

Problems (side 2)

We have to advise responsible people in the church to do business with responsible people in the world and not irresponsible people in the church.

This is a reality.

I deal with it by individuals whom we have to talk to right in this congregation who find that sometimes it's easier to employ an outsider than one of our own.

What we really are saying then is that there are a remarkable number of people who are not responsible, both as employees or employers.

I think we should examine what is our attitude that we have to have this kind of image of irresponsibility.

In the first place, maybe you have a business problem, maybe you don't know how to handle money.

Well, then the answer is you need to get advice of somebody who does whether in or out of the church may not be important at this point, depending on the problem.

And for you who may not know how to handle finances to get involved with someone else and let the other person in the church hold the stack is not, so to speak, that's not the way we should conduct ourselves.

When we owe money to outsiders or brethren, it is important that we make the kind of arrangements we can to resolve indebtednesses, especially when we have contractual arrangements in business.

Talk to the person who is involved.

Explain what your problem is if you have one.

I know of people who come to us to help solve their problems, and they have worked on them and resolved them, but there are others who are, in fact, financial deadbeats.

And they don't come for advice, they don't come for guidance.

I had to deal with the man years ago who was a very able person, but he had one faithful flaw in handling his business, had nothing to do with attitude, had nothing to do with character with just a bit of common sense he didn't have.

He was tithing on his gross income in business, and he was going in the hole and going to go broke.

So all he did was show me his books, and I explained to him when, as soon as I saw it, I didn't take me more than a minute to realize what his problem was.

He was paying tithe on what he had no reason to.

He should have paid tithe on the adjusted gross income after the expenses, and then he was doing well, a little thing.

The fact remains that that man was of a right attitude, he just didn't see this small thing.

He was being overly generous for lack of wisdom, but he had nothing to do with attitude.

But when people are deadbeats and don't share a responsibility, don't go to the person to whom they owe the money to try to work it out, there is something that is fundamentally wrong.

And this could be at any level.

This is a minor problem compared to the marital ones, but it does exist.

When you work for somebody else, it's very important.

I know people in the world who would never let themselves get into a state of bankruptcy.

An old man who's been a travel agent for years, I've known him for a quarter of a century now, he happened to have been in business with somebody who took the money that people were paying him, and instead of sending it to the airlines, he was pocketing it and ran off with tens of thousands of dollars and let the other man hold the sack.

The man who held the sack had the choice of either bankruptcy or spending the rest of his life paying off that debt because he did not properly evaluate the other person.

That man is, to this day, working.

He has paid his debts, which really were the other person's debts.

He chose to go the hard way, and he's a very responsible individual, he's a musician as well.

I have to admire a person who does that and doesn't take the easy way and doesn't have any sense of conversion as we understand it, and then to have people who presumably are.

This is a very sad situation that needs examination.

Are we really interested in correcting it? If our attitudes are right, we will be.

If we find difficulty in working for the boss, maybe the boss is partly the problem.

Maybe you are partly the problem.

If you're the boss and you have difficulty with some of your employees, maybe you're part of the problem as well as the employee.

Try to sit down and evaluate it, and if you need some third party, it's perfectly all right.

Ask somebody.

If you're big enough minded to do it, you won't have any problem.

If the third party can see where the problem is, you can work on it.

But we too often don't want to face up to the need of change.

We don't want to acknowledge that that's not the way to do it in dealing with other people.

Now, some people are far more sensitive than others.

I am normally a little more thick-skinned than some.

I know that some are very sensitive.

Others are so thick-skinned that practically nothing penetrates.

You have to examine yourself.

Now maybe because you can take it, you think others can take it, but you need to be concerned for the needs of the other party.

How you criticize, how you advise, how you put pressure on others is very important because there are some people who need it and others who can be broken by it.

So we're dealing not just with the questions of sin, we're dealing with the question of how not to offend, how not to hurt.

A perfect man, and Jesus asks us to be perfect, is one who offends not in either deed or word.

And there probably isn't any of us who has been able to achieve perfection in either case, that we inevitably offend somewhere in deed or word.

And this is very important.

