

Series: Equipped

Sermon: "Resolving Conflict" Acts 6:1-7 (NKJV)

Acts 6 (NKJV) ¹ Now in those days, when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. ² Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. ³ Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; ⁴ but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

⁵ And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, ⁶ whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.

⁷ Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Acknowledge the problem – yes, there is a problem – elephant in the room – hungry widows are being left out of the food ministry (unintentional? unaware?)

Complaint – a grumbling; murmuring

Division – Hellenist (Jews who grew up in Greek speaking areas but were now in Jerusalem) vs Hebrews (native Jews)

Active listening – do not turn a deaf ear, do not just hear but listen – concentrate of what is being said, understand, respond, remember.

Address the problem – respond - pick out seven men to appoint over this business

Redirect the negative energy into a positive direction.

The atmosphere changes from negative to positive.

A problem turns into a ministry opportunity.

Answer or Resolve the problem – neglected widows no longer neglected

When possible, turn problems into opportunities – opportunities to expand ministry and serve new people, opportunity to identify and deploy new leaders, etc.

Jesus addresses personal conflict in Matthew 18:15-17

Two examples of personal conflicts with different solutions: Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36-41) and Paul and Peter (Galatians 2:11-21).
