



## General Topics :: An Interestibg Perspective

### An Interestibg Perspective, on: 2013/2/17 11:44

Recently I was on a national con call listening to some brothers speak about upcoming persecution on the North American church. In the time allowed for comments I felt constrained to point out persecution is a present reality in North America for believers in Jesus. The call moderator responded that is an interesting perspective.

I was bit disheartened at this comment. As I thought about people such as Ken Miller who is imprisoned for his stand for righteousness. Or Michael Salmon in prison for holding a Bible study on his own property. Or students forced out of degree programs because they testify of Jesus on college campuses. Or believers forced from jobs because of their stand for Christ. Those who are in persecution in America. Would they regard this as "an interesting perspective"?

Can we get so clinical and abstract that we treat persecution, which is already present in this country, as some theological abstract. Saints the world over are tortured and martyred. And our response is "that is an interesting perspective".

One must ask, does Jesus regard the persecuted as an interesting perspective. But then do we in America have the courage to address that question.

Bearmaster.

### Re: An Interestibg Perspective - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2013/2/17 12:03

Dear brother, I understand your hurt, but did you attempt a heart-to-heart with the moderator in private before going public like this? It could be that you guys misconstrued each other over the phone, as it happens so often here in the forum in discussions between believers. Why not simply give your brother the benefit of the doubt, and take your burden to the Lord in secret?

Sincerely,

Brother Paul

### Re: - posted by murrcolr (), on: 2013/2/17 12:19

It is a sin to take offense even when you have been legitimately wronged.

To take offense is to refuse to extend forgiveness.

To take offense is to consider yourself more important than even God, who in his infinite kindness forgives us over and over and over again.

When you are wronged you may not take offense, and your only options are to cover that sin with love which means to forget it and never bring it up against them again. Or your only other option is to confront the person in a spirit of gentleness and humility.

You may not take offense ever, but sin must always be dealt with. Either it is covered with love or it is confronted in love. But it may never be dwelt upon, pondered, or shared with others.

This must grow into a Christian reflex, returning good for evil, blessing for cursing, and kindness for wrongdoing.

**Re: murrcolr - posted by Aprlshws, on: 2013/2/17 15:06**

Thank you for posting that it had not occurred to me that taking offense was a sin, I'm going to let your words really sink in.

**Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiiss (), on: 2013/2/17 16:00**

Hi murrcolr,

Those are very wise words! I was reading this week about the difference between someone who is "persuaded" and someone who is an "ideologue." The article was mentioning it in terms of social and political issues. As an anecdote, they mentioned Ronald Reagan, a political Conservative.

Former Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill mentioned that he strongly opposed many of Reagan's views, but that he couldn't help but like the man. He said that Reagan would often invite politicians over to the White House for dinner or even a barbecue and prefer to talk about things other than politics. O'Neil said that this proved to him that Reagan was not an ideologue, even if he was strongly convinced and even dogmatic in certain beliefs (such as abortion).

I have often seen believers behave in a manner that reflects an "ideologue" personality that is devoid of the grace toward others that we hope for the Lord (and others) to display toward us. I know that I have been this way many, many times when I think that I am "right" about something to the point that I treat others with hostility.

It is a strong but meaningful rebuke that we should not behave or think like this. The Bible is undoubtedly "black and white" and sin is still sin no matter how individuals try to argue. However, the Bible contains another color -- red -- representing the words of Jesus. I often remember them as the words of the One who died for us allowing us to enjoy the grace by which we stand.

Jesus told us that the meek will "inherit the Earth" (Matthew 5:5). I have heard many definitions for what it means to be "meek." It isn't a show of weakness. It isn't full mental compliance. I have often thought of the best man at my wedding -- a football player -- who was tall, strong, highly intelligent, educated...and loved the Lord. He was once mocked by much smaller and seemingly less intelligent guys. My friend's response was to return their insults with kindness. He had within his power to "carry out justice" and point them out (they claimed to be Christians), but he simply and gently reflected the love of God.

I think that this is how we should approach others. Unfortunately, I often fall very short of this. Sometimes, I feel so certain of something that I go out of my way to "argue" a point. Unfortunately, even when I think that I am correct, I often feel as though I am taking things personally. I respond to prove MY point rather than gently sharing the truth or my concern. I am endeavoring to step back from such things.

I remember conversing with a Christian non-resistance brother once. We often strongly disagreed at how we should view the role of government and, of course, the extent of resistance in this world. One day, he sent me an email and told me that the Lord had showed him that while he didn't "resist" in terms of physical retaliation or struggle, he had been using his words to inflict pain in those with whom he disagreed. He said that the rebuke from the Lord was gentle yet remarkably clear -- that he was being a "hypocrite" for preaching against physical resistance but had become "violent" with others via his choice of words (and the heart behind them).

Offenses will come. Yet we should not allow those offenses to remove any desire for spiritual purity in the sight of God. God does not answer us as we deserve. He forgives us of our "debts" or "trespasses" -- so we should do likewise. Unfortunately, our propensity to be "offended" (even in spiritual matters) often leads us to commit offenses. We can contend for the faith while still remembering the grace by which we stand and to strive and extend a reflection of that grace to others.

Thank you for this timely reminder!