

Oxford Baptist Church May 22, 2016

Pastor Robin W. Pifer

Series: Relationships: Improving Our Connections

Message: Solving Problems

Scripture: James 1: 2-7; 19-22; 4:1-10

Life is full of Problems....

- “Don’t you be the problem.”

Followers of Jesus Christ Solve Problems.

Psalm 34:19; 1Cor 7:28; Matt 6:34

Levels of Conflict

Level 1—Problem to Solve— We have a problem to solve— openness to deal with issues. “We” Matt 5:23-26; Matt 18:15-20

Level 2—Disagreement— We have a Serious Disagreement— “They”

Level 3—Contest— We have a contest to Win— “Us and Them.”

Level 4—Fight/Flight— It’s Time to Fight—More Anger “I and You”

Four Disastrous Ways of Interacting with Problems: Criticism, Contempt, Defensiveness and Stonewalling.

Dig into the Scriptures. James 1:2-7; 19-22; 4:1-10

- Problems are going to happen. (James 1:2-7)
- Problem solving helps us grow and mature.
- Problems are solved by seeking the Lord.
- Problems are not solved by anger. (v. 19-22)
- Problems are not solved by selfishness. (4:1-3)
- Problems are solved with humility and submission to the Lord. (4: 6-10)

Five Practical Steps for Solving Problems.

1. **Pray and Accept the Problem with the Right Attitude.**
 - Problems exist, so be willing to tackle the problem.
 - Respond instead of react.

2. Pick the Main Problem and Examine it.

- Define your problem carefully. “A problem well stated is a problem half solved.” Charles Kettering

3. Put your Brain to Work.

- Brainstorm Ideas/Solutions
- Find the simple solution(s).

4. Pick Out and Plan the Solution.

- Choose the best solution
- What are the steps for this solution to happen?
- Agree on it. “We have planned our work, so we work our plan.”

5. Praise the Lord for the Process.

- Review the learnings.
- What happened? What were the results?
- James 5:7-11

Life Group Questions

1. Take time to reread the introduction scriptures and the main passages from James.
2. Discuss the levels of conflict. Why is it more difficult to solve problems as you move from level one to level four?
3. How does criticism, contempt, defensiveness and stonewalling contribute to a lack of problem solving in relationships?
4. What stands out to you regarding the teaching in James regarding problems?
5. Why is Proverbs 15:1 such a great biblical principle to solve problems? What does this avoid in a conflict?
6. Review and discuss the Five Practical Steps for Solving Problems. Pick a problem as a group or individual and work through the steps of solving the problem.
7. How does a simple process help us in solving problems? What are the benefits?
8. Why is brainstorming so important in the process?
9. How does Matt 5:23-26 and Matt 18:15-20 impact our problem solving in relationships with one another?
10. List or discuss biblical reasons why the Lord is to be our greatest problem solver.