

LESSON 3 Christian Principles of Problem Solving

If you were in prison, surrounded by armed guards and deprived of your freedom to come and go as you pleased, you would probably say that you had a problem—or even several problems! You would most likely feel that the best solution for the problem would be freedom!

When the apostle Paul found himself in that situation, he didn't see it as a problem at all. Instead, he saw it as God's divine appointment for his life. He considered the *privilege* God had given him to defend and establish the gospel (Philippians 1:7). He considered the *opportunities* he had been given of sharing Jesus Christ with the palace guards and with his fellow ministers in the city. In Lesson 1 we mentioned Paul's reaction to his imprisonment. He was rejoicing because he knew God was using him even in prison.

Perhaps the best point of view with which to face problems is to see them as opportunities to exercise faith, to practice trusting the Lord, to prove God's great faithfulness, and to be proved by Him. Your Christian faith is made stronger when you work together with the Lord to find solutions to life's problems. He *does* have the right solution for every problem!

In this lesson we will consider some Christian principles for problem solving. When you follow these principles, you can expect God to work with you, and you can expect to work through every problem with joy and victory!



lesson outline

Start With a Christian Approach
Avoid Wrong Reactions
Use a Systematic Method
Rejoice and Give Thanks

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Evaluate your own situation concerning spiritual preparation and finding God's will.
- Recognize kinds of wrong reactions from examples given, and make a personal application.
- Explain why it is important not to try to solve your problems by human effort alone.
- Develop a checklist to follow in working out a problem situation, based on given methods, and apply the checklist to a given problem.
- State the principle which explains what helped the apostle Paul to be content in every circumstance.

learning activities

1. Study the lesson according to the instructions given in the learning activities in Lesson 1. Be sure to read all Scripture texts given, and answer each study question before looking at the answer we have given at the end of the lesson.
2. Look in the glossary at the end of the study guide for definitions of key words you do not know. Understanding the meaning of these words is necessary so that you will understand the lesson content.
3. Take the self-test and check your answers with those we have given at the end of the study guide.
4. This is the final lesson in Unit 1. Review all three lessons in this unit, and answer the questions in Unit Student Report 1.

key words

accusation	confronted	reaction
adjustments	consequences	retreat
aggressive	contrary	revenge
alternatives	deprived	supernatural
bitterness	fanaticism	unoffendable
categories	impulse	withdrawal
compassionate	meditation	
conduct	offense	

lesson development

START WITH A CHRISTIAN APPROACH

Objective 1. *Evaluate your own situation concerning spiritual preparation and finding God's will.*

Two Important Questions

Recently I heard about a young couple who had decided to get a divorce. When they had married, they were both dedicated Christians who faithfully attended their church, read the Bible, and prayed together. But as he got more and more involved in his work, and she became occupied with the two children that came along in the first four years of marriage, their lives became too busy. First their daily habit of reading the Word and praying together dropped off, and gradually they found more and more reasons to stay away from church.

Quite naturally, when problems began to creep into their marriage, they were not spiritually prepared to deal with them. Even though they were well aware of what the Bible taught in matters of faith and conduct, they were not willing to practice this teaching. They made up their own minds about the solution to their problems. Christian friends tried to persuade them to work on their relationship and not seek a divorce, but they had made their decision. They didn't want to hear what God's Word said about divorce because hearing it might affect their decision (see Mark 10:2-12; Matthew 5:31-32). They went ahead with the divorce, and exchanged one set of problems for some worse ones.

By choosing a way to solve their problems which was contrary to God's revealed will as given in His Word, this young couple deprived themselves of these blessings:

1. Divine strength to work through a problem until it is solved.
2. Peace which comes from obedience.
3. Direction from the Holy Spirit so that God's will can be known.

4. God's power to bring an unexpected or even supernatural answer to a problem.

This young couple is an example of people who had the wrong answers to two very important questions I ask myself often, and which I want to share with you. They are:

1. Do I really want to know God's will about this problem?
2. Am I willing to follow God's will when I know it?

If, when you ask yourself these two questions, you cannot answer a firm yes, then you need first of all to spend time in spiritual preparation, asking the Lord to make you willing to say, "Yes, I want to find AND carry out God's solution for my problems."

Application

1 Apply what you learned in Lessons 1 and 2 to answer these questions:

- a Identify the problem described in the example just given.

.....

b Identify the *source* of the problem.

.....

