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In business, at times we will be faced with problems. Problems come in all different shapes and sizes: ineffective procedures, too much expense and not enough profit, equipment breaking down, etc. While the examples given here are all different, there is a plan to solving problems that can be used by anyone in business to help them systematically work through a problem and get to a solution. And solving problems contributes to a business prospering. Whether you are a business owner, a manager, or an employee, when faced with a problem, you can use this approach to solve it.

Let's start by considering what problem solving is. First and foremost, problem solving is Biblical. Acts 6 contains a record of the apostles addressing a problem in the first-century Church.

> *Acts 6:1:*
> *And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians* [Greek-speaking disciples] *against the Hebrews* [Hebrew disciples], *because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.*

In verse 1, we see the problem: the widows were being neglected. The solution is recorded in verses 2 and 3.

> *Acts 6:2,3:*
> *Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples* unto them, *and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.*
> *Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom* [wise spiritually], *whom we may appoint over this business.*

In verse 7, we see that solving the problem produced positive results.

> *Acts 6:7:*
> *And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples*
> *multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests*
> [Judeans in the Aramaic] *were obedient to the faith.*

In this record, we can see that problem solving is Biblical. Problem solving is also working through the details of a problem systematically. Problem solving is considering all sides of an issue; and it is an acquired skill that benefits employers, employees, and businesses as a whole.

Here is a simple method to help you with any problem that you face. As you go through the following steps, write out the answer to each one. This will help you organize your thoughts.

First, identify the problem. Specifically define what you believe is the main or central problem that needs to be solved.

Next, determine what caused the problem. It may seem like there are many causes, not just one. But, while there may be many contributing factors, there is generally one main cause of the problem. Once you are clear on the specific problem and the main cause, you can consider possible solutions.

Then, figure out different ways to solve the problem. Write down every possible solution you can think of. Don't be concerned if some of the ways to solve the problem aren't your top choice. Writing them all down will get you to the next stage, which is recommending a solution.

Finally, recommend one of the possible solutions. Having defined the problem, determined the cause of the problem, and considered the different ways it could be solved, which solution would you recommend? Be sure to include why you recommend it.

If we need to communicate to someone else about a problem and how to solve it, here are some tips for communicating to others:

- Use questions like who? what? when? where? why? and how? to help you add pertinent information at each step.

- When communicating, avoid grand statements like, "Everyone thinks...." Instead, use phrases like, "From my perspective...." This shows that you realize that others may have a different perspective of the problem, the cause, and the solution.
- Finally, be sure to consider all sides of the problem and the solution you are recommending; this may involve getting input from others.

Let's apply this method to the record in Acts 6. What was the problem? The Greek-speaking widows were being neglected in the daily ministration of goods (Acts 2:45; 4:35). What was the cause of the problem? When the Church was small, the apostles could handle this responsibility. But as the Church grew, it became too large for them to handle every day on top of their responsibilities to move the Word.

What were different ways to possibly solve the problem? (1) Have the apostles continue to handle the daily ministration, but neglect the movement of the Word. (2) Have the Greek-speaking disciples handle the daily ministration. (3) Have the Hebrew disciples handle the daily ministration. (4) Have the disciples (from both groups) choose seven men who were qualified to handle this responsibility.

So, which solution did the apostles choose? They chose to have the disciples (from both groups) choose representatives, seven qualified men to handle the responsibility. This solution pleased the whole multitude, solved the problem, and allowed them to move forward in unity.

Problem solving is Biblical; when applied to business, solving problems contributes to a business prospering. Business owners, managers, and employees can all contribute toward a business prospering by solving problems when they come up. Try this method the next time you are faced with a problem or challenge and expect God to work within you and prosper your business.