



# The Bait of Satan: Living Free from the Deadly Trap of Offense

*John Bevere*

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**The Bait of Satan: Living Free from the Deadly Trap of Offense** John Bevere

**The twentieth-anniversary edition of one of our most popular books**

*The Bait of Satan* exposes one of the most deceptive snares Satan uses to get believers out of the will of God—offense. This trap restrains countless Christians, severs relationships, and widens the gulfs between us. With testimonials from people whose lives have been changed by his message, the book will inspire readers to stay free from offense and its destructive power, answering tough questions like:

- Why am I compelled to tell "my side" of the story?
- How can I fight thoughts of suspicion or distrust?
- What can I do to stop rehearsing past hurts?

How can I regain trust after someone deeply offends me?

## The Bait of Satan: Living Free from the Deadly Trap of Offense Details

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**John Bevere**

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## **From Reader Review The Bait of Satan: Living Free from the Deadly Trap of Offense for online ebook**

### **Lindsey says**

This is a book that everyone should read... Seriously! It is about what happens when we take Offense and how Satan will use that against us in our own lives. It sounds intense but if you want some relief in your life and growth, this is a MUST READ! It's teaching me sooooo much and praise God for that!

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### **Steven Bullmer says**

I'm not as apocalyptic in my thinking as John Bevere is. I don't think the world's current woes are signs that Jesus is coming back soon; I think the woes are the way it always is; it just feels more intense now because we're living through it rather than reading about it in the history books.

I am also not as dualistic as Bevere--I don't think there is a spiritual war going on between God and Satan and the outcome of the battle still hangs in the balance. I think that battle was fought 2,000 years ago on Calvary, God won, and the only reason it doesn't seem like God won is that the 2 billion people who claim to be followers of Jesus aren't actually doing what Jesus told us to do in order to bring the kingdom of God to fruition on Planet Earth.

That being said, Bevere's diagnosis of the spiritual kink in our souls that allows us to think it's our right to get offended and stay offended at the people who hurt us--instead of doing what Jesus said to do and to love our enemies, pray for them, bless them, and resolve that as quickly as possible--is absolutely spot-on. He lifts up passage after passage of Scripture that warns us that allowing the attitude of being offended is not healthy and not God's will for God's people. I was convicted by chapters 4 ("My Father, My Father!--when spiritual authority-figures hurt us) and 5 ("How Spiritual Vagabonds Are Born"--running away from the people who hurt and offend us rather than hanging in there and doing the difficult thing of working toward forgiveness and reconciliation). It's a book I need to read again and again to remind myself of how much happier I will be--and how much happier the people around me will be--when I work the kink out of my soul by forgiving and reconciling rather than nursing my feelings of being offended.

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### **Ashley says**

In war the enemy gets the upperhand by cutting off communication amongst the soliders. Without communication, one is often alone without any idea of what should be done next. Offense is the tactic Satan uses to cut communication and create separation. At that point, he can attack and destroy quickly, swiftly and without interference. This book gives tons of examples and situations backed by the Word to help us understand, recognize and reject the bait of satan.

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### **Julia says**

For me personally, this book held a great message. I read it in a group and also passed the book on to some friends, and I noticed that some people took issue with how he worded things, but for me the message that he had really spoke through whatever odd trappings might have surrounded it. At the heart of this book is a

Biblical message which every Christian should hear and take to heart: we don't have the right to hold bitterness in our hearts, no matter how legitimately we've been wronged.

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## **Tim Bariteau says**

Deception is so...unfair!

A deceived person, by the very nature of deception, has no possible way of knowing they are being deceived. That is, unless someone shines a light onto the issue, revealing the truth to them and exposing the lies for what they truly are...lies and deception. I was given such a revelation this past week, when I read "THE BAIT OF SATAN: Living Free from the Deadly Trap of Offense" by John Bevere.

If you had asked me two weeks ago if I was offended by anybody, or if I was holding onto any offense, I would have honestly said, "No...not that I know of." Not because I would not want to share that information with you, or recognize I had any faults but, simply because I am a pretty laid-back person and I tend to easily forgive people. Yet, before even finishing the first chapter of this book, I was already in tears as God began showing me people whom I had allowed to offend me. For the first time, I was able to see through the enemy's deception in this area and could recognize where I had stepped in his traps. I was, in fact, holding onto some offenses, not allowing God's work to be as effective in those areas of my life and ministry.