We have school teachers here.

I see Miss Johnson is here, so since I know nothing about any problems, I will just illustrate some of your teachers.

It isn't easy in being a teacher to deal with every single individual on the basis of everybody's private needs.

I've talked various subjects for years, and you can be pretty strong when some student doesn't measure up, and you can be that way to another one.

It can do good for some, and it can, let's say, really hurt others who need another approach.

One has to be careful, same as with parents and children, that you can say some things to some children, and you need to add special discipline, and in others you'll find that they respond readily.

Some are more submissive than others, some are more self-will.

One of the great difficulties we have today is the inevitable problem of divorce, and the problem, of course, of going to court about it.

The tragedy is that too many do not seek the ministry and seek reconciliation to the point where, at least if a court decision is necessary, you can jointly appeal to the court for a decision without recrimination before the court, without suit and countersuit, without getting two lawyers.

The Church is, it seems, being abandoned as a source of responsibility, because sometimes the ministry doesn't want to get involved with some hard-headed people, and Paul says very plainly, he says, how dare you go to court to settle your problems? Now we may have to go to court to have the final decision, but it would be a lot better to seek some kind of reconciliation prior to presenting a final petition in court.

That we have individuals who have gone so far, that others are so totally alienated, that there is no way of reconciliation, and you really have to ask yourselves, how can people sin as far as some people go, and actually have the Spirit of God? Now it's possible, David did, but there's going to have to be repentance, and there's going to be a blot on that person's life and his example in the Church, or her example in the Church.

And when people are so hurt and offended, I have to ask myself, when people are so offended that there is clear attitude problem showing itself, the righteous are not offended, are we big enough to forgive, and at the same time have wisdom not to be taken in again? There are some people who have a lot to learn in terms of how to deal with others, and to a great extent one's own attitude and how you come across to the other, you may not see.

And the worst thing, of course, is that most people with attitude problems don't want to hear what they're like.

That's the difficulty.

They want to stay that way, or they feel that I'm that way because, and it's always somebody else who's really the basis for it.

We have to learn what Christ expects of us.

I think it is time we examine those chapters in the Bible that define what our conduct is to be in terms of our own feelings toward another.

This is probably the biggest area in which we fall short.

There was a time, as you know, most of our problems seemed to be from the outside.

We had diseases, and as parents we had problems with children versus hospitals versus doctors versus the school or as parents and holy days, we had problems with the children in school, they were not given proper grades, they were never given an opportunity to observe what God asks, we had financial problems because the bosses didn't like us doing this or that with respect to the Sabbath or holy days, or there was clearly a problem in the economy.

I could say that the bulk of problems used to be external, whether through disease, economics or the attitudes of those who were institutionalized through whom we had to go in our educational and business system, and in those days every one of those problems created a sense of unity in the church, a sense of mutually sharing and being concerned with the others' problems, helping financially, helping physically.

Now there are many who still help financially, who still help physically in the needs of other people.

But the more we had these problems from the outside, the more we got our minds off our internal relationships.

That is, we had our minds so occupied with the opposition from without that somehow we could overlook the problems that were within.

The maids seemed so much less of a difficulty in contrast to the problem elsewhere.

The woman who had to support her unemployed husband with encouragement didn't have the time to nag, but now that he's got a steady job on unemployment, there's always now the opportunity to find fault.

He with her and she with him, and this kind of thing goes on.

Now that we have medical science, God is much further away than he used to be because there are so many other ways now other than faith that you can go because men have learned so much more, or a price.

We have far fewer school problems in terms of the administration because the school has so many problems already, they don't want more.

And as the pressures from the outside percentage-wise decline, which is true, we have it easier in all of these areas there is far more consciousness of health and nutrition and natural childbirth than there used to be, far more cooperation because of the presence of the Jewish community with the holy days, school, far more opportunities to have government funds for unemployment instead of falling back on the church.

But the more the pressure from the outside is removed, the more the pressure builds up within.

That is, the more we see the internal problems between each other, we find out that our bigger problems suddenly seem to be anonymous.

And then there are always those things that some people allow themselves or some people allow others to do, and we begin to hear about what people permit themselves.

