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UNOFFENDABLE
HOW JUST ONE CHANGE CAN MAKE ALL OF LIFE BETTER
THE DISCUSSION GUIDE

Chapter One

Being Unoffendable: The Ridiculous Idea

“Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart.” Corrie Ten Boom

1. Be honest and describe what your first reaction might be in one or all of these scenarios:

- A person in a red sports car cuts you off in traffic and then reacts as if it was your fault by honking and shaking his fist out the window.
- Your spouse or good friend criticizes you in front of others.
- The boss at your workplace chooses a rookie employee over you for a much-needed promotion.
- Your child refuses to listen and obey you after you’ve repeated the same command fifteen times.

It seems easy to be offended by these types of things in life. What does it mean to choose to be unoffendable? Describe how you might react differently to the above situations if you consciously chose to be unoffendable.

2. Brant makes the case: “In the moment, everyone’s anger always seems righteous.” Do you believe, or have you believed in the past, that there is such a thing as “righteous anger” for a Jesus follower? Give some examples of what you think are valid reasons for a Christian to be angry. When it comes to matters of injustice, what is the role of anger? Discuss how we might be more effective in fighting injustice without anger.

3. Read [James 1:20](#) and [Colossians 3:8](#). Keeping these verses in mind, discuss the meaning and impact of this idea: “The thing that you think makes your anger ‘righteous’ is the very thing you are called to forgive. Grace isn’t for the deserving. Forgiving means surrendering your claim to resentment and letting go of anger.”

Chapter Two

Everyone’s an Idiot but Me

“Forgiveness is the name of love practiced among people who love poorly. The hard truth is that all people love poorly. We need to forgive and be forgiven every day, every hour increasingly. That is the great work of love among the fellowship of the weak that is the human family.”

– Henri J.M. Nouwen

1. Discuss a moment when you found yourself angry at someone for doing something you are often guilty of doing yourself. When you realized this, how did it effect your attitude?

2. There is an old saying: “Hate the sin but love the sinner.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not? What do you think is the intent of this saying?

3. Read [Ecclesiastes 7:9](#).

Describe what “foolish” anger can bring to a person’s life. Be as specific as possible.

4. Read [Jeremiah 17:9-10](#) and [1 Corinthians 4:3-5](#).

“Our souls may lose their peace and even disturb other people’s, if we are always criticizing trivial actions - which often are not real defects at all, but we construe them wrongly through our ignorance of their motives.”

- Saint Teresa of Avila

Brant challenges us to surrender our anger due to the fact that we cannot totally understand the motives of others and we cannot always trust that our own hearts won’t deceive us.

What does it mean that your own heart can deceive you? Give some examples of what this means in your life.

In light of the fact that we are ignorant of motives and our hearts can deceive us, why should we question our own anger?

Chapter Three Six Billion Rings

1. Try to put yourself in the shoes of someone attending Michael's coffee shop. How would you respond to Michael?
2. Why do we get personally offended at the lifestyles of others? In what ways do we let this "offense" effect the way we treat others?
3. Anger brings stress, resentment and mental anguish. Discuss what harboring anger has done to you personally.
4. Describe how your church, small group, business, and/or family would change if the Christians involved were people who could not be offended. Give some practical ideas of how you can start this revolution of forgiveness in your circle.

Chapter Four Artists See Things

1. What was it about John that was so attractive to Bill's heart?
2. Read [John 14:1-3](#).

Peter received these words from Jesus along with the other disciples, just after Jesus told him that he would betray his Savior. Consider this quote: "Jesus wouldn't even let hypocrisy, betrayal, backstabbing, lying and abandonment stop Him from loving Peter. He saw something in Peter that Peter could not have possibly seen himself."

How does the offense we take at others obscure the vision we should have for people? How could this damage possible ministry?

3. Think of someone who is challenging to you or has even flat-out offended you. Without disclosing this person's name, share with the group a short list of things you think God sees in them.

