

SOLVING CHURCH PROBLEMS

INTRO: It is an indisputable fact that in all congregations, problems will arise from time to time. Every congregation of God's people is made up of fallible humans & they will not be at all times all that they should be. But when problems arise, every Christian should be concerned, & should help to the best of his ability to discover & apply the proper solutions to those problems.

In this lesson we shall take note of a number of problems that can arise & constitute church problems.

1. Division. This problem is certainly not limited to God's people but it has been a great problem among the churches
 - a. Some churches have openly split over matters important or unimportant.
 - b. Many churches which never experience an open split are plagued with division beneath the surface.
 - c. No congregation, no matter how old or how new, how large or how small is immune to the danger of this problem.
2. Need for church discipline. There are certain sins of such a nature as to demand public action on the part of the church. Discipline has sometimes been called the forgotten commandment.
3. Personal quarrels, feuds & disagreements between & among church members can become congregational problems.
 - a. Such problems affect the attitudes of those involved in such a way that they seldom are able to accomplish what they otherwise would for the Lord.
 - b. In most cases, even a casual visitor can spot such problems & the influence & reputation of the whole congregation can be damaged.

4. Problems in the home/marriage relationship are also problems that will often affect & engulf the church as a whole unless they are properly dealt with.
5. Abuse of personal liberties & disrespect for the conscience of others can do great damage within a congregation of God's people.
6. The problem of secularizing the spiritual & demanding the church be everything to everybody presents problems that are far-reaching in their effects.
7. Jealousies/pride, based on misuse or misunderstanding of different abilities is a problem in some congregations.
8. Lack of a real goal or losing sight of that goal is a danger that is ever-present.
9. False doctrine constantly bombards us from every angle and cannot be safely neglected or allowed to go unnoticed

As time permits we shall look at these problems from a Bible standpoint. Some of these may be present problems in this congregation. All of them are a threat to this & every congregation of God's people. Before anyone begins to think that surely I exaggerate, that all these problems could not possibly threaten us, I hasten to point out that I know of a congregation which was plagued with every one of these problems. We are fortunate in that the H.S. saw fit to guide the apostle Paul to write to this troubled congregation & reveal the principles by which all these problems can be solved.

I. THE PROBLEM OF DIVISION, 1 COR. 1:11-12

- A. Not think too highly of any man, 1:13; 4:6
- B. Need to be more spiritual minded, 3:1-7.

II. THE NEED FOR CHURCH DISCIPLINE, 5:1-2.

- A. Recognize the Lord's will, vs. 3-5
- B. Realize the influence of unbridled sin, vs 6-8
- C. Realize that discipline is for the good of the sinner, vs 5

III. QUARRELS BETWEEN CHURCH MEMBERS, 6:1-8

- A. Seek the counsel of mature Christians, vs. 5
- B. Be reminded of your mutual interest in the harmony & reputation of the church, vs. 6-7a.

- C. It is sometimes better to give up a liberty for the sake of peace/harmony/oneness.

IV. HOME/MARRIAGE PROBLEMS, 7:1-2, 39.

- A. Remember Jesus' teaching, 7:10-11; MT 19:9
- B. Heed commands Jesus spoke thru apostles, vs. 12-16
- C. Remember some things are permitted but not commanded, vs. 6. See also vs. 2.
- D. Some things might not be wise, yet still not be sinful, vs. 25-28, 38-40.

V. THE PROBLEMS OF DISRESPECT FOR THE CONSCIENCE OF OTHERS & OF SETTING IMPROPER EXAMPLES, 8:1, 4, 7, 9-11.

- A. A thing not wrong in itself can be a stumbling block & lead others to sin, vs. 9-10.

- B. Such an innocent seeming stumbling block can cause the soul of a weak person to be lost, vs. 11.

- C. When those who are strong in knowledge knowingly become a stumbling block to the weak, they are also guilty of sin, vs. 12.

- D. The right kind of love for Christ & for the brethren will make one willing to sacrifice some of his rights, vs. 13.

VI. THE PROBLEM OF SECULARIZING THE SPIRITUAL, 17-22

- A. Turned L.S. into common meal & place of worship into banquet hall.

- B. Need to realize that certain things which are not wrong in their proper realm are not the work of the church,

vs. 22, 34. (Recreation, entertainment, child care, secular education, general benevolence, political activities, etc.) Lev 10:1-2, 10.

VIII. JEALOUSIES & PRIDE AMONG CHURCH MEMBERS OVER DIFFERING ABILITIES, 12:1, 4, 15-16, 27-30. Remember all abilities are necessary to the proper functioning of the body, vs 14-27.

A. Remember that the basic purpose for assembling is that all may be edified, vs. 26.

B. Every facet of the worship service should have meaning & significance, vs. 15-19.

C. To expedite these worthy goals, everything must be done decently & in order, vs. 40.

IX. A CONGREGATION MUST ALWAYS BE ON GUARD AGAINST FALSE DOCTRINE, 15:12.

A. Show proof of the truth, vs. 1-8

B. Show consequences of false doctrine, 13-15, 17-19

CONCLUSION: Of course, we have not dealt with everything that could possibly become a church problem, but we have noticed many of the most common problems along with the Divine solutions to those problems. In doing so, we have established certain principles that are germane to all such problems.

1. Recognize that the problem exists.

2. Apply Biblical principles to the problem with love, wisdom, courage--& faith that God's way will work.

The Perfect Church

I think that I shall never see a church that's all it ought to be;
A church whose members never stray beyond the strait & narrow
way;
A church that has no empty pews, whose preacher never gets the
blues;

Where elders old & deacons dead and none is proud & all are meek.

Where gossips never peddle lies or make complaints & criticize;
Whose members are all sweet & kind, & to each other's sins are blind.
Such congregations there may be, but none of them are known to me.

So let us work & pray & plan to make this church the best we can.

La Porte, TX, July 10, 1977

Highway 29, Liberty Hill, TX, October 9, 1977 (meeting)

Humphrey, AR, July 30, 1980 (meeting)

Exton, PA, October 26, 1986

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, March 6, 1994

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, August 27, 2000