

**DEALING WITH PROBLEMS
IN RELATIONSHIPS**

Key Verse:

James 2:8

⁸ If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," you are doing well.

**1. Acknowledge
Mistreatment of Others**
Nehemiah 5:1-8

¹ Now there was a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brothers. ² For there were those who said, "We, our sons and our daughters are many; therefore let us get grain that we may eat and live." ³ There were others who said, "We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards and our houses that we might get grain because of the famine." ⁴ Also there were those who said, "We have borrowed money for the king's tax *on* our fields and our vineyards. ⁵ "Now our flesh is like the flesh of our brothers, our children like their children. Yet behold,

we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters are forced into bondage *already*, and we are helpless because our fields and vineyards belong to others."

⁶ Then I was very angry when I had heard their outcry and these words. ⁷ I consulted with myself and contended with the nobles and the rulers and said to them, "You are exacting usury, each from his brother!" Therefore, I held a great assembly against them. ⁸ I said to them, "We according to our ability have redeemed our Jewish brothers who were sold to the nations; now would you even sell your brothers that they may be sold to us?" Then they were silent and could not find a word *to say*.

Q1: In what way do you show compassion to people who come into your life?

Q2: Why do Christians sometimes fail to view struggling people with compassionate eyes?

2. Correct Injustices
Nehemiah 5:9-13

⁹ Again I said, "The thing which you are doing is not

good; should you not walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies? ¹⁰ "And likewise I, my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Please, let us leave off this usury. ¹¹ "Please, give back to them this very day their fields, their vineyards, their olive groves and their houses, also the hundredth *part* of the money and of the grain, the new wine and the oil that you are exacting from them." ¹² Then they said, "We will give *it* back and will require nothing from them; we will do exactly as you say." So I called the priests and took an oath from them that they would do according to this promise. ¹³ I also shook out the front of my garment and said, "Thus may God shake out every man from his house and from his possessions who does not fulfill this promise; even thus may he be shaken out and emptied." And all the assembly said, "Amen!" And they praised the LORD. Then the people did according to this promise.

Q1: How do you honor the spiritual leadership that God has placed over you?

Q2: Why do we often fail to learn from the mistakes of the past?

3. Set a Godly Example
Nehemiah 5:14-19

¹⁴ Moreover, from the day that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, *for* twelve years, neither I nor my kinsmen have eaten the governor's food *allowance*. ¹⁵ But the former governors who were before me laid burdens on the people and took from them bread and wine besides forty shekels of silver; even their servants domineered the people. But I did not do so because of the fear of God. ¹⁶ I also applied myself to the work on this wall; we did not buy any land, and all my servants were gathered there for the work. ¹⁷ Moreover, *there were* at my table one hundred and fifty Jews and officials, besides those who came to us from the nations that were around us. ¹⁸ Now that

MONDAY:

Justice and Mercy
Commanded

Exodus 23:1-9

1 "You shall not bear a false report; do not join your hand with a wicked man to be a malicious witness. 2 "You shall not follow the masses in doing evil, nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after a multitude in order to pervert justice; 3 nor shall you be partial to a poor man in his dispute.

4 "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey wandering away, you shall surely return it to him. 5 "If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying helpless under its load, you shall refrain from leaving it to him, you shall surely release it with him.

6 "You shall not pervert the justice due to your needy brother in his dispute. 7 "Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent or the righteous, for I will not acquit the guilty.

8 "You shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of the just.

9 "You shall not oppress a stranger, since you yourselves know the feelings of a stranger, for you also were strangers in the land of Egypt.

TUESDAY:

Trust God for Justice

1 Samuel 24:8-15

⁸ Now afterward David arose and went out of the cave and called after Saul, saying, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the ground and prostrated himself. ⁹ David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of men, saying, 'Behold, David seeks to harm you'?" ¹⁰ "Behold, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD had given you today into my hand in the cave, and some said to kill you, but *my eye* had pity on you; and I said, 'I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD'S anointed.' ¹¹ "Now, my father, see! Indeed, see the edge of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the edge of your robe and did not kill you, know and

perceive that there is no evil or rebellion in my hands, and I have not sinned against you, though you are lying in wait for my life to take it. ¹² "May the LORD judge between you and me, and may the LORD avenge me on you; but my hand shall not be against you. ¹³ "As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Out of the wicked comes forth wickedness'; but my hand shall not be against you. ¹⁴ "After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog, a single flea? ¹⁵ "The LORD therefore be judge and decide between you and me; and may He see and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand."

WEDNESDAY:

God Judges Injustice

Malachi 2:17 - 3:6

^{2:17} You have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet you say, "How have we wearied *Him*?" In that you say, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and He delights

in them," or, "Where is the God of justice?"

^{3:1} "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts. ² "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. ³ "He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness. ⁴ "Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years. ⁵ "Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, the widow and the orphan, and those who turn

aside the alien and do not fear Me," says the LORD of hosts. ⁶"For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

THURSDAY:

Instructions for Correcting
Wrongs

Matthew 18:15-17

¹⁵ "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.

¹⁶ "But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that **BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.** ¹⁷ "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

FRIDAY:

Solving a Church Problem

Acts 6:1-7

¹ Now at this time while the disciples were increasing *in number*, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic *Jews* against the *native* Hebrews, because

their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving *of food*. ² So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. ³ "Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. ⁴ "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." ⁵ The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas , a proselyte from Antioch. ⁶ And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them. ⁷ The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

SATURDAY:

Follow Christ's Example

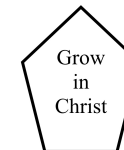
1 Peter 2:19-23

¹⁹ For this *finds* favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer *for it* you patiently endure it, this *finds* favor with God.

Christ Is Our Example

²¹ For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, ²² **WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH;** ²³ and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously;

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Mathis, Texas
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Adult English Class
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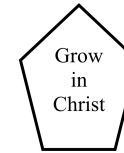
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1. What is the condition of your relationship with others?

2. Prayerfully consider your relationships and be careful to submit your heart to the will of God.

3. Demonstrate care and concern for others and consider the needs of others as more important than your own.

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