

Is it possible to be UNOFFENDABLE?

A review of the book by Brant Hansen

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led by Mary Lowman

Introduction

This will be a book review, not a traditional book study, where I will try to capture the essence of the author's message and pass it on to you. Therefore, you don't have to own or read the book to be a part of this "review."

Book Review: Hansen, Brandt, *Unoffendable*, W Publishing, Nashville, TN. 2023

The handouts will give you key thoughts and principles from the book and with questions we will consider in the study.

Chapters 1 to 5

This book begins with the premise that you can **choose** to be unoffendable.

We live in a culture that seems to be built on being offended and returning that offense. Anger is usually the result of being offended; anger then leads to resentment and bitterness.

Shouldn't a Christian be offended at some of the horrible things happening in our culture?

The book says that Christians should be the most refreshingly unoffendable people on the planet.

Can you forgive and still harbor the anger and resentment that the offense caused?

What happens when you harbor anger?

Christians often talk about "righteous anger," as though we Christians have a special kind of anger to which we are entitled. What does the Bible really say about anger?

James 1:19 – 20: *My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.*

Obviously human anger is not good!

Ephesians 4:22 – 27: You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. ²⁵Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷and do not give the devil a foothold.

This is what the Bible teaches us about human anger:

- Don't be angry fast; don't have a quick temper and express anger quickly.
- Do not sin when you are angry.
- Do not harbor anger; get rid of it at least by the end of the day.

The Bible has very little that is positive to say about anger. We can conclude that anger is almost always wrong for a Christian if it extends beyond a brief period of time—like minutes or hours.

What we call “righteous anger” belongs only to God. He is entitled to vengeance; we are not. He can be trusted with anger; we cannot be. We are called to something very radical: forgiveness.

When there is some wrong in the world that offends us as Christians because it is against the truth of God’s Word—and there is a lot, we are to stand against it in positive ways but not through anger.

If we obeyed these teachings about anger, what would happen when someone offended us?

Example: A driver cuts in on you and takes your place in line, gets your parking place, and walks away like he’s done nothing wrong. If you choose to be unoffendable, what do you do?

Example: A coworker is lazy and sloppy with her work, causing you extra work and many problems because of her laziness. If you choose to be unoffendable, what do you do?

Example: If your grown daughter accuses you of being mean and uncaring because you won’t lend her any more money (she notoriously wastes money), how should you respond if you choose to be unoffendable?

Forgiveness is the antidote to anger; it is what enables you to be unoffendable. And forgiveness is easier when we continually recognize how much we’ve been forgiven by God, how many things we’ve done that are hurtful, how insensitive we can be at times—and God always forgives us.

“Anger is extraordinarily easy. It’s our default setting. Love is very difficult. Love is a miracle.” (Hansen, 2023, p. 6)

Becoming unoffendable is learning to let go of anger quicker and quicker and replace it with forgiveness.

Maybe someone has sinned against you. Does it do you any good to cling to anger because of their sin?

“Being offended is a tiring business. Letting things go gives you energy.” (Hansen, 2023, p.12)

How often are you offended—angered—by the behavior of people you don’t even know?

- Other drivers
- Politicians
- Strangers doing dumb things
- Terrible stories you hear on the news

Instead of getting angry and offended, remind yourself what you’d be like without Jesus. Remind yourself what you’re like sometimes *even with Jesus*. Remember Jesus on the cross, forgiving two men because “they didn’t know what they were doing.”

We often get angry at people we know very little about.

1 Corinthians 4:3 – 5: *I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. ⁴ My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. ⁵ Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.*

We have no idea what is in someone else’s heart. We think we do, but we don’t.

- God knows others’ private motives. We don’t.
- God knows our private motives. We don’t.
- We think we can judge others’ motives. We’re wrong. (Hansen, 2023, p.15)

“And since we don’t know, let’s choose ahead of time: we’re just not going to get offended by people.” (Hansen, 2023, p.16)

Do you find that you need to “be right” all the time? That’s an invitation for being offended.

What’s in it for you if and when you choose to be unoffendable?

“I’m not going to be threatened or scandalized by someone else’s immoral behavior. It’s just that it’s not about me.” (Hansen, 2023, p. 20)

“Forgive in the big things and the small things. Don’t take offense. Fact is, most of us don’t get that many opportunities to forgive. Once I realized that, traffic went from being an exercise in anger to ‘forgiveness practice.’ Life is so much better that way.” (Hansen, 2023, p. 20)

“You can’t find a single story in the Bible where he (Jesus) is so disgusted, so scandalized by someone’s moral behavior, that He writes him off. It just doesn’t happen.” (Hansen, 2023, p. 27)

At the end of John 13, Jesus tells Peter that before the rooster crows that very day, Peter will deny him three times. And there the story stops. But the chapter divisions are not divinely inspired, so consider the first verses of John 14 as part of this story:

John 14:1 – 3: *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ²My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”*

“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 in himself.” (Hansen, 2023, p. 28)

God sees things in people we just can’t see. So, give people the benefit of the doubt, because you just don’t know what God knows about them.

John 2:24 – 25: *But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people. ²⁵He did not need any testimony about mankind, for he knew what was in each person.*

“Perhaps a big part of being unoffendable is seeing the human heart for what it is: Untrustworthy. Unfaithful. Prone to selfishness. Got it. Now we don’t have to be shocked.” (Hansen, 2023, p. 30)

“We shouldn’t be shocked and amazed if someone who does that thing. . . you know. . . does that thing again. Are we going to live in perpetual shock at the nature of man?” (Hansen, 2023, p. 31)

You can be perpetually shocked and offended. There’s plenty to go around. But it’s very exhausting. You can choose to be unoffended.