### **THE TRAP**

Right at the very beginning of the book, John teaches that the Greek word for "offend" is skandalon, which refers to the part of a trap where the bait is set. So, even just by looking at the word "offend", we can see how an offense can be a tool that Satan, our enemy, will lay in our path to catch us, or trap us. Our enemy wants the trap to remain hidden, so we will be unaware of the danger we are headed toward, and even more importantly, he wants us to remain unaware of the very fact that we have been trapped, therefore, keeping us from even attempting to free ourselves from the trap at all! How easy the hunter's job is, if the animal he has trapped does not even realize he has been trapped and does not fight or struggle to get free!

"Well, that doesn't make sense!" one might say. "How could a person be trapped and yet not even realize it?" Bevere addresses this when he writes, "One way the enemy keeps a person in an offended state is to keep the offense hidden, cloaked with pride. Pride will keep you from admitting your true condition." (p. 7)

Pride then leads to selfishness, as we become more concerned with the preservation of ourselves than with the well-being of others. This selfishness causes the offended Christian to become focused inward and we lose sight of what God is doing in and through others. We become guarded and defensive; seeking to protect our "rights", rather than with open arms being ready to embrace others and come to their defense! This selfish pride causes us to view ourselves as victims, but just because we may have been mistreated does not mean we suddenly have the right to hold on to an offense! For as Bevere writes, "If we don't risk being hurt, we cannot give unconditional love. Unconditional love gives others the right to hurt us." (p. 16)

### **THE RESULT OF OFFENSE**

When people get offended, and hold on to the offense and let it grow and fester, it will infect them like a poison. They begin to believe everyone is out to get them. Obviously, this attitude makes it even more difficult for them to see where in their lives they need to grow, change and mature. As they continue to isolate themselves, seeking their own protection, they end up inviting abuse. If they do not soon recognize and put a stop to this destructive mindset, this can quickly become a circular pattern; take an offense, become defensive, seek isolation, invite abuse and then back to offense.

Proverbs 18:1 says, “A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment.” But, as Bevere writes,

“God never created us to live separately and independently of each other. He likes it when His children care for and nurture each other. He is frustrated when we...feel sorry for ourselves; making everyone else responsible for our happiness...an isolated person seeks only his own desire, not God’s. He receives no counsel and sets himself up for deception.” (p. 55)

Further on he adds,

“When you’re out of the will of God, you will not be a blessing or help to [others]...even the good relationships will be strained...Offended people react to the situation and do things that appear right even though they are not inspired by God. We are not called to react but to act.” (p. 50)

However, when we read Psalm 1:1-2 and 119:165 we see that it says, “Blessed is the man...[whose] delight is in the law of the Lord...great peace have they which love [or delight in] Thy law; and nothing shall offend them.” Bevere points out that when we choose to delight in the Word of God, even in the midst of adversity, we avoid being offended.

#### IS OFFENDING SOMEONE EVER ACCEPTABLE?

One of the many things I liked in this book was when Bevere showed, in chapters 9 and 10, the difference between: (a) Jesus being WILLING to offend various people because He knew it would either expose a deception or lie they had believed in error, or because He was not willing to bend or avoid the truth, and (b) Jesus being UNWILLING to offend someone if it would not have served a greater purpose...even if he would have been fully justified in doing so! It showed me: There is both a time to offend and a time when it is wiser not to offend.

I think most of us tend to avoid offending people at all costs, myself included. However, sometimes the action which would be the most beneficial for everyone may very well be taken offensively. The question is, “Are we more concerned with truth and the ultimate well-being of others, or with our reputations and what people think of us?” Yet, on the flip-side, there are other times when we act out of selfish, prideful motivations and put our “rights” before the needs of others and risk offending people unnecessarily, with no higher motivation in mind aside from our own self-centeredness, thus no benefit to anybody is gained. As Bevere points out, we would do well to learn from Jesus’ example in this regard: “...He chose to use His liberty and freedom to serve...He never wanted freedom to be a license to demand our rights and cause another to be offended and stumble” (pp. 113, 116)

#### NO GRAY AREA, NO MIDDLE GROUND, NO DOUBT ABOUT IT

One of the strongest statements John Bevere makes in this book, and possibly my favorite quote in the book, simply because of how bold and shocking it is to our western, privileged way of thinking, is on page 137 when he says, “Jesus eliminates any gray areas for grudges. In fact He says that our attitude is to be so far removed from avenging ourselves that we are willing to open ourselves to the possibility of being taken advantage of again.” Wow! There is no playing around with this statement, is there?! It flies right in the face of our culture’s popular, “Look out for Number One,” mantra, doesn’t it?! But, when we stop and think about Bevere’s statement...it is exactly the attitude of unconditional love Jesus took with us. He willingly went to the cross; laying down His life, though He was innocent. He took all our sin upon Himself; suffering through the worst possible torture and death. He paid the highest price...even while we rejected Him and His gift to us! (Romans 5:8) Now, if THAT was not love, what is?

