

Lesson 2-7 Problems in the Church

1. Consider church A: they are considering a new building project. The church is split: half want to build and half don't think they shouldn't. The committee meetings are difficult and people's feelings are hurt. The Pastor is afraid to take a position. What should they do?

2. Consider church B: this church has a rich family who generously gives time and money, and is very influential in the decision making of the church. Some in the congregation feel that the rich family is too influential, but do not want to offend them. What should they do?

3. Church C has a new pastor who is very different from the previous pastor and has a very different vision for the church. The majority of the congregation misses the previous pastor and are disappointed with the new pastor. What should they do?

4. Considering the problems in the three churches above, which ones can be used by Satan to destroy the church?

5. In church work, is it obvious who represents the will of God?

6. In your opinion, why does Satan work to destroy the church?

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

2 Corinthians 2:11 ... so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

7. Can a "born again" Christian be fooled and used by Satan to hurt the church?

8. Considering the three churches previously discussed, How many of the problems would be solved by loving God first and also loving one another? Remember that love includes forgiveness.

Read:

John 13:35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

9. If a church is filled with love for God and one another, how would Satan attack?

10. Several church problems are mentioned in the Bible.

Church of Ephesus - Lost first love

Church of Smyrna - Satanic infiltration

Church of Pergamum - The church was infiltrated by those who believed another Gospel

Church of Thyatira - Infiltration by an evil prophet / teaching the people to sin

Church of Sardus - Good reputation but spiritual dead

Church of Laodecia - Lukewarm

Corinthian Church - Sexual immorality, laws suits among brothers, divisions in the church, Jealousy, quarreling and worldliness in the church

Galatian Church - Deserted the Gospel of grace and returned to the law

11. Considering the problems in the ancient churches, How many of the problems would be solved by loving God first and also loving one another?

12. In church A, what would happen if the church held a group prayer meeting every week until they had an agreement on what to do? They may find that the Holy Spirit has a better way. Why not enjoy the process of loving one another, forgiving one another, respecting one another and having faith in God? These things are much more important than the church building. The building dispute provides a tool for Satan to destroy the church; or for the Holy Spirit to strengthen the church. What do you think?

13. In church B, if the rich family truly had love for the church and the church had love for the rich family, they could communicate and work it out easily. If they all love the word of

God the solution will be automatic. Do you have any comments on this?

14. In church C, it could be that God sent the new pastor to make needed changes to the church. The church needs to love the new pastor and pray for him. They all need to seek God's will and put love above tradition, ego, and personal taste. If the pastor doesn't belong, the Holy Spirit will guide them in a proper solution. Again this is an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to build the church and the individuals, or for the enemy to destroy the church. Do you have any comments on this?

15. List two problems you have observed in your church experience.

16. How can these two problems be used to build your church?

17. How can these two problems be used to destroy your church?

Note: From our experience, it doesn't matter how a church is organized: with the use of the principles of God it works. The Bible does not talk about how to organize a church, but it does teach us the importance of love of God, love of our neighbor, and forgiveness. If a church has love, Satan can't use one believer against another.

Galatians 5:15 But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

18. The following are contrasting ways of dealing with people: the ways of the world and the ways Jesus taught:

worldly ways

Jesus' ways

Show how smart you are

Humility

Get even if you don't get your way

Forgive

Get them before they get you

Be kind; show mercy

Business sense

seek the Holy Spirit

Money talks

Faith is key

19. Consider each item in number 18. In which category are you?

Are you willing to change?

How would you change?

20. Conclusion: Every problem in your church is an opportunity for you and/or your church; it also is an opportunity for the enemy. We, the church, are the Bride of Christ and should adorn ourselves for that day when He comes back for us.

2 Corinthians 12:9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.