

HOW TO HEAL DIVISION IN THE FAMILY

Studies in the Acts

RAPID GROWTH IN THE MIDST OF PERSECUTION:

The results of preaching and persecution:

Peter's First Sermon:

So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

Acts 2:41

Daily Life in the Early Church:

Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number (how often) day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 2:46-47

After the Healing and the Message:

But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of (what) the men came to be about five thousand.

Acts 4:4

After the Purging of the Early Church:

And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number.

Acts 5:14

Before and After the Conflict Resolution:

(Before) Now at this time while the disciples were (what) increasing in number. (After) The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

Acts 6:1a, 7

After the Peace Brought on by the Conversion of Saul/Paul:

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

Acts 9:31

The Preaching to the Gentiles at Antioch:

But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord.

And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord.

Acts 11:20-23, 24b

SATAN'S NEXT ATTACK ON THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH:

Prejudice, pride and hurt feelings:

Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a (what) complaint arose on the part of (who) the Hellenistic Jews against (who) the native Hebrews, (why) because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food.

Acts 6:1

Question:

Who are the Hellenistic Jews and the native Hebrews?

And why is this such a big deal?

THE EARLY CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS:

So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

Acts 6:2-3

Questions:

What, if anything, does this teach us about church organization?

Does this speak to us about Biblical church government?

Who chose the seven and who had final say in their appointment?

What were the qualifications for the seven?

The qualifications for the seven:

Therefore, brethren, (you, implied) select from

(1) among you seven:

(2) men of

(3) good reputation,

(4) full of the Spirit and of

(5) wisdom, whom (who) we may put in charge of this task.

Acts 6:2-3

Focus on the best and not just the good:

"But we will devote ourselves to (1) prayer and to the (2) ministry of the word."

Acts 6:4

The attitude of reconciliation: Duty of the Congregation

The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch.
Acts 6:5

Questions:

Which party was right, the Hellenistic or native Hebrew believers?

Who chose these men, the congregation or the apostles?

Who were these guys? Did they have many to choose from?

Why do all those chosen have Greek names?

What does this teach us today about how to deal with conflict?

Do the principles only apply to church or do they also apply in other areas of our life?

The attitude of reconciliation: Duty of the Apostles

And these they brought before (who) the apostles; and after praying, they (what) laid their hands on them.
Acts 6:6

Question:

What does "laying their hands on them" mean or convey?

Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, (who) the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for (who) Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which (who) I have called them." Then, when they had (1) fasted and (2) prayed and (3) laid their hands on them, they sent them away.
Acts 13:1-3

THE RESULTS OF HOW THIS CONFLICT WAS RESOLVED:

The (1) word of God kept on spreading; and (2) the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and (3) a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.
Acts 6:7