One of the last things Bevere says in his book is this:

“If we keep the love of God as our motivation, we will not fail. Love never fails. When we love others the

way Jesus loves us, we will be free even if the other person chooses not to be reconciled to us...the love of God is the key to freedom from the baited trap of offense. This must be an abounding love...that continually grows...so many in our society today are deceived by a superficial love, a love that talks but does not act. The love that will keep us from stumbling lays down its life selflessly—even for the good of an enemy. When we walk in this kind of love, we cannot be seduced into taking the bait of Satan.” (pp. 162–163)

#### ON A PERSONAL NOTE

At the time of writing this, I have only just finished reading THE BAIT OF SATAN and have not yet had an opportunity to speak with the people with whom I have held the biggest offense. I have, however, gone before the Lord in prayer; admitting my offenses to Him, forgiving those people who had hurt me, releasing them from any blame in my heart and cancelling any debt I felt they owed me. Almost immediately I began feeling the weight of my offenses lifting and a peace and joy fill my heart as I thought about each person and prayed for them and for our relationship to be healed, restored and strengthened. I know to see the full work of this restoration is a process and may take some time, but I am encouraged to feel such a difference already in my heart over the last two days since finishing Bevere’s book. I am now praying as God provides the opportunities, I would be able to speak with each of these people, to confess my offenses to them and seek their forgiveness. Hopefully, we will see our friendship strengthened and our ministry together bear fruit again...yet, even if they don’t receive my attempt to mend our relationship, I will know I have been freed from the trap of offense in which the enemy once imprisoned me!

I have been so blessed by the message of John Bevere’s book, THE BAIT OF SATAN, and hope to see God’s work of deliverance set many more people free from the trap of offense. I plan on recommending this book to others at my church, in my ministry and in my family. May God bless John Bevere for writing this timely and powerful book, and may God bless every believer who reads it and chooses to obey the Word of God and the principles in this book. May you find freedom and healing from the hurts and offenses of this world; and may you stay freed from the trap!

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#### **Kaye Kaye says**

Every person on God's plant is subject to being offended. Read how God expects us to handle it versus the enemy's expectation. Everyone should read this book but especially every church member or those who have been hurt by "the church". Absolutely the best book I have ever read!

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#### **Phil Gould says**

*"THE BOOK YOU HOLD IS QUITE POSSIBLY THE MOST IMPORTANT confrontation with truth you'll encounter in your lifetime"*

So begins another book that I could not bring myself to finish. I did make it through 7 chapters but that was my limit. My problem was not confrontation with truth but confrontation with arrogance. There was so much wrong with this book I hardly know where to begin.

Call it being offended or call it righteous indignation, but it's clear that Jesus was offended by the money changers and the religious leaders who led His people astray. In chapter 4, Bevere attempts to speak for God while hiding behind his idea of not giving in to offense to the point where he refuses to follow the biblical principles of church discipline. His example of Saul and David didn't even come close to defending his own

inaction in a situation where confrontation would have been the best course of action.

Interestingly enough, in the very next chapter (5) he says we should hit conflicts head-on. Which is it to be, John? In this same chapter, Bevere makes the bold statement that we don't get to choose where we go to church, God does. In doing so, he makes it sound like we're stuck in whatever church we find ourselves at the time we read his book, never mind the fact that God might have other plans for us, especially if the church we are in has become Laodicean or outright apostate. Later in the chapter, he uses the metaphor of trees to symbolize our requirement to stay where we're planted, when in fact we are not trees but branches grafted into the Vine (Jesus).

In chapter 6, Bevere says we should not leave a church until we hear from God, meaning being offended is not a valid reason to leave. My take on that is that if you're in a church that is doctrinally defunct and you take Bevere's advice and stay, you'll pay for it by not growing or bearing fruit. If he insists on using the tree analogy then I would caution his readers to beware where they sink their roots.

