



*Series: This Is My Church—Part One
Title: Problems and Solutions*

Acts 6:1-7

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Objective: Every church can grow by focusing on two realities—accepting problems and finding solutions.

Pastor Dan: I love the church because the church first loved me. I believe in the church because the church first believed in me. I come to the church because the church first came to me. I speak well of the church because the church first spoke well of me. I remain in the church because the church never gave up on me. I take care of the church because the church first took care of me. I give to the church because the church first gave to me.

My worst moments in the church have been better than my best moments in the world. When I lived without Christ in my life even the good things that came my way somehow turned out bad. But after giving my life to Jesus and entering the church world even the bad things turned out good. My good times in the world produced no lasting peace in my life because I knew they were going to turn out bad. But while serving the Lord I always had hope because He miraculously transformed the bad things that came my way into good—so as a follower of Christ, no matter how horrible the difficulty seemed to be, I had hope—and hope does not disappoint those who hold on to it.

Read Acts 6:1-7

#1. Expect Problems (*Acts 6:1 NLT As the believers rapidly multiplied, there were **rumblings of discontent**. The Greek-speaking believers **complained** about the Hebrew-speaking believers, saying that their widows were being discriminated against [**neglected**] in the daily distribution of food.*)

A. Theodore Rubin: *The problem is not that there are problems. The problem is expecting otherwise and thinking that having problems is a problem.*

1. **Conflict Is A Natural Part of Church Life** (*1 Peter 4:12-14 Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. ¹³ Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering ... ¹⁴ And if you are insulted [or assaulted] because you bear the name of Christ, you will be blessed, for the glorious Spirit of God rests upon you*)
 - a. *Pastor Dan:* When you and I face trial there is an anointing of power present in direct proportion to the present need you face.
 - b. *Pastor Dan:* When you and I are in a place where there people are present—there will be problems. And when we are all alone and not one person is anywhere to be see—there will be problems because our adversary the devil walks around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may destroy.
 - c. **Acts 15:36-41** The disagreement [contention] between Paul and Barnabas was so sharp that they separated. Barnabas took John Mark with him and sailed for Cyprus. ⁴⁰ Paul chose Silas, and as he left, the believers entrusted him to the Lord's gracious care. contention between Barnabas and Paul
 - d. *Pastor Dan:* The New Kings James Bible uses the word neglect when talking about administering the daily food for those believers in the church who were in need.
Crandall Miller: Neglect is the worst form of abuse.
 - e. *Just A Thought—May 20--Anything You Ask:* Brother Lawrence said in Practicing His Presence, “To arrive at the resignation God requires, we should watch attentively over all our passions. These passions mingle as much in spiritual things as in things of a more gross nature.” Serving God, and His interests in others, is how we learn to empty our lives of selfishness.
 - f. *Pastor Dan:* The church in Jerusalem was experiencing the pain of change. **Philippians 2:3-4** *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*
 - g. **1 Corinthians 11:17-19 Amplified Bible v19**—For doubtless there have to be factions or parties among you—that they who are genuine and of approved fitness may become evident and plainly recognized among you.
 - h.. *Author Unknown:* The conflict between good and evil is drama; the conflict between good and good is tragedy. (**Ephesians 4:30-32** Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God)

- #2. **Focus on solutions** (*Acts 6:3 So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. They said, “We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not running a food program. ³ And so, brothers, select seven men who are well respected and are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will give them this responsibility.*)
 - A. **Acts of the Holy Spirit: Problems are never meant to weaken. Their purpose is to help us grow from one level to another. Thus we see that church problems and church growth form a cycle. One leads to the other. But remember this; the fate of an individual, a family, a church many times depends on one thing. It depends on how leaders respond to people's needs and complaints.**
 1. **Legitimate complaints arise when needs not being met.**
 - a. *Denis Waitley:* Don't dwell on what went wrong. Instead focus on what to do next. Spend your energies on moving forward toward finding an answer.

- b. *John Foster*: In times like these it is good to remember that there have always been times like these.
- c. *Acts of the Holy Spirit: Four things the Apostles did when dealing with the problem;* 1) *The apostles did not become defensive* or say something like, “We’re doing the best we can.” Rather than defend themselves they looked for a solution to the problem. 2) *They did not attack those who complained.* They listened carefully to discover the problem and fix it. 3) *The apostles were open to change.* 4) *They let the people help make decisions.* The people chose seven qualified men and all of them had Greek names. This shows us that the Hebraic Jews had a great love for their Grecian brothers and gave authority to them.
- d. **Romans 12:10-14** Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. ¹¹ Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. ¹² Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. ¹³ When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.
- e. **2 Chronicles 10:7** Rehoboam failed to listen (Be kind, be fair, be good)
- f. *Malcolm Bradbury*: You don’t drown by falling in water; you drown by staying there.
- g. *Acts of the Holy Spirit*: God invites us to bring out needs to Him and He wants us to pray about our problems. But God will judge those who growl like a dog; he will punish those who grumble, murmur, and complain. Those who complain are not showing faith. They are like the disciples who awakened Jesus on the boat and accusing Him of not caring for them (Mark 4:38). Jesus rebuked their lack of faith. Those who complain are not looking up to God for an answer; they are looking only at the problem. This makes them part of the problem.
- h. **Philippians 4:6** Don’t worry about anything **Numbers 11:1** Fire falls on the Israelites who complain against Moses.
- i. *Mary Kay Ash*: For every failure, there’s an alternative course of action. You just have to find it. When you come to a roadblock, take a detour.

Closing and invitation; Acts of the Holy Spirit: Problems came because the number of disciples increased. Church growth causes problems. Some members like the church to remain small. Thus they avoid growth problems. They like a few people that all know each other. These tend to think and act the same. But Jesus calls us to reach out to the lost. Heaven celebrates each time a sinner comes to Christ (**Luke 15:7**). New converts usually cause conflicts. Still, conflict is a necessary part of growth, and not growing is a bigger problem than the problems caused by growth.

Satan sought a means whereby he could attack the Jerusalem Church and stop that which God was doing there. Acts 1-8 includes three ways Satan seeks to defeat the church. The first is **persecution** and church leaders are special targets. After the lame man was healed (**Acts 3:1-10**) the Sanhedrin persecuted the Apostles in an effort to quiet them but that did not work. In fact, **Acts 4:4** tells us that those who heard the message of the Gospel of Christ believed and the number of men grew to about five thousand. Peter, John and the other apostles faced Satan’s attacks. Some were beaten and some were put in jail but the Apostles were faithful to the Lord and the church continued to grow. Second, we saw that Satan used **seduction** as a weapon for attacking the church. He seduced Ananias and Sapphira to be greedy and jealous. They believed the lies of the devil and faced swift judgment. But the enemy’s attempt to hinder the work of God failed. The Bible declares in Acts 5:14, “Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number—to the church. Third, Satan used **division and conflict** to attack the infant church. Satan attempted to create dissension among believers (**Acts 6:1-7**).