Chapter Five Bert and Ernie and Satan

1. Read [John 2:24-25](#).
Jesus knew what was in man. If we are not "surprised" at the offensiveness of mankind, how does that awareness help us curb anger?
2. Discuss a time when you received some critical and hurtful remarks from someone. Be as specific as possible. How did you handle it? Did you respond to them? What did you say or do?
3. People are judgmental and self-righteous by default. In what situations do you find yourself being critical or judgmental of others the most? At work? At school? At church? On the street? Explain.

Chapter Six Beautiful Exceptions

1. It seems all people are attracted to stories of undeserving forgiveness. Share an experience when you have received or given incredible forgiveness. What impact did it have on you? On others?
2. In Chapter 6, Brant makes the case that grace and gratitude are exceptions to the rule in our world. In what ways do we become less "offendable" when we are "joyfully open for the glorious exceptions"?

Chapter Seven

The World's Worst Bedtime Story

1. Read “the worst bedtime story ever.” How accurately do you think it describes our relationship with God? Describe the Master’s reaction to Gypsy the dog’s decisions in the end. Compare the Master’s actions with his emotions. Could the Master have taken any other action?
2. If you are feeling brave and comfortable enough to share, tell the group about something you have stewed on for years. How has it affected you?
3. Read [Matthew 11:28](#). Jesus was speaking with religious people. What religious-type burdens do you desperately need to give up so you might find rest in Jesus? It may be difficult to admit your answer, but do your best to do so thoughtfully and honestly.

Chapter Eight

Ain’t You Tired?

1. Describe a restful life. Is this difficult to describe? If so, why?
2. What are some of the biggest reasons we all seem to be so busy? How might busyness contribute to anger in your life?
3. What steps can you take to have a more restful life? What do you think has prevented you from taking these steps? Are you willing to try? Why or why not?
4. React to this statement and discuss: “We have nothing to prove, and when we really believe that, we will hardly be quick to anger.”

Chapter Nine

Reverend of the Dumpster

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. And he prayed to the Lord and said, “O Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.” And the Lord said, “Do you do well to be angry?” Jonah 3:10-4:4 (ESV)

1. Read the passage from Jonah out loud. Why was Jonah angry with God? How did God react to Jonah’s anger? Did Jonah have a right to be angry? Explain your answer.
2. In the story of the dumpster-diving pastor, we are reminded that all of us are guilty of some sort of sin and eventually will be found out. How might the exposure of our own sin be a deterrent to anger with others?

Chapter Ten

Idea: Let’s Punch Brant in the Face

“People do not need role models of moral perfection but role models who have experienced and demonstrate grace.” - Darin Hansen

1. Describe how you felt when reading Brant’s long list of moral accomplishments. Did you want to punch him in the face? (Admit it...you did.)
2. Give some examples of how modern-day Christian culture tends to react to people with immoral behavior. Give an example of how you have been offended personally.
3. Brant writes that refusing to be offended by others is a powerful door-opener to actual relationships. Describe a Christian who has impacted your life for the good when it comes to your understanding of Jesus. How do they treat those who don’t know Jesus?

Chapter Eleven

Atheists, Socialists and Toast

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.

1. List some examples of Christians isolating themselves from American culture. Are there some relevant examples in your local area? What about your church? What about you?
2. We are called to love people where they are, and love them boldly. Loving people boldly requires us to not be angry with others' views, but to seek to serve them. Name our fears when it comes to boldly loving people. What barriers do we tend to build that can make it difficult to truly accept others?
3. This chapter ends with, "Don't condemn the culture; redeem it." What does this statement mean to you? What steps might we take as the body of Christ to redeem our culture? What steps might you take personally to love boldly and redeem others?

