

## **Retro Part 5 Growing Pains**

Welcome to week five of our retro series. Today we will explore the first time the church experienced internal discord and problems. We look at what action the leaders took and how the church actually used these challenges to launch them into even greater fruitfulness. Have you ever considered that you may be the miracle answer to someone else's problem? Or that God has shaped and molded you for a very unique purpose? Today's message is an invitation to leave your seat in the grand stands and take your place on the playing field.

### **Intro:**

Picture of men pulling/pushing a cart with square wheels, while the cart is filled with round ones.

### **Charting the early churches meteoric growth:**

#### **Acts 1:15**

in those days Peter stood among the believers and the group numbered about 120

#### **Acts 2:41**

Those who accepted His message were baptized and about 3000 were added to their number that day

#### **Acts 2:47**

'and the Lord added to their number daily those that were being saved.'

#### **Acts 4:4**

But many who heard the message believed and the number of men grew to be five thousand.

#### **Acts 5:14**

Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number

#### **Acts 5:28**

We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching.

**Text:**

**Acts 6:1-7 NKJV**

Now in those days, when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. <sup>2</sup> Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. <sup>3</sup> Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; <sup>4</sup> but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

<sup>5</sup> And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, <sup>6</sup> whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.

<sup>7</sup> Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

- 1. A Growing Church is Biblical**
- 2. More People, More Problems**
- 3. Problems are Symptoms of Unmet Needs**
- 4. This is a Job For Super Pastor?**
- 5. Every Member a Minister and Every Minister Ministering!**
- 6. The Pastors are to Focus on the Ministry of Word and Prayer**
- 7. The Result Was Increased Growth**
- 8. We must mobilize every member for ministry!**

If you've ever doubted your calling to ministry, consider this: God has been moulding and shaping you for ministry since before you were born!

### **Psalm 139:13-18 NKJV**

<sup>13</sup> For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb.

<sup>14</sup> I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And *that* my soul knows very well.

<sup>15</sup> My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

<sup>16</sup> Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet *there were* none of them.

<sup>17</sup> How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!

<sup>18</sup> *If* I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.

### **This passage indicates that –**

1. God shaped you for a purpose,
2. You are unique, and
3. You are wonderfully complex.

You are a composite of many different factors, summarized in the acrostic, S.H.A.P.E.:

**S**piritual gifts

**H**eart

**A**bilities

**P**ersonality

**E**xperience

### **Spiritual gifts**

#### **1 Corinthians 12:7 NKJV**

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of *all*:

#### **1 Cor 14:12 NIV**

So it is with you. Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church.

## **1 Peter 4:10 NKJV**

As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

### **Heart**

Passion

Matt. 12:34, Ps. 34:7, Pr. 4:23

### **Abilities**

**Lie: I don't have any abilities.**

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Studies have proven that the average person possesses from five hundred to seven hundred skills!

### **Personality**

Task oriented vs people oriented.

Structured vs unstructured.

Platform vs behind the scene.

Routine vs variety Solo vs team

There is no "right" or "wrong" temperament for ministry.

When you minister in a manner that is consistent with the personality

God gave you, you experience fulfillment, satisfaction, and

fruitfulness. It feels good when you do exactly what God made you to do.

### **Experiences**

**Rom. 8:28 NKJV**

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. Romans

Instead of trying to reshape ourselves to be like someone else, we should celebrate the shape God has given to each of us.

Wise stewardship of your life begins by understanding your shape.

You will be the most effective and fulfilled in ministry when you use your spiritual gifts and abilities in the area of your heart's desire and in a way that best expresses your personality and experiences.