This is a time where we allow things that we never allowed internally before, or some things where we allow what we once did, is in makeup.

Now people can do what they please, it seems, and they do what they please anyway, whether it's permitted or not, on birthdays to a great extent on how to keep the Sabbath, how to handle your finances, for that matter, how to handle your marital problems.

We have adultery far more often than we should, but it may not be any greater than it used to be because that's an ongoing human problem, but now it seems it's one of the things that we can understand adultery, and we've always been able to forgive and override it.

The problem is when it's permitted and the ministers sometimes allow it, before action is taken and people have been damaged, instead of when it is found that action is taken.

We have a situation that we want to make plain.

The devil tried to stop this work through external pressure on the individual and the church for years, and the church grew, and the more the pressure, the more the church grew, and the devil was smart, and he decided that the best thing then is to pull off the pressure and see if it comes apart because there's no external pressure that makes the thing hold together.

You take the pressure off family responsibility.

Child rearing decays, husband-wife relationships decay, and we are in a state today where there is far less rapport between many individuals, that is where the attitudes that are reflected in how you observe the Sabbath, the attitudes that are reflected in the kind of social dancing and music, the attitudes that are reflected in employee-employer relationships, in the use of drugs and alcohol, in sex parties, let's call it, for what it is, doesn't have to be in our congregation, but it can be, that these things go on to the point that people see the problems that are inside the church because they don't see all the problems outside.

They aren't as many outside, and the devil has indeed pulled some pressures away just to find out whether indeed you would come apart within.

And so if iniquity abounds, it is inevitable that the love of many, not all, will wax cold.

Now, Jesus says this very plainly in Matthew 24, verse 12, because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

How can an employer who has nothing but problems with church members and employees feel the same way? Well, he can, if he is big enough to forgive, to be merciful, to be wise and not get stunned again, but he can also have the problem of his love waxing cold.

Husbands and wives have the same problems.

Employees toward employers.

Employees toward each other, laymen toward the ministry, the ministry toward laymen.

It doesn't really matter.

I don't care what the relationship, children and parents, that the more we find that others do things that don't measure up to the Bible, the more upset we can be if nothing is done about it.

This is important.

The more we allow, shall I say, birthday parties on the campus, on Sabbath evening, and other kinds of parties, the more we have individuals who allow themselves the opportunity to take drugs, drugs in alcohol, alcohol, get pregnant, get raped, and then take the next step.

That is terminated.

The more we allow ourselves these things, the more you really wonder what is going on.

And that is what the devil wants you to think, to the point where your love waxes cold and you don't have the same rapport with the other person.

This is taking place.

It affects me because I know it's happening.

These things come to us.

What I do with that is my responsibility.

Can I still love and extend my concern for someone who has terminated pregnancy, someone who has committed adultery with someone else, someone who encourages other people to do these things and to pass drugs? One has to learn when the individual did it in ignorance, caught up in his or her own emotional instability, and when it is intentional, and when it's intentional, one has to crack down, and that's where too often there is failure.

You're going to have to look at yourselves.

Since most of you do not have the problems, and the minority do, the biggest problem, of course, is what your attitude is going to be.

Can you still love the other person? If Jesus asks us to love our enemies, how much more should we be willing to love our brethren? How much more should we be willing to love our brethren? If our brethren make mistakes as well as our enemies, are we willing to forgive? But are we also willing for the brethren to instruct and to help a person not to sin again like that, because that's where the breakdown is? We have a responsibility then as individuals to ask ourselves whether we're involved in the problem or whether we're emotionally being disturbed by problems.

You see, they're both situations.

We have to be very careful in the latter case that if other people's problems well up that they don't cause our love to wax cold, because you see, going into the same 24th chapter of Matthew just a little before, it says there's coming a time when there will be renewed affliction for reasons of religion.

And verse 10 says, at this time many shall be united in standards one.

Oh, no, it doesn't.

It says at that very point, after the pressure has been removed little by little, and when the love of many waxes cold because of the permissiveness of others, then many shall be offended.

The devil knows that, and shall betray one another and hate one another.

