



Devotional Study Guide Journal

May 10th

The Only Person You Can Change¹

Almost everyone has at least one person in their lives who is difficult. It could be a parent, child, acquaintance, co-worker, spouse, or extended family member. When they offend you, and you just take it, this seems to make it okay to do it again some other day. When they offend you, and you let them know they offended you, they will amazingly accuse you of being “whatever.” So, now, not only are you offended by what they said or did at first, but now the tables are turned on YOU, and YOU are the problem.

It would be the simplest thing on earth for that person to say, “I’m sorry,” but that is unlikely. You already know that a forced apology means nothing.

So, the battle begins. You tell them it isn’t fair to shift blame. You are so hurt, you might forget that this is the same old pattern and that you will not win in the end, but you keep it up because now you are doubly offended.

This can go on for years, even in marriage.

In-between these big arguments, you might have a lovely marriage. You enjoy each other’s company. You are raising your beloved kids and doing fun things together. A sense of false trust grows. You forgave “last time” and hope the future will be bright, but then BANG! You find yourself in the midst of another battle, knowing you will end up devastated, while the other person feels justified in his/her own eyes.

Hours later, the person might apologize, but not really. It’s just a way to smooth over the tension in the air.

Here is some helpful advice from God: There is only one person you can change: yourself. You will have to leave the changing of your offender to Jesus. Only He can get through to someone.

In the meantime, when the first offense comes, it is okay to say something like, “That was super offensive,” or “You didn’t need to say that,” or just let it go, but DO NOT ENGAGE. Don’t expect an apology. Just state the offense and move on. Forgive and pray for the offender. If it is your child, you might need to do some educating, but for all others, do not.

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Go your way. Don't let that person's problem become yours any longer. The next time an offense comes, and it will likely come, repeat. **Calmly** state that what the person did or said was offensive or hurtful. Then go on with your life. This way, you are standing up for yourself but not allowing yourself to be further injured. You are also letting God work in that person's heart, and God will work on them and change them. Meanwhile, you will live a more peaceful life.