- c If this young couple would identify their real problem and its source, and acknowledge it, what common-sense solution could they find which would help them approach all their other problems in the right way?

.....



Spiritual Preparation

Spiritual preparation is of great importance to successful problem solving. A time of stress is the time to *increase* your devotional prayer and Bible reading, not to *decrease* it. Solving a problem in a Christ-like way is not something we can decide to do at the moment the problem occurs. Problems may occur suddenly and need immediate action. A wise Christian will maintain an attitude of spiritual readiness with his heart and mind continually open to guidance from the Holy Spirit.

The apostle Paul gives some helpful instructions in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, 21, 22: “Be joyful always, pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances. . . . Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.”

Spiritual preparation should include these activities:

1. Have a regular time of Bible reading, meditation (thinking about what you read), and prayer every day. Open your mind to what the Bible teaches. Allow the Holy Spirit to direct your thoughts.
2. Listen to scriptural teaching from your pastor and other Christian teachers.
3. Determine in your heart to consider every problem in terms of what the Bible teaches about it, even if the scriptural solution seems very difficult to follow.

Application

2 Think of a problem you have at the present time, or that you have had. Evaluate whether you have prepared or are preparing yourself spiritually for solving the problem and finding God’s will. Check the answer which applies to you.

	YES	NO
a I want to know God’s will concerning this problem.		
b I have studied the Bible to learn if God gives specific instructions about this problem or about similar situations.		
c I have asked the Holy Spirit to guide me in knowing God’s will.		
d If I need additional help to find God’s instructions which apply to this situation, I will consult my pastor or a wise Christian friend.		
e I am determined to obey God and follow His will even if it is difficult for me.		



Spiritual preparation in advance will help you to know God’s will; it will give you strength and courage to act upon the best solution; and it will keep you from making decisions that would bring disaster.

AVOID WRONG REACTIONS

Objective 2. *Recognize kinds of wrong reactions from examples given, and make a personal application.*

Spiritual preparation will help you to reject and avoid certain common but wrong ways of dealing with problem situations. Many of these wrong ways will fit under one of these categories: *anger*, *retreat*, and *human effort alone*. Let's consider each of them briefly.

Anger

Many people who are wronged or offended have a first impulse to react in an angry or aggressive way. This can take many forms: *anger* aimed at other people, at God, or at our circumstances; *accusation*, or placing the blame on someone else; and even *revenge*. When we are hurting, it is easy to want to hurt the one who caused the pain. This is not the way Christ taught us to react, but it is a common fault. Christ's way is this:

You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. . . .

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:38-39, 43-45).

Actually, when we turn our anger over to the Lord, we can trust Him to take care of us. In Romans 12:19 the apostle Paul tells us, "Never take revenge, my friends, but instead let God's anger do it. For the Scripture says, 'I will take revenge, I will pay back, says the Lord'" (TEV)

Christ is the perfect example of one who was "unoffendable"—that is, He did not allow Himself to become offended when He was treated wrongly. He never reacted in anger. As He hung on the cross looking down upon the Roman soldiers who had beaten Him, spit upon Him, and nailed Him to the cross, He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). If you will refuse to be offended or to react in anger when someone mistreats you, you will experience real joy to know that you have come through the

trial with a right attitude. This will strengthen you so that when the next offense comes it will be easier to face it without anger.

Being “unoffendable” takes prayer and practice, but what a blessing it is when you can look back and say, “I’m so glad I didn’t react in anger, but I was able to show love to the one who tried to offend me.”

Application

3 Match the reaction given in the right column with its descriptive behavior in the left column. Place the letter of your choice in each blank space.

- | | | |
|----------------|--|---------------------------|
| a | “It was his fault I didn’t get the job. He purposely kept me from getting it.” | 1) Anger
2) Accusation |
| b | “I’ll get even with him if it’s the last thing I ever do!” | 3) Offended
4) Revenge |
| c | “She hurt me so much I’ll never speak to her again!” | |
| d | “I told her exactly what I thought about her mean and ugly behavior!” | |



Retreat

Retreat, or withdrawal, can take many forms. Sometimes it means running away from a problem, looking for a hiding place. Some people escape reality by losing themselves in drug addiction, in alcoholism, in seeking worldly pleasures, in overeating or overwork, in religious fanaticism, or in other ways. You can hide behind almost anything to avoid facing the truth. (There is, of course, a constructive kind of withdrawal also, when a Christian might choose to leave a situation to *avoid* a problem.)