Another boo-boo Bevere makes is in stating that,

*"Spiritual growth is a function of neither time or learning, but is a function of obedience...Our knowledge of Scripture is not key. Obedience is."*

My question, Mr. Bevere, is how do we learn obedience if we don't have a knowledge of Scripture? I hope he doesn't raise his children using that method! Later he gave an example of a woman who had left a church and he just knew it was only a matter of time before she would be offended in her new church as well. Unfortunately, he didn't back that up with evidence. Finally, along those same lines, he says that if we leave a church offended, we will enter the next church with the same attitude. Blanket statements don't cover every situation and Bevere threw an extremely small blanket here. My feet are sticking out!

In chapter 7, Bevere had to resort to using the KJV to get the word "offended" from Mark 4:17 when most modern translations render it as "fall away" or "stumble". I see this book as being theologically unsound and more about pop psychology than the truth it promises in the preface. So, instead of putting it back on a shelf in my library, this book goes in the recycling bin and the DVD goes in the garbage.

I am normally skeptical of books that are wildly popular with the Christian community, like "The Prayer of Jabez" and "The Shack". I'm not sure how this book got past my spiritual radar but I will have to be more vigilant from now on. I do find it amusing that I left off reading the rest of this book because it "offended" me, but I'm not blaming Satan, I'm blaming Bevere. At least I hope they're not in cahoots!

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## **Chan'tel Grayson says**

### **Life Changing!!! I'm off the hook!!**

I cannot think of a single soul that would not be blessed by this book. I want to buy it for so many people, but instead I pray for God to orchestrate their purchase according to when those are ready.

This book has led me to true freedom in Christ Jesus. I've been reconciled with so many and cancelled so many debts of those in the past...some of which really had no chance without forgiveness. I was blind to the enemy tactics and how he was stealing from me by getting me to bite the bait of offense. This book right here is a key for warfare. My Redeemer lives and I'm so happy to be off the hook! You will certainly be blessed if you open your heart and mind to it. Enjoy.

## **Honeybee says**

Over the years, I have had many Christians recommend this book to me, but had not ever gotten around to it. Our church offered a study over it, too, but again the timing wasn't right. This year, however, just when I was dealing with some of the pain from my past and some very deep wounds from those closest to me, I "just happened" to find a copy (the last one they had) at a used Christian bookstore. Now the time was right, and I read it on my return trip from an unhappy visit with family over the holidays.

The author, John Bevere, rightly asserts that offense is one of the greatest traps the enemy uses to destroy individuals and ministries. I personally have witnessed the collapse of a church, due to mishandled offenses, and I have heard of many others that have suffered the same or similar fates. I love that in his first chapter Bevere reminds us of the words of Jesus, "It is impossible that no offenses should come" (Luke 17:1), but points out that we don't have to hang on to them or let them control our lives.

This book is written a style that is so easy to understand. The author not only quotes scripture and explains it, but gives excellent examples from the Bible, his own life and ministry to illustrate his points. The book is well-organized, progressing from what offenses are, how we get them and cause them, to how to get rid of them and help others to do likewise. A lot of the content was familiar to me from other ministries--for example, Bevere refers to Neil Anderson's books and Institutes of Basic Youth Conflicts.

I love Bevere's take on the biblical examples of how Joseph and David dealt with major offenses against them. He shared excellent insights about what he calls, "spiritual vagabonds," who hop from one church to another out of offense. I highlighted several passages about how we carry immaturity with us from one relationship to another, when we don't deal with unresolved issues in marriage. I had an "aha moment," when Bevere explained Luke 22:31-32, and I realized Satan not only has to ask permission to mess with us, but that Jesus prays for our faith to pull us through. One other point he made that I hadn't really thought of is the possibility that we put our own salvation on shaky ground, when we refuse to forgive.

The book seemed to lack some of its impact in its latter chapters. It's one thing to try to reconcile with folks who are in step with the Lord, but not so easy with those who are in rebellion or resisting Him. In my own situation, I didn't feel like I got the answers I needed to deal with an offender who not only doesn't admit any wrong, but practically accuses me of making things up! His counsel based on Romans 12:18 is good, but I wish I had more instruction to know how to relate to a person not ready for reconciliation.

