

MOVING FORWARD

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READ

Take some time in advance to read and consider the Bible study questions and come up with personal examples to encourage discussion.

WATCH

Make sure everyone can see the screen and the audio is at a comfortable level.

DISCUSS

We hope those who participate in the study walk away knowing, feeling, and doing differently as a result of amazing discussion.

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OPEN

As you open up tonight, let's think about this past week. What bullies do you remember from grade school?

What jumped out at you from the message this week? What led you to really think or even better, to change your actions?

WATCH THE VIDEO

What jumped out at you from the video?

INTRODUCTION

As we begin the study this week, we see that the church had a problem; several problems actually, what were they?

The first part of the matter was that the disciples were growing in number. Secondly, that the non-Hebrew Jewish widows were being overlooked.

READ

READ ACTS 6:1-7

What were the issues with the first problem?

The group which started out with just 12 now is up into the thousands. This is always a good problem to have but nevertheless it is a matter that brings with it certain challenges. No longer could the church do things the way it always had.

What was the solution to the first problem?

This young growing body of believers in Jerusalem needed not only the Word of God but also some level of organization.

What were the issues of the second problem?

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that the non-Hebrew Jewish widows were being overlooked. This was the specific issue but what this meant for the church was of the utmost importance.

How did there come to be so many widows in the church in those days?

Jewish people lived in Jerusalem and Judah, but also in other parts of the world. But when it came time to retire, many Greek-speaking Jewish couples would migrate to Jerusalem so they could be buried there. They would migrate, the husband typically would die first, and then there were all these widows left in Jerusalem.

What were the cultural and linguistic barriers present in this situation?

The Hellenistic Jews spoke Greek and likely embraced Greek culture while Hebraic Jews spoke semitic languages, like Hebrew or Arabic, and embraced Jewish culture.

How exactly were some of the widows being left out of the daily food provisions?

When the Christians were making the rounds to care for some of these women, they were not taking them the food they needed, potentially because of favoritism. These are the beginning signs of the ethnic tension that would threaten the early church between the Jews and Gentiles in Acts 15

How did this specific issue have the potential to impact the future direction of the church?

The surface issue is Hellenistic Widows being overlooked in the daily distribution of food but it really is much more than that, it is an issue of diversity... Is the Gospel powerful enough to save all people AND knit them together in one body?

Why is the solution to this question so important?

The church is just getting off the ground. The focus is still in Jerusalem with Jews. If the

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Church cannot include different kinds of Jews, namely Aramaic speaking and Greek speaking, how in the world will it ever complete the Great Commission. In other words, if it is not unified while still in Jerusalem how will it ever cross ethnic and cultural borders into entirely different people groups?

What was the approach to the solution of the second problem?

The solution was for the Apostles to gather the full number of disciples and make a statement in front of everyone. They first acknowledged that God did not want them to execute the solution to this matter. He desired them to continue to focus on preaching and prayer. However, the issue did need to be dealt with quickly and biblically.

So what was the solution to the problem of the widows being overlooked?

The Apostles directed to select seven men who have been tried and true (Good Repute) and full of the Holy Spirit and full of the wisdom of God.

These would be very special men. These men would be the ones who initially would care for the widows and make sure all the church was cared for.

How did this solution successfully resolve the issues at hand?

It was the task of the Apostles to preach and teach God's Word while in continual prayer, while the servant leaders continued to meet the physical needs of the people. In short, the apostles served the word while the servant leaders served the tables.

LET'S PRAY

Consider the following questions as you pray together as a LifeGroup.

- Are you stepping up to the calling that God has placed on your life in the church?
- Do you even know what that calling is?
- What steps are you willing to take to discover your spiritual gifts and how they apply to the church?

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BIG IDEA

The early church had a problem! The physical problems were just manifestations of the spiritual problems; could the church meet both the physical and spiritual needs of it's people? the inevitable solution proved that as the church develops and grows and moves on, great things can be accomplished when we work together. Had the servant leaders not stepped up at this point, the apostles would've become bogged down. If the apostles had not held onto their convictions then the church would've lost it's way. But because everyone did their part and conducted their ministry, the word increased, the number of disciples increased, and even many people came to the faith. To God be the glory.

BIBLE STUDY NOTES

READ ACTS 6:1-7

PERSONAL REFLECTION

How would you define what makes someone a servant leader?

How does the Bible define leadership in contrast to our culture?

Does a leader's personal conduct affect the people he or she leads? Why does this matter?

