



BIBLE CLASS: NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES

Wednesday nights at 7:00PM | July 7 – September 29, 2021

Lesson 2: The Church at Jerusalem, Learning from Controversy
July 14, 2021

Excerpt from the workbook, “New Testament Churches: Their Strengths and Weaknesses” by Carl McMurray:

“Growing churches are always churches with problems. In fact, any congregation where things run smoothly for too long probably should take a hard look at itself to determine if it is shining as bright on its lampstand as it should be. ... A teaching church will have problems from time to time with teaching. There will be error or pride, or the modern problem of “busy-ness” that keeps us from devoting time to this ministry. ... Churches that effectively reach out to the lost will have problems with new converts. There will be a host of personal problems, marriage problems, problems from too much zeal, and difficulties with brethren that hold themselves aloof from these newcomers.

“Problems will demonstrate who is serving for personal gain or out of convenience and who is sacrificially giving up self to get the job done. There are going to be problems, and Christians should exercise themselves spiritually in order to be able to meet these difficulties with grace. Just as we prepare ourselves against sinning in anger or controlling lust so that the temptation will not overcome us, so also we should be prepared ahead of time to deal with problems in ways that glorify our Savior and move the work ever forward.”

Bible References:

- Acts 4:18-21, 27-29
- Acts 5:1-13, 17-21, 40-42
- Acts 6:1-7

Questions:

1. Give some possible examples of partiality in church discipline.
2. What are some good results of impartiality in church discipline?
3. In what ways did the early Christians deal with external problems?
4. No matter how large or small a problem may be in the church, what is the ultimate danger we should beware of?
5. What was unique in the handling of the two church problems recorded for us in Jerusalem which is unheard of in many churches today?
6. Good leadership is only half the equation in church unity. In your own words, please give some examples of good fellowship.
7. What is the most effective way to put an end to constant controversy?
8. What is the difference between the work of a gospel preacher and the work of a denominational pastor, as modeled by the apostles?
9. Jerusalem started strong and then had problems in the next generation. What are real things that we might do to strengthen and mature the next generation?