

Growing Pains

Intro: The sudden growth of the early church produced internal strains. These verses show how the apostles responded in a way that both lovingly addressed the problem and kept them on mission so that the word continued to spread.

"The main thing is that the main thing remains the main thing" Martin Marty

1 – The Problem (6:1) *rapid growth led to disparity in the distribution of food*

- A problem of administration not discrimination (cf. 1 Tim. 5:3-7)
- The deeper problem was the potential of distraction.

2 – The Solution (6:2-6) *recognition of a second group of official servants*

- The ministry (*diakonia*) of the word vs. the ministry (*diakonia*) of tables.
- The priority of the word (cf. Lk. 24:47-48; Acts 1:8, 4:20, 31; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 4:1)
- The priority of prayer (cf. Acts 1:14, 2:42, 4:20, 31)
- The qualifications of the seven (cf. 1 Tim. 3:8-13; Gal. 5:22-23)

3 – The Result (6:7) *the word increased, and the number of disciples increased*

- A disciple is a follower of Jesus. Every believer is a disciple (Mt. 28:19-20; Acts 14:21).
- For a priest to embrace Jesus he would have to walk away from his entire life of temple service (Phil. 3:7-8).

Concluding reflections

- A church that sets aside those called to the word and encourages members to use their spiritual gifts can see the blessing of God.
- There are many worthy pressures that can crowd out our God-given priorities.
- The ascended and reigning Jesus is dispensing his grace and power through gifts.

Discussion Questions

1. What are some examples of worthy causes that crowd out the word and prayer for you?
2. What spiritual gifts has the Spirit exercised through you? (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Pet. 4:10-11).
3. What are some ways the word of God impacts a believer?