

## Taking the offensive without giving cause for offence

For more resources, see <https://musingoutloud.com/on-offending-being-offended/>

### 1. Scripture teaches a balance between trying too hard not to offend people and not trying hard enough.

*Then the disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?" – Matt 15:12*

When the New Testament talks about *offending* people it means *making them stumble*.

G4348-4350 + 677 – proskope (stone of stumbling)

G4624-4625 – skandalizo (rock of offense)

On the one hand

Expect the gospel to give offense. (Rom 9:32-33, 1 Cor 1:23, Gal 5:11, 1 Peter 2:7-8)

Expect to be unfairly slandered. (Luke 6:26, Mat 5:11-12, John 16:2, 2 Tim 3:12, 1 Peter 4:12-16)

Don't be afraid of not pleasing people. (Gal 1:10, John 5:44, 1 Peter 3:14)

On the other hand

Scripture teaches us the value to our witness of being peacemakers. (Rom 12:18, 1 Peter 2:12, 3:15-16, James 1:20, 3:18)

Scripture warns us to remember who the real enemy is. (Eph 6:12, 2 Tim 2:24-26)

Scripture is very clear that we should not give cause for offense. (Matt 18:7, 1 Cor 10:32)

2 Cor 6:3 “giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited”

Weapons for the right hand and the left (2 Cor 6:3-10)

#### **Right hand**

in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness,  
in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, in the word of truth, in the power of God;

by glory, by good report  
yet we are true, well-known, alive, not put to death, always rejoicing, making many rich, possessing all things

#### **Left hand**

in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses  
in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger,

by dishonor, by evil report  
regarded as deceivers, unknown, dying, punished, sorrowful, poor, having nothing

Prov 18:19 A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city,  
And contentions are like the bars of a citadel.

### **How do we keep the balance?**

Two key attitude checks:

1. Don't take pride in being offended and don't take pride in offending. (Prov 19:11, 12:18)
2. Don't be pugnacious. (1 Tim 3:3, Titus 1:7)

## 2. The wisdom of being winsome.

Winsome: attractive or appealing in appearance or character

*The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable.* (Prov 15:2)

Five ways to be winsome with the truth

### 1. Time it right

*Like apples of gold in settings of silver  
Is a word spoken in right circumstances.*

*Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold  
Is a wise reprove to a listening ear.* (Prov 25:11-12)

This will require self-restraint. (Prov 10:19, 12:23, 14:33, 15:28, 17:27, 29:20)

### 2. Cultivate a gentle manner

*A gentle answer turns away wrath,  
But a harsh word stirs up anger.* (Prov 15:1)

This is easier if you truly believe the best about people. (Ph'p 4:8-9)

### 3. Work to understand the other person's point of view.

*A fool does not delight in understanding,  
But only in revealing his own mind.* (Prov 18:2)

It helps if you are reasonable. (James 3:17)

### 4. Be direct.

*Faithful are the wounds of a friend,  
But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.* (Prov 27:6)

Don't flatter. (Prov 27:5, 28:4, 29:5)

Example: Nathan. 2 Samuel 12:1-13.

### 5. Beware of trolls.

*Do not answer a fool according to his folly,  
Lest you also be like him.*

*Answer a fool according to his folly,  
Lest he be wise in his own eyes.* (Prov 26:4-5, NKJV)

Example: Jesus, the Pharisees and Caesar (Matt 22:15-22)

Key: Surrender your agenda to God.

#### Lessons from Matt 22

- Be discerning. Sometimes it's a trap.
- You don't have to answer.
- You don't have to answer directly.
- There's always a wrong agenda behind the question. You don't have to accept that agenda.