

GROUP RETREAT

Disciples who follow Jesus...

- Love other followers of Christ deeply. *John 13:34-35*
- Desire fellowship and community with other believers. *1 John 1:3*

...Therefore, your commitments are:

- Do this commitment page any weekend where your group spends at least 5 hours together.
- Spend the time as follows:
 - Video Workshop & Study Guide “[How to Solve Problems in Your Life](#)”, [Part 2](#) & [Part 3](#) with group exercise (about 2 hours)
 - Do something fun together
 - Eat together
 - Attend the weekly CV meeting, take notes, and write down at least one key truth that God brought to your attention

HOW TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

Discipleship Training Program, Hope Community Church
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I. A PERSPECTIVE ON TROUBLE

TROUBLE: a state or condition of distress, annoyance, inconvenience or difficulty: *in trouble*,

A Scriptural Perspective on Trouble:

- Troubles are a _____ of this life. *Job 5:7; Ecclesiastes 11:8*
- Life is _____; we do not know when troubles will occur. *Ecclesiastes 9:1; Proverbs 27:1; James 4:13-15*
- Troubles turn out to be a major source of our
- Faith Development *2 Corinthians 1:8-10*
- Growth In _____ *James 1:2-4; Romans 5:3-4*
- Incredible _____ As We Respond Rightly *2 Corinthians 4:16-18*
- Ministry To Others *2 Corinthians 1:5-10*
 - When we have been resistant to God, troubles often come to _____ and make us open to God and to learn his word. *Psalms 119:75-76; 119:67; 119:71*

Troubles can come from many sources:

Troubles often signal the existence of a PROBLEM.

II. UNDERSTANDING PROBLEMS

PROBLEM: any unsettled question or difficulty calling for a solution or causing concern.

The normal feelings that accompany a problem:
_____ and _____.

The **normal response** to a problem:
_____ and _____.

You feel...

"There is a situation here that we've got to do something about. It puts me under strain and stress. I feel upset and maybe a little bit angry. I'm worried and uncertain about what to do. Whatever I try doesn't seem to work. I am confused and puzzled over what to do."

The frequent **reaction** to problems: _____ or _____.

The usual **results**:
the problem _____.

PROBLEM OR OPPORTUNITY?

The Importance of Attitude and Perspective

OPPORTUNITY

1. *A favorable juncture of circumstances (the halt provided an opportunity for rest and refreshment)*
2. *A good chance for advancement or progress.*

Two attitudes toward trouble:

- Troubles are the swamp where _____.
- Troubles are the forerunner _____. *James 1:2-4*

TROUBLE: GOD'S OPPORTUNITY FOR ME _____.

FACTS ABOUT PROBLEMS:

Problems are usually not _____.

Problems tend to be one of two types _____ or _____.

For the first type, important words are:

- **Goal** the end toward which effort is directed; what one intends to accomplish or attain, often only by prolonged effort and hardship (*worked years to reach her goals*).
- **Solve** (from Latin *solvere* to loosen, as a knot) to find a solution, explanation, or answer for *solve a problem*, *solved the crime*
- **Resolve**: to deal with successfully.

For the second type, important words are:

- **Endure:** to put up with something trying or painful; to undergo (as a hardship) especially without giving in: continuing firm or resolute through trials and difficulties *endured years of rejection*.
- **Bear:** to move while holding up and supporting, sustaining without flinching or breaking *forced to bear a tragic loss*.
- **Cope:** to deal with and attempt to overcome problems and difficulties — often used with “with.”

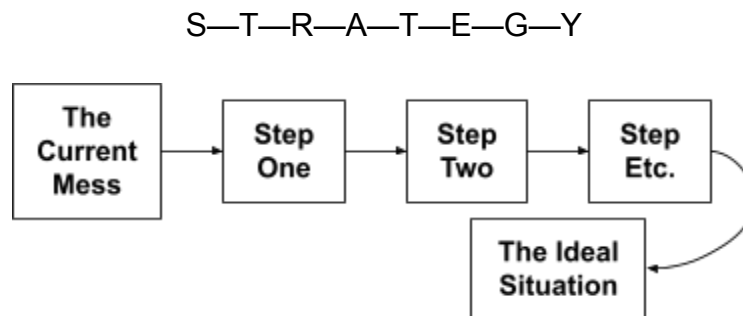
One way or the other, a person needs a _____, *a careful plan or method. Proverbs 14:8; 15; 22:3*

GENERAL OUTLINE FOR PROBLEM SOLVING:

1. **Pray for wisdom.** *James 1:5*
2. _____ the problem or the goal (opportunity).
Proverbs 18:13
3. Find _____ (usually 6) to solving the problem or exploiting the opportunity—get plenty of advice. *Proverbs 15:22*
4. **Select the best, based on prayer, study and advice.** *Proverbs 20:18; 24:5-6*
5. **Work out a strategy for implementation.**
6. _____ your way to the Lord. *Proverbs 16:3, 9*

III. BASIC TYPES OF STRATEGIES

One has to construct a way to go from the current mess to the “ideal.”



There are two broad categories of strategies:

_____ and _____.

ORIGINATION STRATEGIES
(What Caused This Situation?)