Retreat sometimes takes the form of physical escape. I know of one young woman who was not married and still lived with her parents. She began to worry that she would never marry, and would soon be responsible for the care of her aging parents, while her married brothers and sisters would not have that responsibility. Soon her feelings of self-pity and bitterness

caused her to pack all her belongings and leave home without letting anyone know where she was going.

Another form of retreat is *withdrawal*. A widow I know of refuses to leave her house except in emergencies, and has stopped seeing her family and friends since her husband died. She is very lonely and unhappy.

Application

4 Which of these attitudes do you see in those who try to escape their problems by retreat or withdrawal?

- a Unselfishness
- b Selfishness
- c Self-pity
- d Joy
- e Hope
- f Bitterness
- g Anger

5 Answer the following questions by checking yes or no.

	YES	NO
a When things do not go your way, do you usually react in anger?		
b When something goes wrong, do you usually manage to blame someone else, even if it was somewhat your fault?		
c Are people always offending you?		
d Are you frequently in a negative, complaining mood?		
e If someone wrongs you, are you the kind of person that will not rest until you have done something to "pay him back"?		
f Have you ever tried to retreat or withdraw from a difficult situation instead of dealing with it in a positive way?		



Human Effort Alone

Objective 3. *Explain why it is important not to try to solve your problems by human effort alone.*

I have saved this self-help response until last because it is not all negative. God has made the human will a powerful, positive force which is able to rise above life's difficulties in a remarkable way. If there were nothing to "positive thinking" the non-Christian world would never be able to survive. But to trust in human will-power as the main resource for handling life's problems is certainly not the Christian way! God's intent is for His children to face their problems in the power of the risen Christ, and to use their problems as opportunities for Him to reveal His power and grace. So in considering reactions to avoid in dealing with problems, it is important to remember *not* to try to solve them by your own human efforts alone, but take them to God in prayer!



There is no problem too small to take to the Lord. When I am driving my car and am pressed for time, with many errands that must be taken care of, I even pray for parking spaces! Is this foolish? No! God is the Grand Creator of the universe, but He is also the God who knows when a sparrow falls to the ground, and who numbers the hairs on your head (Matthew 10:29-31). He cares about even the little problems in your life, and He wants to help you. Therefore, the most important thing you can do about solving life's problems is to follow the advice of the writer of Proverbs 3:5-8. Read this Scripture, then select the best answer to the following questions.

Application

- 6** This proverb tells you to trust in
- what you think you know.
 - the Lord.
- 7** It also tells you never to rely on
- other people.
 - your own understanding (what you think you know).
 - your feelings.
- 8** If you remember the Lord (acknowledge Him) in everything you do, you can expect Him to
- show you the right way to go.
 - give you fewer problems to solve.
-

It may be easier for you to take your little problems to the Lord than to trust Him when you are confronted with a problem that seems to have no solution. This is God's opportunity to work a miracle in your life—His power is unlimited when you learn to commit every thing into His hands, and He will never disappoint you! (See Ephesians 3:20; 1 John 5:14-15.)

Application

- 9** Why is it important not to try to solve your problems by human effort alone?
-
-
-

USE A SYSTEMATIC METHOD

Objective 4. *Develop a checklist to follow in working out a problem situation, based on given methods, and apply the checklist to a given problem.*

We have been laying the foundation thus far in this lesson for the use of a systematic method of problem solving based on Christian principles. Many books have been written to help people with all kinds of problems. This is a complex subject,

and there are many approaches to it. Our purpose is to give you some guidelines which, if followed, will help you to deal with your problems with the right attitude and with a Christlike spirit, allowing God to provide the answers!

After we have discussed the six basic steps in a systematic method of problem solving, we will give you the opportunity to work through the steps using a problem situation from Scripture, and from present day situations. As we discuss specific problems in future lessons, you will have opportunities to apply the steps to arrive at biblical solutions. We hope in this way to help you make an application of the principles to real problems in your own life, or in the lives of people you want to help.

STEPS TO PROBLEM-SOLVING	
<p>METHOD A</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the problem. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify the source. b. Look for deeper causes. 2. Commit your problem to the Lord. 3. Consider all possible solutions in the light of scriptural teaching. (Use your resources.) 4. Consider the possible consequences of all alternatives. (Use your resources.) 5. Choose one solution and act on it. 6. Evaluate the results of your solution and make any needed adjustments. 	<p>METHOD B</p> <p>(For problems which seem to have no immediate solution)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the problem. 2. Commit it to God. 3. Expect God to work for your good.

