to reach the world. Such was Paul in his early ministry...so consumed with his mission that he didn't have time for weak leaders. *But look at the next 10 years.* Mark, who failed in the beginning, penned the first account of Jesus' life...the "Gospel according to Mark!" Paul eventually reconciled their differences. *And even more, Mark became Paul's trusted friend and fellow worker in ministry (Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philem. 24).*

When it comes to Offenses, Failures and Rejection, time and God are your best friends. In time, people can repent and get their hearts right. In time, God can heal wounds and hurt feelings. In time, God can reconcile embittered hearts and broken spirits. Yes, God can heal instantly, but He knows people need time. What happened to John Mark? In time, he was fully reconciled. *So, what about your failures and offenses? Give it time and pray for God's intervention. Be at peace with all people so far as it depends on you (Rom. 12:18)!*

Next: The Kingdom of God in Hebrews - Turning Misery Into Ministry!

