

“How to Solve Problems”, Part 2 – Galatians 2:6-12 – July 30th, 2017

- Today’s teaching will be part two of a series I’ve titled, “How to Solve Problems.”
- As I mentioned last week, my hope and prayer for this series is that all of us would experience the power of the Word of God.
- More specifically, the power of the practical application of God’s Word to a situation or problem and seeing God’s hand in it.

- The reason I share that again this week is because the chapter and text that’s before us provides us with this very application.
- It’s not that all of scripture doesn’t contain practical application to our lives; it’s just that this chapter is very specific in doing so.
- So much so that we have a Biblical template that we can superimpose on those relational problems that we face in our lives.

1. Tact (Verses 1-2)

- Paul is very tactful in approaching the problems there in the Galatian churches by meeting privately with the esteemed leaders.

2. Discernment (Verses 3-5)

- Here, we’re told that Paul used his spiritual discernment to expose the false believers who had infiltrated them to spy on them.

3. Impartiality (Verses 6-8)

6 As for those who were held in high esteem—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism—they added nothing to my message. 7 On the contrary, they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised. 8 For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles.

- Paul says those they esteemed are inconsequential because God shows no favoritism and they added nothing to his message.
- He then tells them conversely that they recognized he was entrusted with preaching to the Gentiles as Peter was to the Jews.
- He says the reason is because God had worked in Peter as an apostle to the Jews, and in Paul as an apostle to the Gentiles.
- What Paul is saying here is he’s not impressed with influential or famous people, and that they never influenced his preaching.
- That’s not to say that Paul wasn’t blessed by others held in high esteem, rather, it’s that he wasn’t impressed with the others.
- This speaks to the importance of putting aside all prejudice and bias in our dealings with others in order to resolve the problem.

Acts 10:34–35 (NKJV) — 34 Then Peter opened his mouth and said: “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. 35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.

James 3:17 (NIV) — 17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

4. Compassion (Verses 9-10)

9 James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. 10 All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.

- Paul refers to what’s known as the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15, which was a dispute about the requirement of circumcision.
- Thankfully, Peter, James and John, along with Paul and Barnabas resolved this problem with both a passion and compassion.
- It’s evidenced by what Paul says in verse ten concerning those impoverished believers in Jerusalem, which he had a heart for.

5. Boldness (Verses 11-12)

11 When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. 12 For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group.

- Here in these verses, Paul turns a sharp corner of sorts and tells them about how he confronted Peter opposing him to his face.
- The reason for this is that before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles, until the Jews had arrived.
- Then upon their arrival Peter refused to associate with Gentiles because he feared those who were of the circumcision group.
- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the most difficult things for us as Christians, confronting others has to be it.
- While it must always be done with the aforementioned tact, discernment impartiality and compassion it must be with boldness.
- It’s interesting to note that Paul confronts Peter publicly and not privately. The reason being is that what Peter did was publicly.

- I would suggest that Paul had to boldly and publically confront Peter because of the seriousness of this as a salvation matter.
- Furthermore, Paul knew, Peter knew better because of the vision God gave him concerning this very matter in Acts 10:10-16.
- The truth of the matter is that Paul cared enough for Peter to say something to Peter, for his and the betterment many others.

- Here’s the bottom line in closing, if we’re ever to have the hope of resolving relational problems, we must have a holy boldness.
- In other words, if we really care for and love them, we have to tell them what they need to hear, and not what they want to here.
- Whether we are the pastor in the pulpit, or the person in the pew, we must speak with the power and boldness of God’s Word.

Jeremiah 23:25–33 - 28 “The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat?” says the LORD. 29 “Is not My word like a fire?” says the LORD, “And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?”