Method A



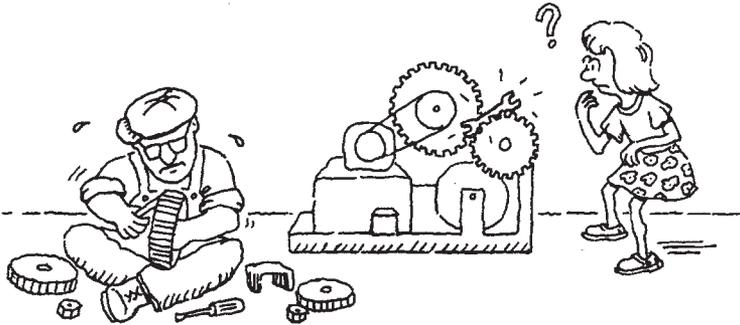
Step 1. *Identify the Problem*

Not all problems are easily identified. Others are. Suppose I need money, or have unpleasant neighbors, or notice that my eyes are getting weak. These kinds of problems are easily identified.

If, on the other hand, I feel unhappy but don't know why, have trouble sleeping, or feel uneasy but can't explain what

has caused the feeling, I may have to give myself to specific meditation and prayer to discover the source of the problem. I may even need outside help to discover it.

a. First you need to *identify the source* of the problem. We talked about sources of problems in Lesson 1. Once this has been established, you will be better able to face up to the problem. When you have defined it as something that really can be changed, you are ready for the next step.



b. You may need to *look for deeper causes*. For example, suppose I am short of money for food and I will not receive my pay for several more days. The cause may be that I have been careless with my money and used it for unnecessary things. I can solve the problem easily by planning more carefully in the future. But if I find that the necessities of life are greater than my weekly income can cover, on a regular basis, then I must find a more permanent solution. The deeper cause is that I regularly need more money than is available to pay for my necessities. I must either increase my income or cut my expenses.

Application

10 In a separate notebook, begin a checklist of questions which you can use in working out a problem. You will add to these questions as you proceed through this section. Review Step 1 and try to write three or four questions to help you follow through on this step. Check my answer at the end of the lesson after you have written your questions.





Step 2. Commit Your Problem to the Lord

God is greater than any problem you may have. Lift your eyes away from your problem and to the all-knowing, all-wise, all-loving, and all-powerful Jesus Christ. He cares about you (1 Peter 5:7). Talk about the problem to God. That is, say it out loud in your own words. God knows what the problem is, it's true, but He wants us to come to Him in prayer.

There is something very important about being definite in prayer. One dear Christian lady I know writes down her prayer requests and the date when she began praying about each of them. Then as the answers come she records that date also. She says it strengthens her faith to go over the record and see how faithful God is. It also reminds her to give thanks for answered prayers.

As you turn your attention from your problem to the Lord, you will feel that a great weight has rolled from your shoulders. The worry must leave, because you are trusting Christ. The burden must go, because He has said, "Come unto me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28 TEV). "Leave all your worries with him, because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7 TEV). This is the true meaning of commitment: concern enough to do what has to be done, and a trusting heart that does away with worry and fear.

Application

11 Add question 5 to your checklist, based on Step 2.



Step 3. Consider All Possible Solutions

We have already discussed in Lesson 2 the ways for finding solutions. Sometimes there is more than one solution to a problem. What you want to do is find the *best* solution. Apply these steps to each possible solution:

- a. Discover the scriptural principles that apply to the problem. Reject any solutions that do not measure up to these principles.

- b. Seek answers in all the appropriate (right) places. Use your resources. (See Lesson 2.)
- c. Seek God's will.

Application

12 You should add questions 6 through 8 to your checklist based on Step 3. Be sure to write your questions before you look at the ones I have written. This will help you to remember what you have learned.



Step 4. Consider the Possible Consequences of All Alternatives

Think of the possible consequences for the couple who decided divorce was the solution to their problems. The results of a broken home affect not only the husband and wife, but also the children. A wrong solution can create greater problems than those you started with. That's why it is so important to reject any solutions which cannot be supported by scriptural teaching. Use your resources to determine what consequences might result from any decision you make. (See Lesson 2.)