Overall, this is a pretty good book. The fact that it is still read, recommended and used for personal/group Bible study after all these years is a testimony to its relevance. Anyone who reads it should do so prayerfully, so you can glean the good stuff and apply it to your circumstances. Have your Bible handy, so you can check the context of Scripture quoted, and ask God to reveal what you need to do with what you learn. Don't read this book, unless you are prepared to confess your sins, as well as release the sins of others!

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## **Courtney says**

This was recommended to me by a friend from church, and is the book the church uses for a course on spiritual cleansing- I would actually like to study this with others to see if I would gain any more insight.

Bevere's theme is on offense, and how taking offense and harboring unforgiveness are poisonous to us. Exercising forgiveness is like exercising any muscle: you have to use it all the time. The outline of the book was a little vague, so while there was a lot of valuable info and scripture application, it lacked pop. It does get an extra star for the title though... I fantasized about carrying it around as a conversation starter, but I never worked up the courage :)

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### **John Weston says**

WOW! This is for anyone who has been hurt by anyone, or who has hurt anyone. It is not a sappy, feel-good book. It will rock your faith to the core. I didn't read at first because of the title, but offence, then the fruit of that, unforgiveness, keeps so many from a fruitful life, and even from Heaven. I wish so many in the church would read this who have been hurt by pastors and other Christians.

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### **Kells Next Read says**

This is yet another must read for all christians. I will have this as a yearly re read to keep the examples reveal at the forefront of my mind as I continue my walk with Christ.

Re-Read on February 9th 2017:

This is one of those books that you need to keep close and re read ever so often as a reminder of how the enemy causes us to get offended and also allows others to be offended. It shows you how to detect it and how to deal with it. Such an enlightening read.

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### **Fred says**

Bible Teacher Don Basham used to say that prophetic utterances were often like water from a muddy hose: First, you get a bunch of mud and yuck before pure water starts flowing. This is an apt description of this book if there was one. Unfortunately, it's just the opposite, in this case, the more it flows the more mud and yuck you get. "The Bait of Satan" is also an apt title because that's exactly what this book is: A little bit of truth buried underneath a mountain of error. There is great danger here my Christian friend!

#### **THE GOOD**

There is just no question that for the Christian we are required to forgive, it's simply not optional. John Bevere does well by citing the numerous passages in the Bible that say this. And, yes, the Bible is clear that unless and until we forgive it's like we're put into a prison of resentment where we hold the key[1] And yes, the Bible is clear that if we refuse to forgive then a root of bitterness can set in that may defile many. And yes, forgiveness is like forgiving a debt that's owed you - it is YOUR choice to give that gift to your debtors. Forgiveness IS a choice.[2] All this is good and true. And you now have the nuggets of truth that this book contains.

#### **THE BAD**

Now, the bad. This book epitomizes everything that's wrong with the Charismatic Movement - and I say this AS a Charismatic Christian.

First, the book is cover-to-cover filled with shameless self-promotion. At the end of each chapter is a "Testimony" - not of Jesus Christ, but of the author and this book. And this is on top of the shameless self-promotion of the author and this book that's actually IN the text of the book itself.

Second, the author's hermeneutics and exegesis are downright awful! Consider the "proof text" that he bases the thesis for the book on:

"Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!"

-- Matthew 18:7 (KJV this is the version that the author uses)

However, the author has ripped the verse out of context and committed an equivocation fallacy by using the word "offence" here in the modern sense of "annoyance or resentment brought about by a perceived insult to or disregard for oneself or one's standards or principles" rather than it's true archaic, Jacobean English meaning "stumbling block" or "temptation".[3] Consider how the text is rendered in modern translations:

"Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come!"

(NIV)

"Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! It is necessary that stumbling blocks come, but woe to the person through whom they come."

(NET Bible)

"Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes!"

(ESV)

Further, when considered in its full and complete context the passage is clearly referring to temptation and coming to God like a child, not personal offense:

"Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

"If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to the one by whom the stumbling block comes!

"If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than to have two hands or two feet and to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into the hell of fire."

-- Matthew 18:4-9 (NRSV)

Third, the book is full of Charismatic experientialism in the form of a steady stream of anecdotes spiced with "God told me" and/or "God told my wife" accents. Fellow Charismatics, the problem here is that there is absolutely NO way to vet, confirm, or deny such claims. This type of thing plus \$1.50 will get you a cup of coffee at Denny's - which is about what this type of "evidence" is worth. Stated plainly, "It just don't mean nothin'!" I know that Charismatic culture sucks this stuff down like Kool-Aid, but that's the truth.

