

# Principles For Solving Problems

## ❖ Introduction

- There is no doubt that from time to time we will have to find answers to some tough questions together in regard to the faith.
- Today we want to study about some principles for solving problems as brethren.
- While we are not dealing with any major problems, locally, we need to understand what the scriptures teach about these matters.

# Principles For Solving Problems

## ❖ Give Others Time To Study

- We have all grown through a study of the word of God in our years as a Christian.
- The truths that we understand today, we may not have understood when we first came to the Lord.
- When we have a difference with someone, we need to allow them the time to study the word of God as well. (See Rom. 14:1-19)

# Principles For Solving Problems

## ❖ Credit Others For Their Efforts To Love God

- Just the simple fact that someone is willing to continue to study and seek the Lord, should help us to see their true motives.
- While we understand that claiming to love the Lord doesn't constitute its validity, we at least need to be understanding of the efforts that are being made to love Him.
- Perhaps we can direct the efforts of an individual in the right ways. (Jn. 14:15; Acts 18:24-28)

# Principles For Solving Problems

## ❖ Allow That You Might Be Wrong

- One of the main difficulties is resolving any issue between brethren is that most people will not allow that they could be wrong with their position
- Perhaps we can take the words of wisdom that Solomon gave to us (Prov. 12:15)
- It is obvious that truth is in God's word, and we all are trying to study and learn of His will (John 17:17)



# Principles For Solving Problems

## ❖ Be Open Minded On Every Matter

- We are to be students of the word of God so that we can prove all things by that standard (1 Thess. 5:21-22)
- If we are not open minded with an open Bible we may close off the truth from ourselves and be stuck with personal positions that are false or at least misguided (Mt. 15:3-9)
- We need to be children of light and understand the will of the Lord (Eph. 5:17)

# Principles For Solving Problems

## ❖ Address The Issue With The Person Involved

- Too often, we talk to all the wrong people about a problem without ever talking to the person we have an issue with (Matt. 18:15-18)
- On many occasions an individual is condemned and judged without ever being approached and talked to (John 7:51)
- Don't ruin someone's reputation and then find out that you only had a misunderstanding (Prov. 6:16-19; Rom. 3:13-18)

# Principles For Solving Problems

## ❖ Listen And Hear Before Giving Answers

- We are foolish if we think we can give an answer before listening to the other party on any matter (Prov. 18:12-13)
- We need to be willing to hear both sides, so that we can examine the positions and find out what is right and true. (Prov. 18:17)
- Answering someone before we hear their position can never be a substitute for Bible study. (James 1:19-20)

# Principles For Solving Problems

## ❖ Never Misrepresent Others With Differences

- We should never put words and thoughts in the minds and mouths of others
- Many righteous have been hurt this way...it will continue as long as we misrepresent each other (Matt. 27:11-14, 22-24)
- We need to hear each claim made by others before we have a right to accuse them of anything (Acts. 25:7-27).



# Principles For Solving Problems

## ❖ Do Not Be Quick To Label Others

- You cannot help those who label others before considering the facts (**John 7:33-34**)
- It is easier to call someone by a prejudice label (liberal, false teacher, erring) than it is to study with them about the Bible.  
(**See II Pet 2:1-22**)
- If I differ with you am I erring...if you differ with me are you a...false teacher...let's study the Bible and be in the truth together.

# Principles For Solving Problems

## ❖ Never Attack Honest Motives

- Our motives are to be judged and discerned by the Lord. (1 Cor. 4:1-6; Prov. 16:2)
- No one knows the spirit of a man except for the man himself and the same is true of the spirit of the Lord...both parties must reveal their knowledge (1 Cor. 2:11-13)
- Speaking evil of others (malignity) is a sin worthy of death (Rom. 1:28-32; Jam. 1:26)

# Principles For Solving Problems

## ❖ Congregational / Personal Autonomy

- There is no other authority to give answers to our problems than the Lord Himself...this means that we need to study the Bible  
(II Tim. 3:16-17)
- The universal church doesn't collectively teach anything...each congregation is responsible for its teaching (Eph. 4:11-16)
- No religious paper, coalition of preachers, group of congregations etc. can solve issues.

# Principles For Solving Problems

## ❖ Differentiate Contending And Contentiousness

- Someone who brings up a subject for the sake of contending for the faith is different from one who simply speaks of something to be contentious. (Jude 3-4; I Tim. 4:6-7; 6:3-5)
- There are those who are serious students and then there are those who just want to fight (II Tim. 1:13; 2:14-19)
- We must continue in the sound words of the faith with love as we are in the Lord. (Tit. 3:9-11)



# Principles For Solving Problems

## ❖ Application

- We can misrepresent those who differ with us, attack their motives or try to impress the brotherhood. We might take our position to be only what we've always believed and imply that further open minded study demonstrates weakness, while demanding an immediate change from those that we disagree with on a certain matter.

# Principles For Solving Problems

## ❖ Application

-We can approach the one that we differ with and ask them about their motives and for the scriptural support for their belief. Since we come to a knowledge of the truth only in the Bible, we should be able to study the matter with open minds coming to a conclusion based on the word of God. We should allow time to grow and come to a knowledge of the truth, while continuing to learn together about the one faith of our Lord, Jesus Christ.