

## The Blessings and Benefits of Problems (Part 6)

### Introduction:

1. We have learned that problems are a part of life. Because of the curse of sin on this earth, problems are woven into the fabric of everyday life.
2. There are many internal benefits and blessings of problems. Let's examine some of those benefits.

**First, problems can lead us to a state of humility.**

**Second, problems can teach us patience.**

**Third, problems can cause us to deepen our relationship with the Lord.**

**Fourth, problems can open doors for ministry to others.**

**Fifth, problems can strengthen relationships or allow new friendships to begin.**

Let's look at three simple, yet incredible truths that have the power to radically change our relationships in a positive way:

### **A. By maintaining open communication**

- If you have a red letter Bible, look at John 13-18 and notice how much red there is. This was just prior to Jesus going to the cross.
- As the disciples were about to go through the most turbulent time of their lives, Jesus kept the lines of communication open. After the resurrection, it was the same way. **Example:** Luke 24:44-45
- Misunderstandings kill relationships. Communication clears away the fog.
- The strongest, closest relationships will have conflicts. When this happens, we have two choices:
  - Talk it through.
  - Turn and run.
- Many satisfying relationships have been terminated because one or both parties decided to quit talking.
  - **Illustration:** You go to water your flowers and the hose has a knot in it which restricts the flow of water. You can't say, "Oh well," and walk off. The flowers will die. When there is a knot in our line of communication and the communication stops, mark it down, the relationship will die.
- Ephesians 4:29 – This verse provides the three laws of effective communication.

- Godly – “*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth...*”
- Good – “*...but that which is good to the use of edifying...*”
- Gracious – “*...that it may minister grace to the hearers.*”
- Do you want to strengthen your relationships when you go through problems? Take a lesson from Jesus and maintain open communication.

**B. By staying committed to the relationship**

- I must say that, as I read through the gospels, I am absolutely amazed at the level of commitment Jesus had towards His disciples.
- Remember, these were the men who fell asleep on Jesus when He needed them, forsook Him and fled at His arrest, cursed and denied Him, doubted His resurrection from the dead, and went back to fishing after they had seen Him twice.
- Yet, let’s look at Luke 24:49. Isn’t this amazing? Jesus told them, “*I send the promise of my Father upon you...*”
- We probably would have said, “Remember that promise of the Spirit I talked to you about and how you would receive supernatural power from heaven? Well, let me introduce you to my **new** disciples since you guys blew it so badly and messed up and forsook me. They are going to receive the blessing, not you!”
- This isn’t what He did at all. He basically said, “You’re still my guys. I’m with you. I’m committed to you. We’re in this thing together!”
- Because of Christ’s commitment to them, they went on to do incredible exploits for God, leading thousands of people to Christ.
- What if Jesus had ditched the relationship? Think about what would have been lost. But He didn’t, and because of that the relationship came through all the problems stronger.
- Today, we live in a society that loves disposable things (trash bags, diapers, contacts, razors, etc.). The problem is, now we have disposable relationships.
- Marriages, friendships, church – if it doesn’t work out, throw the relationship away and dispose of it.
- This is why so many people have problems keeping a friend, staying in a church, keeping a marriage intact. When problems come, they just throw it out. This is not Christ-like.
- We miss so much. Running never solves problems. There is nothing more rewarding than a relationship that has been through problems and yet has come out stronger.

- If you have accepted Christ as your Savior and entered into a relationship with God, do you realize how committed God is to you? He has placed you in His Son, sent His Spirit into your heart, given you eternal life and is already preparing your heavenly home.
  - God expects us to model that relationship we have with Him in our relationships here on earth. Some of you may have some fence-mending to do, or you have been thinking about bailing out of a relationship.
  - Do you want your relationships to be strengthened through problems? Stay committed to the relationship.
- C. By forgiving past mistakes and offenses.**
- Unforgiveness destroys relationships. Staying committed to a relationship is very difficult when there is a record being kept of past offenses.
  - What were Jesus' first words to His friends after He rose again? Did He say, "How could you do it to me? You ought to be ashamed. You guys are pathetic."?
    - John 20:19 – "*Peace be unto you...*"
    - John 20:21-22 – "*Peace be unto you: as my Father...*"
  - Very clearly they knew they were forgiven. What a difference it made in their relationship. After this point, it continues to get stronger and stronger.
  - Many relationships will never grow any stronger until the bitterness is dealt with.
  - The bitterness buster – Colossians 3:13
  - As people draw closer to death, many times they begin to realize more and more that relationships are what really matter the most in life.
  - When you are near death, will you look back on your life and simply see a string of broken relationships? Or will you be surrounded by family, friends, and loved ones that – yes – went through problems together with you, but your relationships were strengthened through each one, and you still remain committed to each other?