



## **DON'T TAKE THE BAIT**

May 30 & 31, 2026

### **Big Idea:**

The way I respond to offenses \_\_\_\_\_ how deeply I'm connected to Christ.

### **Four Types of Bait:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ – Past wrongs that bait us into bitterness and retaliation instead of forgiveness.
- \_\_\_\_\_ – Emotional pains that hook us into grudges instead of healing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ – Irritations that snag us into anger, eroding our patience.
- \_\_\_\_\_ – False assumptions that lure us into needless conflict.

### **Luke 17:1 (NKJV)**

Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come!"

### **I Refuse to Take the BAIT When I:**



**B** \_\_\_\_\_ through genuine forgiveness.

### **Matthew 18:27, 32, 34 (NLT)**

"Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt ... Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me' ... Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt."

### **The Process of the Bait of Bitterness:**

- I \_\_\_\_\_ the offense over and over.
- I \_\_\_\_\_ on to it with intent.
- I \_\_\_\_\_ a case every time I think of it.

### **Ephesians 4:31-32 (NLT)**

Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

### **Colossians 3:13 (NLT)**

Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

### **Solution:**

#### **Matthew 18:15-18 (TPT)**

"If your fellow believer sins against you, you must go to that one privately and attempt to resolve the matter. If he responds, your relationship is restored. But if his heart is closed to you, then go to him again, taking one or two others with you. You'll be fulfilling what the Scripture teaches when it says, 'Every word may be verified by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' And if he refuses to listen, then share the issue with the congregation in hopes of restoration. If he still refuses to respond, even to the church, then you must disregard him as though he were an outsider, on the same level as an unrepentant sinner. Receive this truth: Whatever you forbid on earth will be considered to be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you release on earth will be considered to be released in heaven."

### **T.A.L.K it Out:**

**T**\_\_\_\_\_ them privately.

**A**\_\_\_\_\_ good, objective moderators.

**L**\_\_\_\_\_ the appropriate church leaders know.

**K**\_\_\_\_\_ a healthy distance until God intervenes.



**A**\_\_\_\_\_ with truth and love.

#### **Matthew 18:26-27 (NLT)**

"But the man fell down before his master and begged him, 'Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.' Then his master was filled with compassion for him, and he released him and forgave his entire debt."

### **Avoider's Motto:**

- **Stay** \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **being a peacekeeper.**
- **Say "It's \_\_\_\_\_" ... when it's not.**

#### **Ephesians 4:15 (NLT)**

Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.

### Exploder's Motto:

- \_\_\_\_\_ out.
- \_\_\_\_\_ intensity.
- \_\_\_\_\_ without thinking.

### John 1:14 (NCV)

The Word became a human and lived among us. We saw his glory—the glory that belongs to the only Son of the Father—and he was full of grace and truth.

### Two Undeniable Choices:

- You can be a thermometer who \_\_\_\_\_ to the room.
- You can be a thermostat who \_\_\_\_\_ the temperature of the room.

“Reacting is emotional, but \_\_\_\_\_ is intentional.”

### Proverbs 15:1 (TPT)

Respond gently when you are confronted and you'll defuse the rage of another. Responding with sharp, cutting words will only make it worse. Don't you know that being angry can ruin the testimony of even the wisest of men?



I \_\_\_\_\_ and release my bitterness.

### Matthew 18:28, 34 (NLT)

“But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment ... Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt.”

### Remember:

I can avoid reacting outwardly and still \_\_\_\_\_ it inwardly.

Because offense doesn't just hook us; it \_\_\_\_\_ something deep inside us.

### Hebrews 12:15 (NLT)

Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many.

### Matthew 18:21-22 (NLT)

Then Peter came to him and asked, “Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?” “No, not seven times,” Jesus replied, “but seventy times seven!”

### Two Facts:

- What you don't \_\_\_\_\_ ... will take root.
- What takes \_\_\_\_\_ ... will take over my life.

**James 3:16** (NLT)

For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind.



**T** \_\_\_\_\_ **God with the final outcome.**

**Matthew 18:35** (NLT)

That's what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart.

**Remember:**

**You can do everything \_\_\_\_\_ and the other person still may not respond right. It's okay.**

**Romans 12:18** (NLT)

Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

**Do all I can but...**

- **Do not try to \_\_\_\_\_ them.**
- **Do not try to \_\_\_\_\_ them.**
- **Do not try to \_\_\_\_\_ them.**

**Proverbs 25:21-22** (GW)

If your enemy is hungry, give him some food to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him some water to drink. In this way you will make him feel guilty and ashamed, and the LORD will reward you.

**Every day the bait is being dropped in:**

- \_\_\_\_\_.
- **Relationships.**
- **Moments of \_\_\_\_\_.**

**My Choice:**

**Do I take the bait or do I trust God with the \_\_\_\_\_?**

**Reflection:**

- **Where do I need to break free through forgiveness?**
  
- **Where do I need to answer with truth and love?**

**Every time I refuse the bait I reflect \_\_\_\_\_.**



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### **Big Idea:**

The way I respond to offenses reveals how deeply I'm connected to Christ.

### **Four Types of Bait:**

- **Offenses** – Past wrongs that bait us into bitterness and retaliation instead of forgiveness.
- **Hurts** – Emotional pains that hook us into grudges instead of healing.
- **Frustrations** – Irritations that snag us into anger, eroding our patience.
- **Misunderstandings** – False assumptions that lure us into needless conflict.

### **Luke 17:1 (NKJV)**

Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come!"

### **I Refuse to Take the BAIT When I:**



**Break free** through genuine forgiveness.

### **Matthew 18:27, 32, 34 (NLT)**

"Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt ... Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me' ... Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt."

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- I replay the offense over and over.
- I hold on to it with intent.
- I build a case every time I think of it.

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### **T.A.L.K it Out:**

**Tell** them privately.

**Add** good, objective moderators.

**Let** the appropriate church leaders know.

**Kee**p a healthy distance until God intervenes.



**Ans**wer with truth and love.

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- **Kee**p being a peacekeeper.
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Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.

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- Lash out.
- Escalate intensity.
- Speak without thinking.

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Identify and release my bitterness.

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**Do all I can but...**

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- Do not try to fix them.
- Do not try to change them.

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**Every time I refuse the bait I reflect Jesus.**