Application

13 Add question 9 to your checklist based on Step 4. Consider the eternal values of your decision as well as the immediate *earthly* values.



Step 5. Choose One Solution and Act on It

You have identified your problem, and you have committed it to God in prayer. You have carefully studied God's Word to find His teaching concerning your problem or related problems. If necessary, you have discussed your problem with a Christian friend, pastor, or counselor. Now you have used your best judgment, guided by the Holy Spirit, to decide what is God's will for you in this situation. It is now time to act upon the decision

you choose. Believe that God will help you and He will be with you as you take this step toward solving your problem.



Step 6. Evaluate the Results and Make Any Needed Adjustments

I have included this step because we need to evaluate the results of the solution we chose. Sometimes after we have acted to solve a problem, we find that it was not the best choice—further adjustment may be necessary. Don't despair if you have acted according to your best judgment, after committing your problem to God and asking for His direction, and then you find that somehow your solution failed to achieve the desired results. Problem solving is learned through experience. It is not a talent we inherited at birth. This is a time to look within yourself to see if you have fully committed yourself to God's will and are ready to follow wherever He leads you.

Application

14 To conclude your checklist, add question 10, based on Step 6.



Remember, too, that not all inconvenient situations are problems in the sense of needing solutions. If it is something that cannot be changed, a different kind of adjustment is needed. For the solution to this kind of problem, let's look at *Method B*.

Method B



Step 1. Identify the Problem

Use the same procedure as in Method A.



Step 2. Commit It to God

Use the same procedure as in Method A.



Step 3. Expect God to Work for Your Good

When the apostle Paul found himself behind prison bars, he knew he could not change the situation. God did not release him from prison that time, as He had done earlier in Paul's ministry (Acts chapter 16). But Paul expected God to work for his good anyway. As a result the Lord used him in a wonderful way to spread the gospel even in prison.

The real solution to this kind of problem is to joyfully accept what cannot be changed, and allow the situation to be a growing experience for you—forming you into the likeness of Christ and making you a more caring, compassionate human being. Remind yourself often that “in all things God works for good with those who love him” (Romans 8:28 TEV). It is unhealthy to dwell on how things “might have been, if only . . .” Such thoughts are a waste of time and energy. You can expect God to work for your good no matter what your situation may be.

Application

15 To which of these problems would you most likely apply Method B?

- a** You have deeply offended a friend by gossiping about him.
- b** You must care for a sick and aging parent who has no other means of support.
- c** Your husband has died and now you are alone.
- d** The place where you live is in poor condition, but it is all you can afford at the present time.
- e** Your teenage son has left home and you don't know where he is.
- f** You want to continue with your schooling, but your parents are unable to help you pay for it.

16 Read Daniel 1:1-17 and follow through the steps in problem solving by writing opposite each question on your checklist the Scripture text and action which show how Daniel with God's help worked out each part of the solution. If you cannot find an answer to any question, leave it blank. Relate the questions to Daniel's situation: for example, question No. 1 would be, “What was Daniel's problem?” Write your answers in your notebook.

17 Now apply Methods A and B to the events recorded in Daniel 6:1-28. Which method seems to provide the solution in this case?

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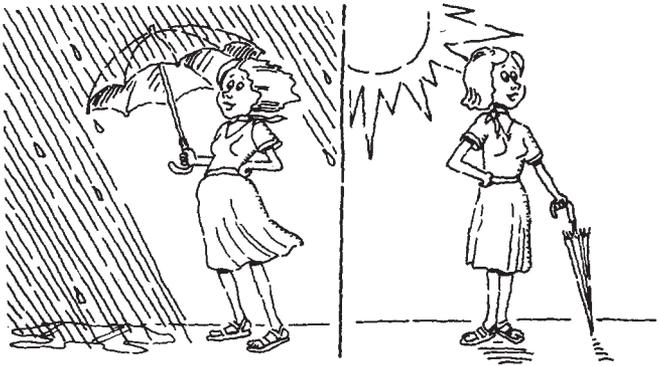
REJOICE AND GIVE THANKS

Objective 5. *State the principle which explains what helped the apostle Paul to be content in every circumstance.*

The last principle in the Christian response to problem solving is to give God the glory. “Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). Praise God continually. Whenever your mind is not occupied with necessary business, develop the habit of letting praise flow silently to God. This simple practice will transform your mind. Praise Him for His faithfulness, for standing with you in all your problems.

