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Humanity's conflict is with truth itself, and with the God who is truth

We live in an age when offense is treated not as a feeling to examine, but as a right to enforce. Someone feels insulted, uncomfortable, or contradicted, and suddenly another person must be silenced, removed, or made to apologize.

That differs from the older moral meaning of "offense." To give offense once meant more than hurting feelings. It meant committing moral wrong, violating God's law, or becoming a stumbling block that led another into sin. Jesus warned, "Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come!" (Luke 17:1, ESV).

Today, offense usually means an emotional reaction to a perceived insult, disagreement, or violation of personal values. Feelings are real, and believers should never be cruel or careless. But feelings cannot become the measure of truth. If they do, the person most easily offended gains the greatest power.

A recent incident at an Atlanta Dream–Indiana Fever WNBA game illustrates the problem. According to Fox News/OutKick, a mother and daughter wearing XX–XY-themed shirts were told by security to cover them with Atlanta Dream "Wellness & Health Night" shirts or risk removal, after fans complained. Arena policy prohibits explicit or derogatory messages, yet the reported issue was simply that someone found the message offensive.

The issue is not whether every slogan or protest is wise. Christians should be gracious. The deeper question is whether a claim about biological reality may be suppressed because it unsettles someone. If offense becomes the test, scientific facts, moral convictions, and biblical teachings can all be treated as punishable injuries.

That is the danger of a secular worldview that claims neutrality while demanding conformity that excludes God. Secularism holds that government, education, and morality should be governed by human reason rather than God's revealed truth. It presents itself as neutral ground between believers and nonbelievers. But neutrality vanishes when convictions rooted in moral order, natural reality, or God's authority are considered uniquely unacceptable.

Every society rests on beliefs about what is true, good, human, and just, and public life reflects those convictions. The real question is whose convictions will prevail, and whether they may be challenged.

When morality is reduced to relativism, it becomes an instrument of power. If there is no truth beyond personal preference or political authority, the strongest voices decide what may be said or silenced. Offense becomes a weapon against those who challenge secular assumptions.

The Apostle Paul knew the Christian message would provoke resistance. "The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing," he wrote, "but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18, ESV). He called it "a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles" (1 Corinthians 1:23, ESV).

The gospel offends because it does not flatter human pride. It declares that we are not self-created or self-saving. Sin is real, judgment is coming, and every person needs mercy through Jesus Christ. It confronts rebellion against the Creator, who "does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth" (Daniel 4:35, ESV).

At its deepest level, humanity's conflict is with truth itself, and with the God who is truth. Isaiah saw the Lord "sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up," while heavenly beings cried, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:1, 3, ESV). The creature cannot replace the Creator without declaring war on reality.

Christians, however, must not imitate the culture's addiction to grievance. We are not called to hunt for insults or demand protection. "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you," Paul writes, "along with all malice" (Ephesians 4:31, ESV).

Nor should Christians relish offending others. Peter calls us to defend our hope "with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15, ESV). Truth without love becomes harshness; love without truth becomes sentimentality.

Still, disciples should not be surprised when faithfulness offends. Jesus said, "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18, ESV). Our response must be neither surrender nor outrage, but courageous truth, humble love, and steadfast witness.