When there is a lack of love, there is a lack of trust.

When there is a lack of trust, there is the possibility of betrayal.

When there is the possibility of betrayal, there can be no doubt that there is hate.

We are at a state in 1977 when we do not yet know just how long it shall be before great religious pressures occur.

We've had a very interesting religious explosion in Washington, D.C. internally within a distinct religious environment, the Muslim environment.

What's going to happen when we have the Catholics and the Dutch Reformed churches coming to clash with one another in South Africa, the various churches in Rhodesia, the problems in Northern Ireland, the ultimate controversy of Christian gunmen and Muslims in the Middle East, the controversy between the religious groups in Western Europe and the non-religious in Eastern Europe, some place, somewhere along the line, there is going to be a catalyst that has not yet shown itself.

But when it does, when the only way to preserve Western civilization is to conform to a religion, then indeed, what do you think would happen when there is no love between a husband and wife, children and parents, one brother and another, or friends, employees and employers? When to survive you have to conform.

Would you protect the other person? Because when love waxes cold in you, even if you obey, much less if you don't, you're not very likely to have the zeal and the faith and the confidence that it takes to stand up under this kind of pressure, and the devil knows it.

Now, as the Passover season approaches, it is very important that we examine ourselves in terms of what we think of others, what we allow ourselves, whether we really help others to overcome their problems when we see it or only gossip about them or report it to the ministry, which is not always wrong if you can't have any way of helping the other person.

We must examine our animosities.

We need to ask for the kind of forgiveness and to get our minds, even in the areas of doctrine where there is animosity toward Herbert Armstrong, or Garner Ted Armstrong, or the ministry, or what, doesn't matter, because people get so close to their little hobby and they think it isn't being looked into, and maybe it isn't being looked into, maybe it isn't that important, and maybe it is and it has not

been seen for its importance, but in any case, your attitude is the most important thing, and after all, the time is coming when a lot of people in the world tomorrow are going to have a chance to let their light shine even if it wasn't seen today.

The people who want to see their light shine because they like their light will soon see it go out.

If the truth has been suppressed through history somewhere along the line, through mismanagement in the church, God's going to use the people to whom He revealed it to make it known and not those who stood in the way.

That's exactly why this church is where it is in contrast to a body of people before who acknowledged the truth but did nothing about it or acknowledged the truth and tried to hide it.

God stepped in and had to raise up a whole new work to finish because the other was dead, spiritually at the top.

We cannot compromise with sin.

There will be differences in how we view matters.

Some will not quite understand it as others, and one of the functions of the ministry is to bring us all to unity.

There's a church where something is not clear, and then we must walk arm in arm.

I hope that we take note of the importance of what our attitudes do to us, and that there's one thing that will enable us to be perfect as God in heaven is perfect.

It is this that our attitudes are perfect.

The knowledge is short because we only understand in limited fashion today.

Our understanding of prophecy is only an obscure view of history in the future.

It is not what we know or how much we intellectually accumulate or how righteous we think we are.

It is the issue of attitudes toward every other person, those with whom we agree and those with whom we don't, whether in or out of the church.

You don't have to accept somebody else's philosophy, even if that person seems to be a member.

Don't take heed that you examine yourself in terms of the biblical account, because we're all going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

We must learn in this matter of attitude that we don't be permissive on the one hand and we don't become offended on the other.

We've had individuals who left who were permissive and individuals who left because they thought the church that remained was still too permissive and they became offended.

Jesus Christ addressed this question, and I hope that prior to the Passover service, many of you will have a chance to examine what Christ said and the attitude that is reflected in the several chapters 14 through round 17 of John's account of the gospel and see to what extent you measure up in your mind and in your dealings with other people in the way that Christ's mind measured up to this responsibility.

We often have it read to us, and we probably absorb it for a few minutes as it's being read, and the minutes over, then we begin to do the same thing we did before.

There is only one way to secure the spiritual safety and preservation of God's people.

That is that we learn to exercise control over ourselves through the power of the Spirit of God.

We do not do these things in our own strength, but with our strength through the Spirit of God.