



A New Look At Problems

By

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Teaching Notes are Bible studies we taught before GraceLife Ministries began publishing articles online in 1995. Some were presented as sermons, others as group studies.

Our hope is that these older studies will be a blessing to you in your life and ministry. Please use them in any way God leads you.

These teaching notes are from a radio series.

[These notes are from 50 years ago.]

“I’ve got a problem!” That’s standard equipment in the counselors’s office. Everyone has problems. Some cope – some cop out. However, problems are not really problems! What do I mean by that? Problems are not really problems. They are golden opportunities.

Let’s say that I get struck by a car while crossing the street and am carried into the hospital with broken legs and fractured vertebrae. I’ve got a real problem, right? Wrong! I have a tremendous opportunity to experience the outpouring of God’s amazing grace and to spend precious hours alone with Jesus depending on His strength. I also have the opportunity to be an effective witness to unsaved doctors, nurses, and patients around me. What could have been a tragic problem has turned into a blessed opportunity simply by looking at life through God’s eyes.

Let's say that I lose an immediate family member to a fatal disease. I've got a real problem, right? Wrong! I have a tremendous opportunity to experience the love and nearness of Christ and learn complete dependence on Him. I can also be a powerful example to lost loved ones and other Christians. What could have been a crisis has turned into a golden opportunity.

I remember several months ago when dear friends of ours lost their youngest son in a hunting accident. The 18-year-old was going to leave for the Army on Monday, so his family had a special weekend just for him. On Sunday morning he went out early to hunt and while running to get a downed squirrel he was accidentally shot in the face by another hunter. The boy died instantly. During the following weeks we witnessed the power of God and the sweetness of His mercy in the lives of the boy's mother and father and Christians at their church. It greatly increased my faith in and love for God to see their faith.

As I mentioned before, most people do two things when faced with problems – they cope or cop out. Let me share a third alternative – CONQUER! Before Jesus ascended into Heaven He taught His disciples that all power had been given to Him and that He was going to share that power with them for the work of the ministry (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:17-18). In John 17 Jesus prayed for His disciples –

And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.
John 17:19-21

Jesus was praying for you and me as well! He prayed that we would be set apart in holiness, unity, and spiritual power. The Apostle Paul prayed in Ephesians 3:16 – “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.” This is a picture of the filling of the Holy Spirit. Our inner man (mind, emotions,

intellect, and will) is strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit which gives us the ability to ‘conquer’ our problems.

Let's take three different men with the same problem and see how each one handles their situation. Put yourself in their place and see how you would react.

Each man is being sued for 10-thousand dollars in a libel case by the same person. The first man, we'll call him 'Mr. Cope,' says, 'No sweat, this thing will never go to court. It's unimportant, I can handle everything just fine. The second man, we'll call him 'Mr. Cop-out,' says, 'Oh, No! My whole life is ruined. I'll be wiped out. How can I face my family? It's an impossible situation.' The third man, we'll call him 'Mr. Conquer,' says, 'Lord, thank you for this opportunity to see your power poured out on my life and in the lives of others. I pray that you will give me the wisdom to use this opportunity to bring glory and honor to your Name.'

The first man, Mr. Cope, was taken to court where he lost the case and is not trying futility to borrow 10-thousand dollars. The second man, Mr. Cop-out, went to his garage and committed suicide. The third man, Mr. Conquer, went to the person suing him and asked for forgiveness about the bitterness that existed between them. Mr. Conquer led the man to Christ, who dropped the lawsuit.

Those are hypothetical situations, but there is not one problem you will ever face that cannot be conquered through Christ. 'But,' you say, 'I just can't!' Don't ever use the word 'can't.' That's a foreign word to the God of the 'impossible.' You can through Christ! 'But,' you say, 'my problem is different. It's just too hard.' Not true –

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. 1 Corinthians 10:13

God's statement — all trials are common to men. (Your problem is not unique.)

God's promise — you will be able to bear it. (You can!)

We need to see our problems in the light of God's Word that teaches that we are given these precious opportunities and we are to buy them up (Ephesians 5:16, Greek). If our lives roll smoothly along, we could never prove to a hungry and needy world that God's grace will meet every need of life.

How can we practically apply this biblical truth? Take a piece of paper and pencil or pen. Head your paper, 'Turning Problems Into Opportunities.' Make two columns on your paper —

ProblemsOpportunities

Under 'Problems' list every problem you are facing right now. Then, go back under the 'Opportunities' column and ask God to show you how to turn your problems into opportunities to glorify Him. After you've finished your list, begin to activate

these truths in your life each day. We must not just ‘know’ what is right – we must ‘do’ what is right.

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. James 1:22

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