

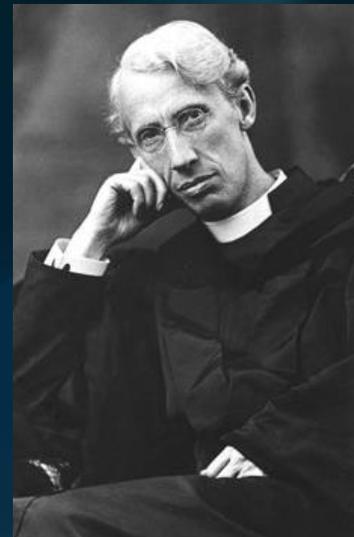


**Acts 6:1-4** Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. <sup>2</sup>Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. <sup>3</sup>Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; <sup>4</sup>but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word. +

## Satan had already made repeated attempts to stop the church.

1. He had tried persecution from without, but that only caused the church to grow more rapidly.
2. He had tried sin within, but that only purified the church and made it even more powerful.
3. Now he would try division and strife within.

“The Church’s gravest danger has never been created by opposition. When she has been opposed and persecuted she has been pure and strong. Never until she was patronized did she become weak. Wherever the Church is patronized and admired by the world, she becomes weak. So surely as the Church is obeying Him, she can never be weakened by patronage, and she never can be paralyzed by compromise.” G. Campbell Morgan



## 1. The congregation they were building

**Acts 6:1** Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying,

Some estimate the church's size by this point at approximately 20,000.

**The church was populated by:**

- “ Native Jews who were of Hebrew tradition
- “ Hellenistic Jews who were of Greek tradition

## 2. The complaint they were hearing

**Acts 6:1** there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.

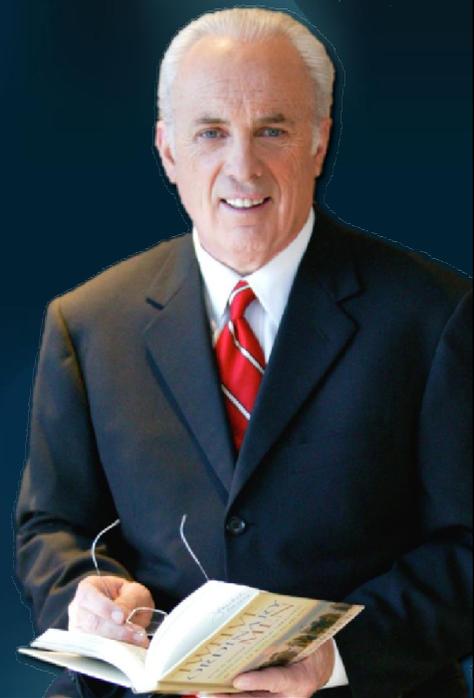
**Deut 14:29, 16:11, 24:19-21, 26:12**

**1 Tim 5:3** Honor widows who are really widows.

### 3. The chance they were taking

As is normally the case, the church was about to split over a relatively insignificant issue.

A church racked by internal conflict finds its message lost in conflict, its energy dissipated. And a church thus focused on itself will find it difficult to reach out to the lost world.+ John MacArthur



**Ps 133:1** Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

**Prov 6:19** ã one who sows discord among brethren.

**Prov 10:12** Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins.

**15:18** A wrathful man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger allays contention.

**16:28** A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends.

**17:19** He who loves transgression loves strife,

**26:21** As a charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife.

**28:25** He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife,

**29:22** An angry man stirs up strife,

**1 Cor 1:11-13** For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. <sup>12</sup>Now I say this, that each of you says, %am of Paul,+or %am of Apollos,+or %am of Cephas,+or %am of Christ.+<sup>13</sup>Is Christ divided?

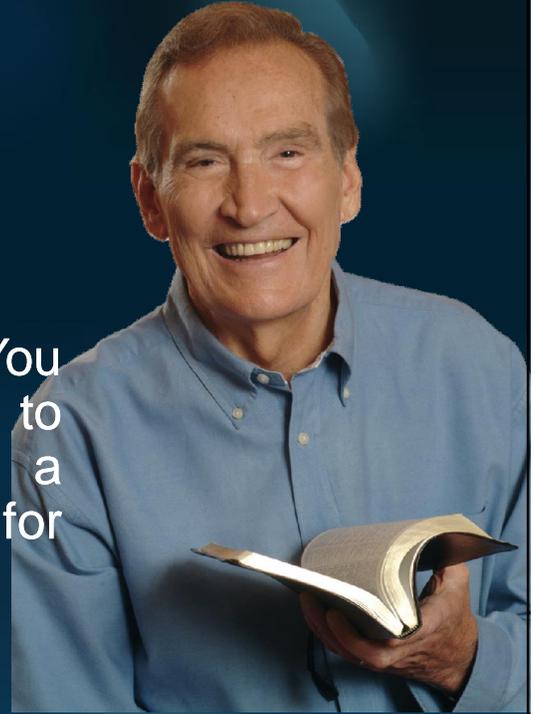
**1 Cor 3:3** for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?

**1 Cor 12:22-25** But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.

**2 Tim 2:23** But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. <sup>24</sup>And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, <sup>25</sup>in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,

## 4. The choice they were facing

You are free to choose. You are not free, however, not to choose. After you make a choice, your choice chooses for you.+ Adrian Rogers



**1 Tim 6:3-5** If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, <sup>4</sup>he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, <sup>5</sup>useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.