

**LEARNING THROUGH OFFENSES**  
**A Devotional Meditation from**  
**Proverbs 10:12; Isaiah 55:1-13; John 6:53-71; 1 Corinthians 13:9-12**  
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Since 1977, the *Star Wars* saga has captured the imagination of people around the world. The stories resonate with us because we see ourselves in the characters and the circumstances they face. Those characters confront difficult, uncomfortable things about themselves, and if we allow it, they can help us deal with the same unpleasantnesses within ourselves.

For example, in Episode IV (the first of the *Star Wars* films), Obi Wan Kenobi presents Luke Skywalker with his father's lightsaber. Luke knows very little about his father, so he takes the opportunity to ask how his father died. Obi Wan answers,

"A young Jedi named Darth Vader, who was a pupil of mine until he turned to evil, helped the Empire hunt down and destroy the Jedi Knights. He betrayed and murdered your father. Now the Jedi are all but extinct. Vader was seduced by the dark side of the Force."<sup>1</sup>



*Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill) receives his father's lightsaber from Obi Wan Kenobi (Sir Alec Guinness) in Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope. Image via [Stack Exchange SciFi & Fantasy Community](https://www.stackexchange.com/questions/100000/stack-exchange-sci-fi-fantasy-community).*

There is a problem with this explanation, as subsequent films reveal. In Episode V, we learn that Luke's father is actually the evil Darth Vader, and that Obi Wan knew the truth all along. In Episode VI, we feel Luke's anger and sense of betrayal when he confronts his mentor with the angry accusation, "You told me Vader betrayed and murdered my father."

Obi Wan's response only seems to make matters worse:

"Your father was seduced by the dark side of the Force. He ceased to be Anakin Skywalker and became Darth Vader. When that happened, the good man who was your father was destroyed. So what I have told you was true . . . from a certain point of view. . . Luke, you're going to find that many of the truths we cling to depend greatly on our own point of view."<sup>2</sup>

Now what are we supposed to do with such an answer? We like things black and white, with a clear distinction between what is right and what is wrong. But the

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<sup>1</sup> George Lucas, *Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope*, revised fourth draft, January 15, 1976. 8FLIX Film & Television Scripts Database (<https://8flix.com/assets/screenplays/s/tt0076759/Star-Wars-Episode-IV-A-New-Hope-1977-screenplay-by-George-Lucas.pdf>).

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence Kasdan and George Lucas, *Star Wars: Episode VI – Return of the Jedi*, third draft, 1983. 8FLIX Film & Television Scripts Database (<https://8flix.com/assets/screenplays/s/tt0086190/Star-Wars-Episode-VI-Return-of-the-Jedi-1983-screenplay-by-Lawrence-Kasdan-and-George-Lucas.pdf>).

uncomfortable reality is that Obi Wan is correct: so much of the truth we understand depends on our point of view.

Which means there can be more than one “right answer.”

But it does not mean there is more than one truth.

And here we have the conundrum. Truth is often bigger than our limited understanding, especially when we are talking about our eternal, infinite Creator. We know in part, and see eternity dimly, as in a mirror. It shouldn't surprise us that others see the same truth differently. They may not be wrong, but they, like we ourselves, are not completely right. It's not that we are dull and stupid, but that our God hasn't yet revealed everything. This is why He says:

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways.” It is a declaration of *ADONAI*. “For as the heavens are higher than earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:8-9 TLV)

The Lord says this in the context of calling on us to abandon our wicked ways, return to Him, and receive pardon for our sins. In other words, to be made new and whole, with renewed hearts and minds capable of carrying His Presence wherever we go. Yet He is not in the habit of revealing everything even to the redeemed. It seems there are some things it's best we don't know in our current state of mortal imperfection.

Perhaps this is because we simply can't handle the full truth. Or maybe it's a test – a test to see whether we can remain on good terms with those who see the same truth differently, or even whether we will continue to trust in our God when it seems impossible, or when the things He reveals contradict our own comfortable paradigms, or when He seems to have betrayed us.

If scripture is any indication, this happens more often than we like to think. The Hebrews standing on the shore of the Red Sea, with the Egyptian army at their backs, must have felt betrayed by the God they trusted to deliver them from bondage and bring them into paradise. They certainly felt that way over the next 40 years, when every adversity in the wilderness only confirmed the fact that deliverance from Egypt was but the beginning of a long testing and purification process. Only those who were able to endure to the end got to enter the Promised Land – and even they never understood the full story.

Neither did Messiah Yeshua's disciples. John relates to us that a multitude followed Yeshua after He fed them all with a few fish and loaves of bread. What happens the next day reveals much about why those disciples followed Yeshua, and the limits of their tolerance for His challenges to their ways of thinking:

So *Yeshua* said to them, “Amen, amen I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is real food and My blood is real drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent Me and I live because of the Father, so the one who eats of Me will also live because of Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven—not like the bread your fathers ate and then died. He who eats this bread will live forever.”

He said these things while teaching at the synagogue in Capernaum. So when many of His disciples heard this, they said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can listen to it?"

But *Yeshua* knew His disciples were murmuring, so He said to them, "Does this offend you? Then what if you see the Son of Man going back up to the place where He was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is of no benefit. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and are life! Yet some of you do not trust." *Yeshua* knew from the beginning who were the ones who did not trust, as well as which one would betray Him.

Then He told them, "For this reason I've told you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by the Father."

From this time, many of His disciples left and quit walking with Him. So *Yeshua* said to the Twelve, "You don't want to leave also, do you?"

Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life! We have trusted and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God."

*Yeshua* answered them, "Didn't I choose you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is the adversary!" Now He was speaking of Judah, the son of Simon of Kriot—for he, one of the Twelve, was about to betray Him. (John 6:53-71 TLV)

If we want to know why the people of *Yeshua*'s day rejected Him, we could say it's because He wasn't the Messiah they expected. Rather than yield to the more complete truth revealed by the Father through the Son, they chose to remain within their comfort zones and walk away. The twelve who remained deserve credit for staying with *Yeshua*, but even they did not understand. They stayed with Him despite their questions, knowing only that somehow the truth was in Him, and that they would understand better in time. Even then, one of those trusted twelve fell away before the end. Like the multitude before him, he encountered a Messiah who didn't act in the way He believed the Messiah should, and therefore he sought to rework the script to suit his own preferences.

We dare not judge these ancient Hebrews. They are, after all, our spiritual ancestors. Their reactions to the paradigm-shattering revelations of God speak to the common imperfect humanness we share across time and space. The truth is, we are uncomfortable with a Creator Who does not fit our expectations. That is why the hardest tests he places on us are those that require us to endure and learn through an endless parade of offenses.