**Growing Pains can Lead to Problems & Praise!** God’s plan for serving people & solving problems efficiently & enthusiastically

**(Pastor John Mulligan)**

Acts 6:1-7 (ESV)

**Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution.  (2)  And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables.  (3)  Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.  (4)  But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."  (5)  And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch.  (6)  These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.  (7)  And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.**

**1) Notice the praise: External growth    (v. 1a)**

     *“Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number…”*  
  
**2) Notice the problem: Internal grumbling    (v. 1b)**  
  
     *“…a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution.*  
  
**3) Notice the priority: Preaching the word  (v. 2)**  
  
     *“And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said: It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables.”*  
  
**4) Notice the participation: All the Disciples    (v. 3)**  
  
     *“Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men…”*  
  
**5) Notice the prerequisites: Men of -      (v. 3b)**  
  
*“…of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.*  
  
            A.) good reputation  
  
            B.) full of the Spirit  
  
            C.) full of wisdom

**{James 3:13-18**

Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.  (14)  But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth.  (15)  This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.  (16)  For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.  (17)  But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.  (18) And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.}

**6) Notice the passion: Prayer, preaching, & participation pleased the people   (v. 4-5a)**  
  
     *“But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word. And what they said pleased the whole gathering…”*  
  
**7) Notice the procedure: Church family chooses – leaders affirm/ordain      (v. 5b-6)**  
  
      *“…and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. 6These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.”*  
  
**8) Notice the potential:  The word shared results in salvation & obedience (v. 7)**  
  
     *“And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.*