Like Paul, share your good news with others! Paul wrote about the faithfulness of Christ when he penned the letter to his friends the Philippian Christians (Philippians 1:12). He didn’t want them to feel sorry for him! He said joyfully, “In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel” (Philippians 1:4-5). Paul also shared with them some of the things he had learned as he allowed God to work out the problems in his life:

I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength (Philippians 4:11-13).



REJOICE!

Application

18 What principle that we have discussed in this lesson explains what helped Paul to be content and joyful in any and every situation?

.....
19 This Scripture reveals that the values of greatest importance to Paul were

- a) present earthly values.
- b) eternal values.



When we recognize that Christ is the Master of every situation that comes into our lives, that He cares about us, and that He is always working for our eternal good, we can do nothing but praise Him. He is worthy of our praise! We are ready now to consider specific problems which are common to many people, and which you may face. In the next unit of study we will talk about problems in relationships. We pray that this study will be of great help to you.

You have now concluded the final lesson in this unit. Take the self-test and check your answers. Then review the unit and answer the questions for this unit in the student report at the back of the book.

self-test

In this self-test we will describe some problem situations and their results; then we will give you an opportunity to apply the principles of this lesson to see how they might have been worked out in a better way. After you have completed the self-test, compare your answers with those we have given at the end of the study guide.

1 Raymond and Arlene were the children of a pastor whose church was small and whose income was very limited. Raymond had always wanted to be a doctor. When he reached college age, his parents decided to use the money they had saved to send him to medical school. This meant there was no money to help Arlene attend college. Her parents expected that she would marry and would not need a college education. However, Arlene also had a dream of going to college, and her parents' decision was a great disappointment to her. Because they could not help her, Arlene retreated into self-pity. She began to withdraw into a world of her own, spending her time grieving over her parents' decision. Her great mental sadness almost destroyed her health. For many weeks she was confined to the same hospital where her brother was taking his training. Raymond was a dedicated Christian. Arlene was also a Christian, but she had been overcome by her problem.

- a What was Arlene's problem?
.....
- b What was the source of her problem?
.....
- c How did Arlene react to this problem?
.....
- d If Arlene had followed the principles for problem solving which we have given in this lesson, what solution would have been possible for her? You may think of more than one solution.
.....
.....
- e What Scripture that we have reviewed describes the approach Arlene should have taken in finding a solution for her problem?
.....

2 Jordan was a Christian businessman who owned a meat market. One day he bought some sheep from his friend, David, who was also a Christian. Jordan butchered the sheep, but the health

inspector did not approve the meat for sale, saying it was diseased and must be destroyed. Jordan was very angry—he went to David and demanded his money back. David denied that the sheep were diseased when sold, and refused to return the money. In his anger, Jordan brought a court case against David. When their pastor heard about the problem, he tried to get David and Jordan to come and discuss the matter with him and settle it in a Christian manner. He reminded them that Scripture warns Christians not to take their arguments before ungodly men (1 Corinthians 6:1-8). But Jordan refused to listen, and went ahead with the lawsuit. The two men are no longer friends, and there is a feeling of defeat in the church.

a What principles of problem solving should Jordan have followed to handle the problem in a Christian way?

.....

b What was the end result of his behavior?

.....

c What should it have been?

.....

d Apply the steps in problem solving to show how this could have been solved successfully and to the glory of God. Write your answer in your notebook.

3 James and Esther have been married for ten years, but they have no children. Both of them have a great desire for children and have prayed many times that the Lord would meet this need. They have sought medical help but there is nothing doctors can do. In the meantime, they have offered their services to their pastor to work with the children in the church, and the Lord has blessed their ministry of teaching many children and winning them to the Lord. Their lives are filled with praise to God.

a Which method of problem solving seems to have been applied here?

.....

b Use your checklist to show how James and Esther worked out their problem. Write your answer in your notebook.

4 Now use your checklist for a problem in your own life or in the life of someone you know. Apply the steps given, and believe that God will help you to find the right solution.

answers to study questions

10 Your questions should be similar to these:

1. What is my problem?
2. What is its source?
3. Is there a deeper cause that I should consider?
4. Is it possible to find a definite solution?

1 Your answer. Here is how I would answer:

- a** The real problem is *disobedience to God*, which includes failure to read His Word and pray, and failure to keep His day holy (church attendance).
- b** The source is a *sinful nature*.
- c** The common-sense solution would be *confession* of sin, and *obedience* to God. This solution will prepare the couple spiritually to deal with other problems that come.