Fourth, the author's theology and discernment is badly broken and in need of repair. Consider, this "gem"

from the book:

"I heard an unusual testimony about a minister in the Philippines. Friends of mine who had known him from a previous ministry showed me an article telling about his experiences.

The man had resisted the call of God on his life for several years because of his business success. He was making a large amount of money. His disobedience eventually caught up with him, and he was rushed to the hospital because of heart failure.

He died on the operating table and found himself outside the gates of heaven. Jesus was standing there and dealt with him about his disobedience. The man pleaded with the Lord that if He would extend his life, he would serve Him. The Lord consented.

Before sending him back to his body, the Lord showed him a vision of hell. He saw his wife's mother burning in the flames of hell.

He was amazed. She had said the "sinner's prayer," confessed to being a Christian, and had attended church. "Why is she in hell?" he asked the Lord.

The Lord told him that she had refused to forgive a relative and therefore could not be forgiven." (John Bevere, "The Bait of Satan: Living Free From the Deadly Trap of Offense" (10th Anniversary Edition, 2004), Charisma House, pp.123-124; <https://smile.amazon.com/Bait-Satan-L...> )

Friends THAT is what's known as a False Vision! The Bible teaches that unforgiveness is a relational sin, not a damnable, or eternal sin. Stated plainly, nowhere does the Bible say that one will be sent to hell for refusing to forgive. As John MacArthur notes well in his study notes for the Matthew 6:15 passage being referred to here that says, "neither will your Father forgive your trespasses":

"This is not to suggest that God will withdraw justification from those who have already received the free pardon He extends to all believers. Forgiveness in that sense— a permanent and complete acquittal from the guilt and ultimate penalty of sin— belongs to all who are in Christ (cf. John 5: 24; Rom. 8: 1; Eph. 1: 7). Yet, Scripture also teaches that God chastens His children who disobey (Heb. 12: 5– 7). Believers are to confess their sins in order to obtain a day-to-day cleansing (1 John 1: 9). This sort of forgiveness is a simple washing from the worldly defilements of sin, not a repeat of the wholesale cleansing from sin's corruption that comes with justification. It is like a washing of the feet rather than a bath (cf. John 13: 10). Forgiveness in this latter sense is what God threatens to withhold from Christians who refuse to forgive others (cf. 18: 23– 35)." (NKJV, "The MacArthur Study Bible, eBook: Revised and Updated Edition" (Kindle Locations 147958-147966). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition; <https://smile.amazon.com/NKJV-MacArth...>)

And the ESV Global Study Bible agrees with MacArthur:

"MATTHEW— NOTE ON 6:14–15 Forgive your trespasses refers to restoring relationship following sin, not salvation." (ESV Bibles by Crossway. "ESV Global Study Bible" (Kindle Locations 228065-228067). Crossway. Kindle Edition; <https://smile.amazon.com/Global-Study...>)

#### THE UGLY

Much of the above is probably due to the fact that the author is a former protegee of heretic and charlatan Benny Hinn - a fact that he conveniently fails to disclose. There's a HUGE red flag waving right there. Given that, suddenly passages in the book like this one take on a whole new meaning:

"I was in a church for several years. The pastor was one of the best preachers in America. When I first

attended that church, I would sit with my mouth open in awe of the biblical teaching that came from his mouth.

As time passed, because of my position of serving the pastor, I was close enough to see his flaws. I questioned some of his ministry decisions. I became critical and judgmental, and offense set in. He preached, and I sensed no inspiration or anointing. His preaching no longer ministered to me."

(John Bevere, "The Bait of Satan: Living Free From the Deadly Trap of Offense" (10th Anniversary Edition, 2004), Charisma House, p.49; <https://smile.amazon.com/Bait-Satan-L...> )

Well, if that "one of the best preachers in American" was Benny Hinn[4] I can only say, "Thank God, you saw the light! Did you confront him on his heresy and charlatanism?" However, Bevere then goes on to explain how after leaving this church, he (wait for it, wait for it, wait for it) went back because, as he explains (starting on page 47) and using the stories of Samuel and Eli, then David and Saul, God can use corrupt Christian Leaders. Friends, I can only hope that Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Moonies, and the members of other cults don't heed this terrible advice![5]

Which brings me to the biggest problem with this book: Its teachings can lead to a lack of boundaries and codependency.

