

Seeking God's Plan for Joyful Unity Unity Comes from Dealing with Problems

4 principles to handling problems well:

Opening Salvos

1. God wants problems to be solved in a timely manner.

Ephesians 4:26 – *Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,*

Matthew 6:34 – *So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

2. God wants problems to be solved in a balanced way.

cf. John 8 – the woman taken in adultery...

3. God wants every Christian to shoulder responsibility in this matter.

Ephesians 4:11-12 – *some as pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of service...*

Romans 15:14 – *And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.*

Galatians 6:1 – *Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.*

4. God wants problems to be addressed in the tightest circle possible.

cf. Matthew 18:15-18

Proverbs 20:19 – *He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, therefore do not associate with a gossip.*

Proverbs 26:20 – *For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down.*

5. Biblical problem solving can produce spiritual maturity like few other activities.

I. Prepare the Person(s) Adequately

A. Speak of your relationship with them

v. 1 – *brethren*

B. Speak of your love for them

v. 1 – *“dearly beloved and longed for”.*

C. Speak of their importance in your life

v. 1 – *“my joy and my crown”...*

3 John 4 – *I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.*

II. Keep the Confrontation Pointed and Simple

A. Be specific

Jay Adams – “How important it is to get down to brass tacks...There are real people involved. They must be singled out and dealt with specifically. Abstractions and generalizations solve few problems.”

B. Be positive

v. 1 – *so stand fast in the Lord...*

C. Avoid extraneous speech

Proverbs 10:19 – *In the multitude of words there lacks not sin: but he that refrains his lips is wise.*

D. Be fair

v.2 – *I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche*

E. Be Christ-centered

v. 1 & 2 – *...in the Lord.*

Philippians 4:13 – *I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.*

III. Use the Resources of the Church if Necessary

A. Sometimes an additional person needs to be brought into the equation

syzygos – companion, yokefellow

B. The restoration of their relationship was worth the effort

IV. Look to the Benefits of Solving Problems Biblically

A. Great joy

Psalms 133:1 – *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!*

B. An opportunity to develop a reasonable spirit

v. 5 – *Let your gentle spirit be known to all men.*

gentle – mercy or leniency toward the faults and failures of others.

C. Anxious-free living

v. 6 – *Be anxious for nothing...*

D. Developed prayer life

v. 6 – *...but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.*

E. The peace of God

Philippians 4:7 – *And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*