THE NATURE OF CAUSES

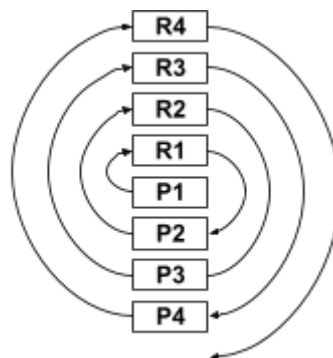
A. Problems are Multi-leveled:

- I. Presenting Problems (Symptoms—these are the “pains” that show up)
- II. Secondary Causes: (When these are treated, symptoms may temporarily disappear)
- III. Primary or Root Causes: When these are dealt with, the problem dries up.

B. How Problems Develop Over Time

P = Problem

R = Response



Like a _____ huge ball of snarled twine some problems must be unraveled _____ at a time.

C. Sources For Discovering Causes: Experience, Advice and

For example, dissension in a group (family, church, business) may flow from people who practice

- **Hatred** (Proverbs 10:12)
- **Pride / Lack of Teachability** (Proverbs 13:10)
- **Hot-temper** (Proverbs 15:18)
- **Quarrelsome** (Proverbs 26:21)
- **Perverse / Gossiper** (Proverbs 16:28)
- **Mocker** (Proverbs 29:8, 22:10)
- **Greed** (Proverbs 28:25)

DESTINATION STRATEGIES

(Where Do We Need To Go?)

A GAP ANALYSIS can help design a strategy for where to go: one asks

- **Where are we now?** Proverbs 13:16; 14:15
- **If we keep on going, where will we be in the next time frame** (days, months, years)?
- **Do we like that?**
- **If not, where do we want to go in the next amount of time** (days, months, years)?
- **What would we have to change** about what we are doing in order to get there by then?
- **What are the barriers to making these changes?**
- **How can we overcome them?**
- **If we cannot, how do we need to change our expectations such that we can improve, but can also accomplish the needed change?**
- **How can we prioritize our steps so that we can get going to where we want to be?**

A GOAL ANALYSIS can help improve the clarity of your strategy:

Goal: what you want to accomplish

Fuzzy: abstraction whose occurrence is not observable

Goal Analysis: an iterative process for sharply defining abstract goals in terms of observable events

THE STEPS OF GOAL ANALYSIS

1. Write down the goal in terms of results you want to accomplish.
 - Write it down
 - Check to make sure it describes an outcome rather than a process, so:
 - “have a favorable attitude toward carbuncles” rather than “learn to have a

favorable attitude toward carbuncles”

2. Jot down in words and phrases the performances that, if achieved, would cause you to agree the goal is achieved.

- Answer the question - How would we know if we had done this?
- At this point do not worry about duplication or fuzziness—just jot away!
- You might use one of 4 strategies:
 - Answer the question, “What evidence would prove that my goal has been achieved?”
 - If I had to sort between people who had done this and people who had not, what indicators would cause me to put a person in one pile or the other?
 - Suppose you were in charge of instructing the person who would determine the goal had or had not been met. How would he/she know the accomplishment of the goal has taken place? How would he know one (an accomplished goal) if he saw one?
 - Think of someone who is one or who has done this and write down why you think so.
 - Also, think of both positive performances you would want to see—and negative ones you wouldn’t want to see (non-examples).

3. Sort and trim:

- Sort out the jottings.
- Delete duplications and unwanted items.
- Note that the behaviors you write must be able to be performed by the people pursuing the goal
 - (for example, an individual can’t achieve a goal that talks about the performance of a group—or a group of students the performance of an institution over them -”reduce absenteeism.”)
- Trim any remaining fuzzies considered important (Re-do steps one and two repeatedly).

4. Write a complete statement for each performance:

- describing the nature, quality, or amount you will consider acceptable.
- coherent statements describing what you intend for each of the performances on your list.

5. Test the statements with the question, “If someone achieved or demonstrated each of these performances, would I be willing to say he has achieved the goal?”

- If the answer is no, you must decide what else is necessary before the list of performances is considered satisfactory.
- Critical minimum: Ask, “Is each of these performances necessary to say that the goal is accomplished?” Delete any unnecessary performances.
- When a list has been produced that satisfies you that the goal is accomplished, in which each performance is necessary, the Goal Analysis is complete.

IV. SOLVING RELATIONAL PROBLEMS

GUIDELINES

1. In general, solve your own problems, not those of others. *Proverbs 26:17*
2. Remove the _____ to communication.
3. Attack the *Problem* not the _____.
Proverbs 12:16; 14:3; 15:1; 15:4; 16:23; 12:18
4. Deal With Persons, not just Ideas or Issues.
 - The Prior Question Of Trust—my actions and words must be _____. *Proverbs 3:3-4; 16:6; 20:28*
 - Answer the other person’s important question: Am I _____? *Ecclesiastes 10:12*
5. It’s What’s right, not _____ right.
6. Know that Conflict is the result of someone not getting _____ want. *James 4:1-3*

USE THE “SIX RESPONSES” WISELY

The Six Responses: Judge, Instruct, Probe, Understand, Identify, and Support

Judge: _____ the wisdom, value, or correctness of a statement

Instruct: to educate or inform a person on a matter

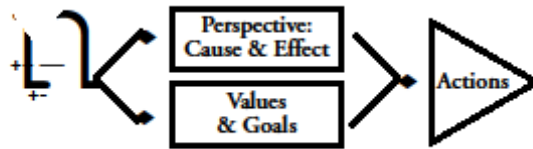
Probe: to try to get _____ information

Understand: to clarify what was said

Identify: Communicate that you have also have _____

Support: to communicate, not support for the statement, but for the person
We usually go “_____.” We need to go “_____.”

