

02 – LIVE IN HARMONY

- ✓ In this series, we're looking at relationship hacks. We defined a "hack" as "a tip or technique that solves a problem, simplifies a task, gives you an advantage, or makes life easier."
- ✓ Sometimes Relationships are Tough – (i) We're imperfect people trying to connect with *other* imperfect people. (There's lots of room for error.) (ii) We've also got an enemy who hates relationships and makes it his business to sabotage them every chance he gets. (The #1 way he does that is through strife.)

HACK #2 – Stay Out of Strife

Rom. 12:16 – "Live in harmony with one another ..." (NIV)

A. God & the Devil Both Work in Atmospheres

- ✓ God works in an atmosphere of _____. Satan works in an atmosphere of _____.
- ✓ The Punchline – You create the atmosphere. Then one side or the other will show up and start working. (If you create unity, God will come. If you create strife and division, then *Satan* will come.)

GOD – Matt. 18:19 – "... if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst ..."

- ✓ He said, "If two of you agree ..." (The Greek word is "Sumphoneo"). It means to "flow together in unity, to be in harmony, or in one accord". (You're not just agreeing on the outcome of the prayer. You're creating an atmosphere.)
- ✓ What's the outcome? "I'm in the midst" (He shows up.) "Your prayer will be answered. (He works.)"

- ✓ God works in an atmosphere of unity. Satan is just the opposite. Satan shows up and goes to work in _____. Just like harmony brings the presence and power of God, strife brings the presence and power of the devil.

(i) He Shows Up

Eph. 4:27 – "Don't give the devil a foothold in your life by nursing anger."

- ✓ When you nurse anger (strife), you give him a "foothold". The Greek word for "foothold" is "topos" and it means "room to stand".

(ii) He Goes to Work

James 3:16 – "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."

- ✓ Who do you think is behind the work? The devil.

B. It's Easy to Get Sucked into Strife

(i) No One Is Immune. (Acts 15 – Paul & Barnabas ...)

Phil. 4:2 – "Euodia (Eē-yō'diă) and Syntyche (Sîn-tă-kē), I urge you to put aside your differences and live in harmony in the Lord. I also request you, loyal Syzygus, (Sîz-ă-gŭs) to help these women; for they for they worked side by side with me in the Gospel ..."

(ii) Offense is a _____! (Greek: Skandalon – the trigger, the part of the mousetrap where you put the bait.) Offense is Satan baiting you.

(iii) Offense is an _____. (To pain and trouble.)

- ✓ It hurts the people involved in the fight (Gal. 5:15 GW) and it hurts

the people around the fight. Strife rarely stops with the initial people. It's like yeast. It works its way through the entire group.

Gal. 5:15 (AMP) – “But if you bite and devour one another [in bickering and strife], watch out that you [along with your entire fellowship] are not consumed.” (INT – “... end up destroying your assembly ...”)

(iv) A Person That Yields to Strife, Ends Up Doing the Devil's Work

Romans 6:13 – “And do not present the parts of your bodies to Satan as weapons for wickedness, but present the parts of your bodies to God as weapons for righteousness.”

- ✓ No Christian just offers his services. He's got to be *deceived* into it.

C. The Anatomy of an Offense

Matt. 24:10-12 – “And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because lawlessness shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”

- ✓ That looks like random things that happen in the last days. No, they're things the devil does when he's present and at work.
- You get offended and your love grows cold.
- You get deceived – (*An offended heart is the breeding ground for deception. The devil starts to feed you thoughts ...*)
- Lawlessness, Betrayal & Hatred follow – (*The attack moves outward, and you become a weapon in Satan's hands.*)

2 Tim. 2:24-25 – “In meekness instructing those that set themselves in opposition (offended people), in the hope that God may grant a change of heart and a turning to the truth, enabling them to escape the devil's trap, where they are caught and held captive, (and) forced to run his errands.”

D. How Do You Maintain Unity?

(i) Kill “the Two P's” in Your Life – (Pride & Preference)

Ro. 12:16 – “Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud ...”

- ✓ Why would he mention pride? Pride and strife go hand-in-hand. (*Prov. 13:10 NIV*) If you want to kill strife, kill pride.

James 4:1 – “What causes quarrels and fights among you? They come from the selfishness inside you.”

- ✓ Selfishness (preference) says, “I want it *my way!*”

(ii) Take Responsibility for Unity

Ro. 12:18 – “If possible, and to the extent that it depends on you, live in peace with all people.”

- ✓ He doesn't phrase this as a command because you're not entirely in control. You can only control your side of the relationship. Sometimes, peace isn't possible, but you do your part. (*Heb. 12:14*)

(iii) Sow Seeds of Unity Into the Relationship – (Ro. 12:10,14)

- ✓ Be devoted (loyal, committed, faithful). “It's you and me against the world. Everything around us can crumble, but *we're* not crumbling. Everyone can turn against *us*, but we're not turning against each other.”
- ✓ Honor one another. “Try to outdo one another in showing honor.” “Compete with each other ...” “In blessings, put the other person at the front of the line.” “Esteem each other as higher in value.” (*Phil. 2:3 Amp* – It didn't say they are superior, it said treat them that way.)
- ✓ Bless – Move in the opposite spirit. (*Prov. 15:1*)