11 5. Have I talked to God about this problem?

2 If you answered *no* to any of these questions, I encourage you to take the necessary steps to correct the situation.

12 6. Are there scriptural principles that apply to this problem? What are they?

7. Do I need help from a Christian friend or counselor to find a solution?

8. What solution would agree with scriptural teaching?

- 3 a** 2) Accusation.
- b** 4) Revenge; 1) Anger.
- c** 3) Offended.
- d** 1) Anger.

13 9. In my best judgment, after following all of the steps to find a solution, which solution will be best for me as a Christian?

- 4 **b** Selfishness.
c Self-pity.
f Bitterness.
g Anger.

- 14 10. Am I satisfied with the solution, or do I need to make further adjustments?

Note: If further adjustments are needed, you may want to start back at Step 1 and work through the problem again.

- 5 If you answered yes to any of these questions you need to give much thought and prayer to finding positive ways of dealing with your problems. Ask the Lord to help you in the future to recognize these wrong reactions to problems and avoid them.
- 15 Probably you would apply Method B to problems **b**, **c**, **d**, and **e**. You could apply Method A to problems **a** and **f**.
- 6 **b**) the Lord.

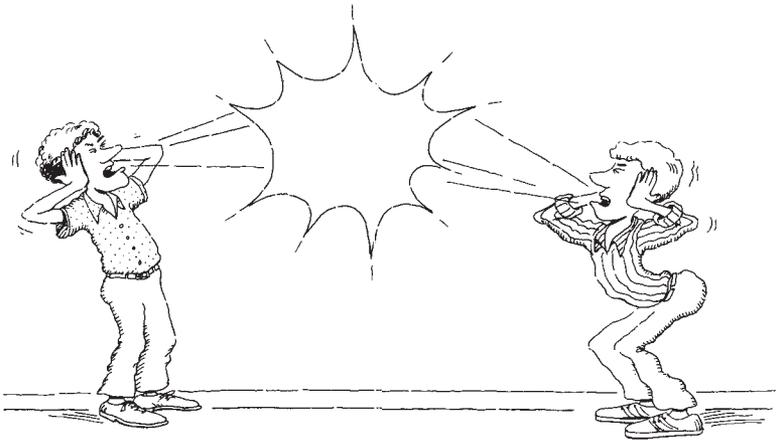
16	Question	Answer
	1. What was Daniel's problem?	He was required to eat food that would make him unclean according to God's instructions for Hebrews (Daniel 1:5, 8).
	2. What was the source?	The king.
	3. Was there a deeper cause?	No.
	4. Was a definite solution possible?	Yes.
	5. Did Daniel talk to God about this problem?	Yes, this is implied in verses 8, 9, and 17. God made Ashpenaz sympathetic to Daniel and his friends.
	6. Were there scriptural principles that applied to this problem?	Yes, Daniel knew that God had declared certain foods unclean (for example, see Leviticus 10:9, and chapter 11).

7. Did Daniel need help to find a solution?	No, he knew the food would defile him (make him unclean before God) (v. 8).
8. What solution would agree with scriptural teaching?	No, he knew the food would defile him (make him unclean before God) (v. 8).
9. What solution did Daniel choose as best for him as one of God’s chosen people?	He chose not to eat the food. He chose a ten-day test of eating vegetables and water instead (vs. 11-13). He asked Ashpenaz and the guard for help, and he did not eat the king’s food. The ten-day test was successful and the Hebrew men continued to eat the vegetables and water (vs. 8, 11-16).
10. Were further adjustments needed?	No, God honored Daniel’s decision by blessing him (vs. 17, 20).

- 7 b) your own understanding (what you think you know).
- 17 I would say that Method B is the one Daniel used in this instance—he defined his problem, committed it to God, and expected God to work for his good. There was no way he could obey the king without disobeying God. He chose eternal values, and God honored his choice.
- 8 a) show you the right way to go.
- 18 The principle of trusting God to work for his good in any situation.
- 9 Because your own understanding is limited and you may not know the best solution; also because there are some problems that are solved only by putting your trust in God, who can do the impossible.
- 19 b) eternal values.

For Your Notes





PROBLEMS IN RELATIONSHIPS

Lessons

- 4 Problems In Social Relationships
- 5 Family Problems
- 6 Problems of a Single Life