

Acts Part 8 Explosive Growth With Imperfect People

Pastor John Carmichael

[Act 6:1, 7 NASB95] 1 Now at this time while the disciples were increasing [in number,] a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic [Jews] against the [native] Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving [of food.] ... 7 The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

- Things and people who are being used of God are not exempt from the imperfections of problems.
- The church had a monocultural leadership in a multicultural church. Hellenistic Jews were Jews who spoke Greek and took on the Greek culture. These were different from the Hebrew Jews. The Hellenistic Jews were liberal socially and politically. The Hebrew Jews were conservative.
- This problem had the potential to tear the church up and hinder its effectiveness.
- We see God using this group of imperfect people to do explosive things for the Kingdom of God.
- How did we get from v1 to v7? How did God use these imperfect people to see explosive growth?

What can we learn about how God uses imperfect people with problems to overcome those problem and do great things?

These seven lessons we can learn about how God can use us even though we are imperfect.

I. God calls imperfect people.

- a. Acts 6:1
- b. A good growing church will not be perfect. Having imperfect people means problems are inevitably to happen.
- c. We are wounded healers. Yet, we should not be bleeding.
- d. [1Co 1:26-29 NASB95] 26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, 29 so that no man may boast before God.

II. God wants us to love all people.

- a. Acts 6:1, 5
- b. Love the people you agree with and those you do not agree with.
- c. We must be intention to include all people. Age. Gender. Ethnicity. Social economic. Education. Politics.
- d. Everyone represented in leadership. Example: choir.
- e. Interesting the seven had Greek names. Commentator Longenecker says it is possible that all 7 where Hellenistic Jews.
- f. We are called to love everyone.

III. God wants us to deal with our issues not ignore them.

- a. Acts 6:2
- b. They recognized that this problem should not be ignored. It required organization adjustment.
- c. Be willing to make adjustments in your life. They did not change their message just their methods.

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- d. Through the power of the Holy Spirit (including praying in tongues), we make adjustments.

IV. God wants to use us.

- a. Acts 6:3
- b. At this time, these 7 were servant leaders. Some of them became 5 fold ministers.
- c. We have to quit making excuses of why God can not use us.
- d. [Eph 3:8-10 NASB95] 8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, 9 and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; 10 so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly [places.]

V. God wants us to focus on our calling.

- a. Acts 6:2,4
- b. The Apostles were called to preach and pray.
- c. Everyone has a role. We don't have the same calling. We need everyone (children church: volunteers serving snacks, pastors teaching praying)
- d. [Eph 4:11-12 NASB95] 11 And He gave some [as] apostles, and some [as] prophets, and some [as] evangelists, and some [as] pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;
- e. The Clergy must equip the laity. Some are gifted at proclamation. Some are gifted at administration. Things work best when everyone is in their grace and their place.

VI. God has requirements for leadership.

- a. Acts 6:3
- b. Three requirements
 - i. Personal integrity.
 - ii. Full of the Holy Spirit.
 - iii. Practical wisdom.
- c. When we compromise in these areas we limit our effectiveness.

VII. God wants growth and success through us.

- a. Acts 6:6-7
- b. God wants growth and success. It can look different from one to another. It may have times of winnowing. Yet, it will have growth and success.
- c. When things were in alignment, it grew.

- **God can and does used imperfect people and churches when they are willing to get into the alignment with the heart and order of God.**