Chapter Twelve

Anger's Fun - Except for the Boiling, Blazing and Burning Part

"Not forgiving is like drinking rat poison and then waiting for the rat to die."
— Anne Lamott, *Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith*

Read Ephesians 4:31-32 (ESV)

1. Brant listed many words in the Bible that are associated with anger. Look up the word "anger" in a Bible concordance and examine the context of the passages. Is the tone consistent with the scriptures pointed out in this chapter?
2. On a scale from 1-10, how stressful is your life right now? Give a reason for your assessment. How might letting go of self-righteousness affect your number on the stress scale?
3. Talk about how letting go of assessing the spiritual temperature of others can benefit your life. What does Jesus promise to those who will give up anger and seek to forgive?

Chapter Thirteen

The Big Question: What About Injustice?

1. According to research from the University of British Columbia, people who join causes online are not more apt to actually do something; they're less likely to take action. We can be in love with "taking stands" that cost us absolutely nothing.

The key theme of this chapter is that anger and action are not synonymous when it comes to battling injustice in the world. How has expressing anger in social media influenced our society? Name an injustice in the world that tends to upset you emotionally. Have you had angry interactions concerning this injustice on Facebook or Twitter? Describe the interaction(s) and what, if anything, was accomplished.

2. What are some action steps you could take to help combat this injustice? What would it cost you?
3. Dallas Willard says, "Stepping out of anger means you are surrendering your will to God. It means you have accepted that you don't have to have your way." Discuss the meaning of this quote.
4. According to this chapter, what is true about anger?
 - A. It is not synonymous with action.
 - B. The Bible does not command us to be angry.
 - C. In order to justify anger, we confuse ourselves with God.
 - D. Worry and anger go hand in hand; both represent a lack of trust.
 - E. Choosing not to be angry does not mean accepting injustice.
 - F. All the above.

Chapter Fourteen

This Is the Chapter About How We Are Just Smart Enough to Be Stupid

Read [Matthew 6:25-27](#).

1. What do you tend to worry about the most these days?
2. Brant writes, “The lie, for most of us, is that we’ll ‘get there,’ that we’ll somehow, someday, make it to a point where that thing, that whatever, that we think we need to be secure, is finally ours, and we won’t be threatened anymore, because we made it. But there is no ‘there.’ It’s such a pervasive lie, this notion that security comes from something besides God Himself...”. Where do you tend to look for self-worth other than God? (i.e. recognition, addiction, etc.)
3. Read [Psalm 34](#) together. David encourages us to trust God in the face of fear and worry. Brant makes the case that chronic worrying stems from arrogance; it means we are not trusting God. Define as specifically as you can what it means to trust God in everyday life. What does that look like? What steps can you take today to actively trust God more?

Chapter Fifteen Nothing Left to Lose

Read [Matthew 10:37-39](#).

1. Matthew records one of the hardest teachings of Jesus in the above verses. If you can be brave, name the things in your life that receive the ultimate attention from you. In other words, what would you be afraid to give up, even for God?
2. God is good and will ultimately set things right for us. How would truly believing that statement help to curb anger in our life?

Chapter Sixteen

And Here’s the Chapter I Kept Putting Off...

1. What exactly is the “Good News” that Christianity espouses? Talk about how the Good News has affected your life (be as specific as possible). Do you have someone in your life who reminds you of the Good News on a regular basis? If so, who?
2. What was Brant’s reasoning for relating the Good News to our “unoffendability”?
3. If we are convinced that God’s love for us is provisional—based on if we ever get our act straightened out—how might that snowball into anger toward others?

Chapter Seventeen

We’re All Waiting for Something...That Already Happened

1. Describe a type of person who you find hard to love. What offense might you have to set aside to love this person?
2. Determine if you agree or disagree with this statement: “...our very refusal to take and hold offense is evidence of the existence of God.” Attempt to explain the meaning of this statement. Why do you agree or disagree?

Chapter Eighteen

On Winning - and by “Winning,” I Mean, of Course, Losing

1. Try to remember the last argument in which you found yourself. What was it about? What was the outcome?
2. Brant suggested that giving up anger requires sacrifice and us “picking up the bill” in certain situations. What did he mean by these statements?
3. Read [Romans 5:6-8](#) and [Matthew 5:38-41](#). How do these passages speak to the way God feels about us and how we should feel about others?

