

AMPLIFIED – Growing Pains

September 6-7, 2025

Acts 6:1-2 (AMP) – “Now about this time, when the number of disciples was increasing, a complaint was made by the Hellenists (Greek-speaking Jews) against the [native] Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. So the Twelve called the disciples together and said, ‘It is not appropriate for us to neglect [teaching] the word of God in order to serve tables and manage the distribution of food’”.

Proverbs 16:28 (NIV) - “A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends”.

Matthew 28:18-20a (NIV) – Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you”.

Acts 6:3-4 (AMP) – “Therefore, brothers, choose from among you seven men with good reputations [men of godly character and moral integrity], full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. But we will [continue to] devote ourselves [steadfastly] to prayer and to the ministry of the word”.

“A desire to preach without a burden to study is a desire to perform” – **H.B. Charles**

“**ministry**” = Greek *diakonia* – “service, ministry, mission”; origin of “deacon”

Exodus 18:13-16 (NIV) – “The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, ‘What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?’ Moses answered him, ‘Because the people come to me to seek God’s will. Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God’s decrees and instructions’”.

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Exodus 18:17-22 (NIV) – Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to Him. Teach them His decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. But select capable men from all the people – men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain – and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you".

Acts 6:5-7 (AMP) – "The suggestion pleased the whole congregation; and they selected Stephen, a man full of faith [in Christ Jesus], and [filled with and led by] the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas (Nikolas), a proselyte (Gentile convert) from Antioch. They brought these men before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them [to dedicate and commission them for this service]. And the message of God kept growing and spreading, and the number of disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem; and a large number of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith [accepting Jesus as Messiah and acknowledging Him as the Source of eternal salvation]".

Acts 6:8-11 (AMP) – "Now Stephen, full of grace (divine blessing, favor) and power, was doing great wonders and signs (attesting miracles) among the people. However, some men from what was called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (freed Jewish slaves), both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and [the province of] Asia, rose up and questioned and argued with Stephen. But they were not able to successfully withstand and cope with the wisdom and the intelligence [and the power and inspiration] of the Spirit by whom he was speaking. Then [to attack him another way], they secretly instructed men to say, 'We have heard this man [Stephen] speak blasphemous (slandorous, sacrilegious, abusive) words against Moses and against God'".

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“The bell in the steeple may be well hung, fairly fashioned, and of the soundest metal, but it is dumb until the ringer makes it speak. And the preacher has no voice of quickening for the dead in sin, or of comfort for living saints unless the divine Spirit gives him a gracious pull, and begs him speak with power. Hence the need of prayer for both preacher and hearers” – ***John MacArthur***

John 12:9-11 (NIV) – “Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of Him but also to see Lazarus, who He had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well; for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in Him”.

Acts 6:12-15 (AMP) – And they provoked and incited the people, as well as the elders and the scribes, and they came up to Stephen and seized him and brought him before the Council (Sanhedrin, Jewish High Court). They presented false witnesses who said, “This man never stops speaking against this holy place and the Law [of Moses]; for we have heard him say that this Jesus the Nazarene will tear down this place and will change the traditions and customs which Moses handed down to us”. Then all those who were sitting in the Council, stared [intently] at him, and they saw that Stephen’s face was like the face of an angel.