WHERE PERSONAL BEHAVIOR COMES FROM



Proverbs 20:11; Luke 6:45; Proverbs 23:7

Permanent behavior change usually requires a _____ in perspective and/or values.

V. GROUP PROBLEM SOLVING

Guidelines:

1. Usually one uses group problem solving when the solution must have strong loyalty from the group in order for it to succeed.
2. It may be that the leader would better serve the group by making the decision.
3. Clarify for the group at what level they will be involved in solving the problem.
4. If the group is going to be operating at the level of “Delegating” or “Joining,”
 - **The leader** must be determined that it is important enough to have group loyalty that he will definitely live with the group’s solution or the exercise will be exasperating for the group.
 - **The problem**
 - Must not be trivial, something that could easily be decided by one person.
 - It ought to be worthy of spending time and emotional energy on it.
 - **The group members** need to be effective in problem solving
 - Have some competence in the area of the problem.
 - Be relatively at peace with one another, otherwise the “problem solving” becomes a conflict.

GROUP PROBLEM SOLVING PROCEDURE:

- State what the problem to be solved is.
- Introduce the guidelines on the group interaction.
- Brainstorm without criticism.
- Pick the four or five best options as agreed on by the group.
- Choose the one(s) the group feels most appropriate.
- Establish a plan for implementation.
- If the group gets stuck in process, take time to pray, take a break, etc.

VI. IDENTIFYING WISE STRATEGY

The Three Dimensions Of Wisdom

Proverbs 8:12-14, 20-21



The Earmarks Of Godly Strategy

James 3:17-18

- **Pure:** it is clean, modest, and holy; it has one goal—to please God, not to please God and self.
- **Peaceable:** it looks for ways to be in unity and at peace, not at war.
- **Gentle/Considerate:** it is easy to question it for its supporting reasons and Scripture; it is appropriate in its approach, mild in its spirit and gentle in the way it handles people. It is not defensive, closed-minded or bull-headed.
- **Submissive:** it is compliant, obeys easily
- **Full of Mercy:** it has genuine compassion on others and desires to help them, especially those in difficulty (as one's opponents might be).
- **Good Fruits:** as the strategy is implemented, good things keep happening for people, not bad things.
- **Impartial:** it does not play favorites and treat people unfairly
- **Sincere** (without hypocrisy): it does not play pretend, it is not two-faced, but is direct and honest.

Earmarks of Demonic Strategy

James 3:15-16

- **Earthly:** It is “earth based” in its approach, functioning entirely out of secular approach; it is just what ordinary, unsaved people would do in this circumstance.
- **Unspiritual:** it has nothing in common with the Holy Spirit in the way it handles matters, lacking His fruit and His touch.
- **Demonic:** it is ultimately characteristic of the way the Enemy would handle things.
- **Envious:** It sets out to get what others have and is fueled by an angry hurt that others have what it wants and it does not.
- **Selfish Ambition:** It operates for selfish goals by secretly electioneering and jockeying for position.
- **Disorder:** as the strategy begins to be implemented, people become confused and the organization starts to fall apart.
- **Foul Practices:** not good results but all kinds of hurtful things (deeds) are done to people. Damage to people

THE FOOLISH APPROACH TO GETTING WHAT YOU WANT OUT OF LIFE

- **Pethee (6612):** keep on believing life is not that hard to figure out (Pr. 9:6)
- **Eveel (191):** become reactive, upset, demanding, stubborn, manipulative (Prov. 1:7, 7: 22,14:9, 15:5, 16:22, 20:3, 24:7)
- **Keseel (3684):** indulge in your lazy streak, don't bother to work hard, lie a little and keep on looking for the magic key that will let you score big in life. (Ps. 49:10, 92:6, 94:8, Pr. 1:22,32; 3:35, 8:5, 10:1, 18, 23; etc.)
- **Sawkal (5528/5530 - Cakal):** forget your responsibilities and go for fun in the moment (Gen 31:28, 1 Sam. 13:13, 26:21; 2 Sam 15:31,24:10; 1 Chron 21:8, 2 Chron, 16:9, Isa.44:25).
- **Halall (1984):** promote yourself; bully and threaten others to get attention and power (Ps. 5:5, 73:3, 75:4).
- **Naball (5036):** harden heart, sear your conscience and become out for yourself alone. Take what you want from others without concern; it's not your fault they are so stupid. (1 Sam. 25:25, Gen. 34:7)

[The words listed above are Hebrew words (OT) and the numbers are from Strong's Dictionary]