Chapter Nineteen

The World’s Worst Neighbor

“It makes sense that people who follow the Man of Sorrows, a man who was ‘acquainted with grief,’ are also acquainted with grief (Isa. 53:3 ESV).”

1. The word “ministry” means to come alongside someone. What has been the biggest season of grief in your life? What did the actions and/or words of others mean to you during that time?
2. “Choosing to be unoffendable out of love for others is ministry. And real ministry forces us to abandon our relentless search for approval from others.” Discuss a time when you chose to serve someone despite what might happen. Describe how God used that ministry.

Chapter Twenty

Imbalanced? You Better Hope So

1. Describe a time in your life when you received something that you didn’t deserve. How did you feel? What was your response?
2. What motivates your “religious activity”?
3. God’s grace and our choosing to be unoffendable is not common sense as the world sees it. What is it about grace that makes the world feel so uneasy? What is it about grace that may make you feel uneasy?
4. Spend some time sharing about how God’s generosity has changed your life.

Chapter Twenty-One

I Can Worship a God Like That

1. Brant told two significant stories in this chapter: Tony Campolo’s story about the birthday party for a prostitute, and Brant’s personal story of working with a mission team in Indonesia. Each example described incredible displays of grace. Describe what it was exactly that surprised and impressed the hearts of the prostitutes, diner workers, the imam, and other Indonesian people.
2. Read [Hebrews 2:14-18](#) and [Philippians 2:5-8](#). How do these passages describe Jesus’ mission?
3. “We decide to be unoffendable because that’s how love operates; it gives up its ‘status’ entirely.” What would it mean for you to give up your status in order to serve others? Be as specific as possible.

Chapter Twenty-Two

Here's the Part Where I Talk About Some Danish People

1. Have you ever asked, "Can God really forgive me?" Explain the role guilt has played in your life. Do you struggle with it? Explain how.
2. Discuss these questions that Brant posed to Jacob: "Are we so bad that Jesus needs to suffer again? Did He not go far enough to cover your rebellion?"
3. Read [Romans 8:1-4](#). Do you find yourself doubting this? Do you believe it?
4. "We humans can't save ourselves, but we want to be our own saviors. And many of us would rather go down on our own terms than be humble. It's that simple, and it's that tragic."
Discuss the quote above. How do we live in such a way to indicate that we want to be our own saviors?

"Jesus has been offensive for centuries. Blessed, indeed, are those who aren't offended by Him. They're the ones who can become like little kids and just know a great gift when they see it. They don't have to pose. They can simply accept an invitation to the greatest feast of all, and they can enjoy every minute of it."

Chapter Twenty-Three

Forget Danish People - Let's Talk About Your Elbow

1. Brant wrote, "If you're constantly being hurt, offended, or angered, you should honestly evaluate your inflamed ego." Discuss the nature of this statement. What is the connection between an inflamed ego and constantly being offended?
2. How much do you feel your ego is affected by the "imaginary audience"?
3. Real humility lies in self-forgetfulness. Define self-forgetfulness. Read [Matthew 16:25](#). List and discuss some other scriptures that teach self-forgetfulness. What did Jesus teach? What did Paul teach?
4. Why would humble people be difficult to offend?

Chapter Twenty-Four

And Lo, The Kingdom of God Is Like a Terrible Football Team

"So let's review: Choosing to be unoffendable means choosing to be humble. Not only that, the practice teaches humility. Once you've decided you can't control people; once you've reconciled yourself to the fact that the world, and its people, are broken; once you've realized your own moral failure before God; once you've abandoned the idea that your significance comes from anything other than God, you're growing in humility, and that's exactly where God wants us all."

1. After reading the review, which element of this book has shaken you the most personally? Which challenge listed above has caused you to seek change in your life?
2. We are all guilty of anger, and we will fail again. But what do you know about God that will help you through such failures?
3. How does it make you feel that ultimately, you are not in control? How should it make you feel?

Take heart. The limo is coming anyway.

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