

TALKING POINTS

I SPEAK JESUS - TAKING OFFENSE

LEANING IN

To speak like Jesus in this divided culture, we have to be mindful of the struggles of those around us. We live in an era of *offense*, where everyone is on edge, and easily put on the defensive.

In this world, we'll all face multiple "opportunities" to be offended. But, we need to see people exactly the way Jesus sees them in order to "speak like Jesus". We have to look at all others with compassion - not offense.

The important thing which can get lost in the middle of division and conflict is - *People should never be our enemy*. All of us, including those we strongly disagree with, are not the *true* enemy. There is an enemy out to destroy *us all*, and a Savior who gave Himself for *us all*. We need to *remember* this and act accordingly.

Read Matthew 9:35-36, Proverbs 18:19, Acts 24:16

How do you "speak Jesus" to those you are in strong disagreement with?

LIVING IT OUT

If we are followers of Jesus, we are missionaries in *America to America*. So we can't allow ourselves to get caught up in the things of this world and become offended by them, because this world is not our home, we're just passing through. Here are four times we need to be on the lookout to avoid becoming offended:

When We Disagree - it's not that we should never disagree, in fact, sometimes we should. Rather, it's *how* we disagree which matters most. We need to disagree *agreeably*. We need to honor others, even in disagreement.

Read 2 Corinthians 10:3, Ephesians 4:15

What would disagreeing "agreeably" look like in the real world?

When We Are Confronted - being confronted is hard on us all. The key is to not respond in kind. Respond in wisdom, humility and love to speak like Jesus. When the world seeks to build walls, we need to be the ones who take them down.

Read 2 Timothy 2:23-24

Can you share a time where you broke down a wall with someone who offended you?

When We Are Hurt - hurt in our lives makes us even more vulnerable to taking offense. In order for us to overlook the offenses of others, we have to remember who overlooked *our* offenses.

Read Matthew 5:44, Luke 23:34

Why does hurt in our lives make us more easily offended?

When We Fall Into The Trap - the temptation for us to get offended is a trap we must avoid. It only accomplishes the purposes of the enemy of us all. We need to respond to offense with love and forgiveness to speak like Jesus.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-5, 2 Corinthians 5:19-20

How is the enemy using offense to divide us today?