I was in the Shepherding Movement of the 1970's and 80's[6] and experienced abusive churches first hand. I stayed for 13-years too long because of a combination of immaturity, a lack of healthy boundaries, and heavy codependency issues due to the enmeshed culture of my family of origin. I can make that assessment without passion or pain now because of God's sovereignty as well as God's process of redemption and refinement in my life. Friends that process only began AFTER I was out.

Bevere's book is completely imbalanced because it fails to recognize this necessary part of the recovery process. Just like an alcoholic doesn't get sober by staying in the bar, a codependent Christian doesn't get healthy by staying in an Abusive Church. As the late Ron Enroth explained in his classic book "Churches That Abuse":

"Members of all abusive churches soon learn that the pastor or leader is beyond confrontation. As one former member of an abusive congregation put it, "Since no one in the church was allowed to murmur and complain, or to disagree with the pastor, there were many, like myself, who suffered in silence lest we incur God's anger." All problems that befall the group are the fault of members who violate the infallible rules. Accordingly, members experience increased self-doubt, helplessness, and insecurity.

Often times the deviant is barraged with attempts to get him to admit that he is guilty of crimes that he does not see. If he says that he is doubting the leadership, he has sinned because you are never to doubt the leadership. If he has talked to someone else about his concerns, he has sinned because you are never to plant "seeds of doubt" in others' minds about the leadership and/or the sect. If, however, the deviant does not agree with the definitions of his behavior that is placed by the group, he is immediately considered "unrepentant" and "unsubmissive..."

One need not have psychological training to understand that such a procedure also operates as an effective control mechanism within a church. Those who are the "boat-rockers," those who raise uncomfortable questions and who challenge the leadership in any way, are prevented from sharing their legitimate concerns and criticism with other members. Dissent is muffled, and disinformation can be "spiritualized" or manipulated by the leadership."

(Ronald M. Enroth, "Churches That Abuse", p.81 and p.95; <https://smile.amazon.com/Churches-Tha...>)

Further, John Bevere never addresses the issue of leaving a church because it's teaching heresy. Much of my work these days is in Mormon Studies and I cringe at the thought of Mormon leaders or Mormon Apologists

getting their hands on this horribly flawed and imbalanced book.[7] Strangely, the thought or possibility of such a thing never seems to have occurred to the author.

Friends, this is a dangerous book. I do NOT recommend it. Rather I recommend the books and resources that I have listed in the NOTES section of this review. In addition, I recommend one more: The classic book "Boundaries" by John Townsend and Henry Cloud; <https://smile.amazon.com/Boundaries-U...>

Now, I understand that this review may seem like a voice crying in the wilderness being drown out by all the other voices that are praising it loudly in all those other reviews here, but I beg you to listen to me. Consider this: There's a reason why America loves Joel Osteen's ear-tickling feel good heresy and hates the sound wisdom and theology of other voices. I plead with you in Jesus' Name to not listen to the siren's song, the only thing awaiting you there are shipwrecking rocks.

#### NOTES

[1] No one has said or taught this better than Bob Mumford in his book, "The Prison of Resentment"; <http://lifechangers.org/teachings/the...>

[2] No one has said or taught this better than Robert D Enright in "Forgiveness is a Choice: A Step-by-Step Process for Resolving Anger and Restoring Hope"; <https://smile.amazon.com/Forgiveness-...>

[3] See Google definition <https://www.google.com/search?q=defin...>

[4] If it was, it's an assessment that I would vehemently disagree with! I think that anyone with even a modicum of biblical literacy and good theology would.

[5] Please note that I think that the author John Bevere got this concept from Gene Edwards' classic books "A Tale of Three Kings" (<https://smile.amazon.com/Tale-Three-K...>) and "The Prisoner in the Third Cell" (<https://smile.amazon.com/Prisoner-Thi...>) however, Edwards' books stress healthy boundaries and truth throughout, Bevere does not. If you want this wisdom, read Edwards and skip Bevere.

[6] See Wikipedia "Shepherding Movement" <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shepher...> and David S. Moore, "Shepherding Movement (Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement)" <https://smile.amazon.com/Shepherding-...>

[7] To this point, I recommend "When to Leave a Church" by R.C. Sproul; <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/series/...>

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#### Traci Alverson says

Offense leads to sin, which leads to separation from God and others. We are so easily offended, but this book opened my eyes to the ways in which to overcome offense.

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#### Nika says

This book should be REQUIRED READING for everyone.

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