Problem Solving from a Biblical Perspective

Carlo Ramos

Go Business 200

G JvRensburg

3 October 2025

Problem Solving from a Biblical Perspective

Introduction

Every human being faces problems. Whether in the realm of business, family, or personal growth, problems are woven into the human experience. Yet how one defines and responds to problems determines whether they lead to ruin or to maturity. From a biblical perspective, problems are not merely unfortunate disruptions of life; rather, they are God-ordained opportunities to strengthen character, deepen obedience, and reveal destiny. Katherine Gallagher and Dennis Peacocke, in GoBusiness200: Lesson 15, Problem Solving, Parts I & II, argue that "power is guarded by problems," suggesting that true leadership and maturity cannot develop apart from learning to overcome difficulties. This essay explores the nature of problems, God's purposes in them, biblical examples of problem solving, and practical applications for believers today.

The Nature of Problems

At its most basic definition, a problem is "something difficult to deal with; a source of trouble or worry." The Bible presents the reality that problems existed even before the Fall of humanity. In Genesis 2:19–20, Adam is tasked with naming the animals—a challenge requiring observation, discernment, and decision-making. This indicates that problems were originally intended as exercises to strengthen humanity's God-given capacities. After the Fall, however, problems took on a new dynamic. The curse brought toil, frustration, and resistance into human labor (Gen. 3:17–19). Work became marked by "thorns and thistles," a picture of opposition and difficulty.

Proverbs 24:30–34 paints a vivid metaphor of a neglected field overtaken by weeds. The implication is that "nothing" is required for problems to multiply—passivity naturally produces decay. Problems are not anomalies but the natural condition of a fallen world. Therefore, the Christian response must not be avoidance but engagement.

Another important truth is that God remains sovereign over all human affairs. Problems are never outside of His providential care. They serve not to destroy believers but to develop them. As Paul reminds in Romans 8:28, God works all things—even the most perplexing challenges—for the good of those who love Him. Problems also expose the complications of disobedience. When people violate God's natural or moral laws, the result is disorder and pain. Thus, problems often become the "voice" that calls people back to alignment with divine principles.

Finally, problems are universal. They transcend gender, culture, time, and status. Whether rich or poor, male or female, young or old, every person experiences trouble.

This universality provides Christians with an opportunity to stand out. While the world often responds with despair or self-reliance, the believer can model hope, perseverance, and faith in God. Revelation 2:26 promises, “To the one who conquers and continues in my works until the end, I will give authority over the nations.” Overcoming problems thus becomes the pathway to spiritual authority.

God’s Purposes in Problems

God designs problems to empower His people. First, problems can act as a doorway to destiny. Joseph’s betrayal by his brothers, slavery in Egypt, and unjust imprisonment became stepping-stones to his ultimate role as governor, preserving nations during famine (Gen. 50:20). Similarly, Esther’s crisis of facing Haman’s genocidal plot positioned her to deliver Israel. In both cases, problems became the crucible through which God elevated His people to influence.

Second, problems direct people toward obedience and repentance. In Judges, Israel repeatedly turned back to God when pressed by surrounding enemies. Trouble awakens the recognition of sin and the need for divine mercy. Without problems, human pride can lead to independence from God; with them, humility is cultivated.

Third, problems highlight dependence on God. Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” is a clear example. In 2 Corinthians 12:7–9, Paul pleads for deliverance, yet God responds, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Instead of removing the problem, God uses it to teach Paul reliance on divine strength.

Fourth, problems foster intimacy with God. Struggles become places where believers experience God’s presence in unique ways. David’s psalms of lament illustrate that pain can deepen fellowship with God. By inviting God into the process of problem solving, believers find that the Lord not only delivers but also walks with them through difficulty.

Biblical Examples of Problem Solving

The Scriptures are rich with examples of God’s people navigating problems. Joseph exemplifies perseverance and faith in adversity. Rather than succumbing to bitterness, he recognized God’s providence, declaring to his brothers, “You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good” (Gen. 50:20). His perspective reframed the problem as part of God’s redemptive plan.

Esther demonstrates courage in confronting problems. When faced with the annihilation of her people, she risked her life by approaching the king, declaring, “If I perish, I perish” (Esth. 4:16). Her problem was not avoided but embraced, leading to deliverance.

Paul provides a New Testament model. His missionary journeys were riddled with opposition, imprisonment, and hardship. Yet he considered his sufferings as opportunities for the advancement of the gospel (Phil. 1:12–14). For Paul, problems were not hindrances but catalysts for ministry.

Ultimately, Christ Himself embodies the supreme example of problem solving. The cross was the greatest problem in history—humanity's sin and separation from God. Through His obedience and sacrifice, Jesus transformed the problem of sin into the solution of salvation. Every Christian approach to problem solving must therefore be rooted in the example of Christ.

Practical Applications for Believers

If problems are both inevitable and purposeful, how should Christians approach them? First, believers must cultivate a redemptive view of problems. Rather than asking, "Why me?" the better question is, "Lord, what are You teaching me through this?" This perspective turns difficulties into opportunities for growth.

Second, Christians should integrate biblical wisdom into problem solving. Scripture emphasizes patience, counsel, and prayer as essential tools. Proverbs 15:22 states, "Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed." Wise problem solving requires humility to seek input from others.

Third, in the business context, problems should be viewed as strategic opportunities. Just as Joseph managed famine with foresight and stewardship, Christian professionals are called to handle organizational challenges with integrity, creativity, and reliance on God's principles. In doing so, they provide a testimony to the watching world of how faith informs work.

Finally, believers must remember that overcoming problems develops authority and maturity. Each victory builds spiritual resilience, preparing the believer for greater responsibility in God's kingdom. Problems are not obstacles to avoid but stepping-stones toward destiny.

Conclusion

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible consistently presents problems not as accidents but as instruments of God's design. They existed before the Fall as opportunities for growth, and after the Fall, they became even more essential to human development. God uses problems to shape character, direct obedience, deepen dependence, and reveal destiny. Biblical figures like Joseph, Esther, and Paul exemplify the truth that those who embrace problems with faith can see God's redemptive purposes unfold. For Christians today, problem solving is more than a practical skill—it is a spiritual discipline. As Gallagher and Peacocke emphasize, power is indeed "guarded by problems." To overcome them is to step into the authority, maturity, and intimacy with God that He desires for His people.

Bibliography

Gallagher, Katherine, and Dennis Peacocke. GoBusiness200: Lesson 15, Problem Solving, Parts I & II

Holy Bible, English Standard Version.

Turabian