

NOTE: This is a continuation of Problems Are Solutions in Disguise, January 21, 2008

## PROBLEMS ARE SOLUTIONS IN DISGUISE

By Rev. Tom Lacy

Life, without a doubt, is the continuing exercise of making choices. Some choices are simple and easy to make because they have few or no lasting consequences. Some choices, however, are more complex carrying with them unknown, severe or even dire consequences. Even so, choices in life must be made.

Mind set, in any given situation, greatly influences how people handle problems and make choices. In the decision making process people will sometimes rationalize to the point of compromise. In order to justify their way of dealing with a problem they say, "Well, if you knew what s/he did to me then you would know why I am doing this." Most of us have grown up knowing that two wrongs don't make a right, but we take this same approach. We need to change our mind set if we intend to do a better job at problem solving and choice making.

Although every problem is not a spiritual problem; God's Word always holds the Answer. *"For all Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for right living, so the man who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good work"* (2 Tim. 3:16-17 GNB).

Getting into the habit of reading a portion of God's Word on a daily basis is an investment of time that will pay benefits in the form of comfort (Rom. 15:4), joy (Ps. 46:1) and as a guide in life (Josh. 1:8.)

Specific help can be found for dealing with faith and trust (1 John 5:4); loneliness (Rom. 8:38-39); fear (2 Tim. 1:7); anger (Col. 3:8); frustration (Isa. 26:3); guilt (Rom. 8:1); suffering (Ps. 27:14); discouragement (Gal.6:9); depression (Phil. 4:8); trouble (Ps. 46:1-3); and temptation (1 Cor. 10:13) to name only a few.

The oldest form of problem solving recorded in the Bible is blame shifting. *"And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat"* (Gen. 3:12 KJV). Always assume full responsibility for your part in making choices - especially if the choice turns out to be a bad one. Blame shifting only makes matters worse.

The most popular form of problem solving, I believe, is avoidance. *"And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest"* (Ps. 55:6-8 KJV). Seldom can we change life's circumstances by changing our address. Situational change only gives temporary relief.

Neither blame shifting nor avoidance will solve problems or reverse the effects of bad choices. The only thing that will help is having a better plan for problem solving and choice making. Making better choices necessitates developing better resources.

Let's look at a plan.

Different Is better. If up until now everything you have done to solve the problem has not worked -- do something different. There is no change if there is no change. If you want tomorrow to be different from yesterday, you must do something different today. Same ol', same ol' will not bring about change. More is not better; different is better. You know the choices you

made that put you in your current situation. You may have gone along with the crowd although you knew you weren't comfortable with your choice. You just might want to listen to that inner voice before making your next choice.

Further, if you are accustomed to making snap decisions and impulse choices don't do that any more. Sleep on it. Many decisions and choices made on the spur of the moment could just as well be made later - after taking time to think it through, pray it through and check it out.

As difficult as it is to do, face each problem with a positive attitude. Remember, there is a solution to every problem.

We have seen that making poor or bad choices are the source of most problems. We have seen that our poor choices also affect those around us just as their poor choices affect us. This serves to multiply and compound everyone's problems.

The problem is making poor or bad choices.

The solution is learn to make better choices.

Next time we'll look at the three progressive levels of a problem, and see how to apply the axiom *an ounce of prevention is always better than a pound of cure*.