

(un)offended

WEEK 4
REFEREE
MATT RANDALL

“Choose to be unoffendable, and you’ll flourish the way God intends you to.”
Brant Hansen

Christians: _____ **Referees** _____ of the world.

Studies from the Barna Group:

- 87% think Christianity is judgmental.
- 85% think Christianity is hypocritical.

1) Put down the _____ **whistle** _____.

Everyone needs _____ **Jesus** _____.

“When we lose sight of [our] end goal, instead focused on keeping the moral score for people outside the church... we are just making sure that hell is full of really well-behaved people... But when we focus on loving people into a relationship with Jesus, we are making sure that heaven is filled to capacity.” Jamie Snyder

...clothe yourselves with tenderhearted **mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance** for each other’s faults, and **forgive** anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with **love**... *Colossians 3:12-14*

2) Choose _____ **influence** _____ over being offended.

“When we choose, ahead of time- before conversations, before meetings, before our day begins- to be unoffendable, we’re simply choosing humility.” Brant Hansen

A defining characteristic of a Jesus follower in our culture is _____ **humility** _____.

Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive... so that you will have the right response for everyone. *Colossians 4:5-6*

3) Be _____ **ready** _____ with an _____ **answer** _____.

“In this culture, if you live a restful life, you’ll freak people out.”
Brant Hansen

...worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, **always be ready** to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way... *1 Peter 3:15-16*

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For Group Discussion

Answer these questions prior to your Small Group meeting this week.

Introduction

As Christians we have the ability to alter what the public sees as negative or positive. Sadly, we have a history of using this ability to drive division. Too often, we believe our authority is found in the way we speak out against political topics, well-known people, or parts of pop culture we’re offended by. How can we change this perception to gain influence while still honoring God?

Discussion Questions

1. Christians often feel the need to be the referees of the world – imposing the high moral standards of Christianity on everyone. Surveys show more than 80% of the next generation think that Christians are judgmental and hypocritical. Why do you think that perception exists?

Read Matthew 23:1-4. If we aren’t careful, people can see more Pharisee in us than Jesus. If we’re honest, most of us are guilty of this at one time or another. Share a time when your actions or reactions may have left the door open for someone to label your Christianity as judgmental or hypocritical.

2. In order to live an (un)offended life, we must put down the whistle and protect our influence with others. Read 2 Corinthians 5:15. “Everyone needs Jesus.” Why is it difficult for us to see people who offend us through that lens?

What are some attributes or character qualities we can exhibit that help us maintain influence with others and point people to Jesus? Read Colossians 3:12-15 and Colossians 4:5-6. What is one area of your life (friends, family, co-workers, neighbors, social media connections, etc.) in which you know you haven’t responded in the way these verses describe the Christ-follower’s character?

3. When we choose to be (un)offendable ahead of time, we’re simply choosing humility. Read Philippians 2:3-7. In what ways are you most likely to struggle with humility? Where do you tend to judge others the most?

How can we breed the humility necessary to consistently put others before ourselves? If you get this right, who would you build influence with for God’s kingdom?

4. Brant Hansen wrote, “In this culture, if you live a restful life, you’ll freak people out.” In other words, people will notice when you choose to be (un)offended. Knowing what you know about your tendencies to respond to others, share some things you can do this coming week to help you respond appropriately in advance.

OUTREACH: GROUPS IN ACTION

The organization, Adult and Child, needs your support. When children are placed in foster care, Adult and Child provides the foster family with a backpack full of items to help get the child settled – toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, and maybe something small but special to show the child they are loved. As a group or family, purchase and supply the backpacks with the items mentioned. Stocked backpacks can be brought to the Info Desk during weekend service at any campus or dropped off to the Greenwood/Banta campus offices during the week. If you have any questions, contact Kerry Carmichael at kcarmichael@eclife.org.

Do you have a passion or skill? Maybe you like to repair cars, do plumbing or electrical work, sew or cook. If you want to put your skills and passions to use for someone in need let us know! As we hear of needs throughout our church and community we can connect you to help with the solution. Email Kerry Carmichael to learn more about how you can help at kcarmichael@eclife.org.

Action Step

Fill in the blanks below for this upcoming week.

My action steps are _____.

I’m accountable for _____, and their action steps are _____.

My memory verse is _____.

This coming week, I’m praying for:
