



## **BLS200 SECTION IV: Solving Problems God's Way**





## SECTION IV – LESSON #15

**SUMMARY:**

This lesson provides an introduction to approaching the problems and obstacles we experience as a part of our daily lives and businesses from a biblical perspective. It will inspire you to begin to see problems as opportunities to experience the life of God rather than as inconveniences to be avoided.

**MAIN LESSON IDEAS:**

- Problems are designed by God to promote us, protect us, enlighten us, and change us.
- Effective and consistent problem-solving requires the use of certain standard questions and concepts.
- The relational, conceptual, and executional dimensions of problem-solving require the methodical application of our tools in a disciplined manner.
- Consistent, effective problem-solving requires that we diagram out the problem and apply the “seven rules” as well.

# Understanding the Basics of Problem Solving

by Dennis Peacocke

- I. God’s purposes for problems (1 Tim. 3:4; Rev. 2:26)
  - A. Problems are designed by God to empower us.
    1. They teach us to recognize the complications arising from disobeying God and breaking spiritual or natural laws.
    2. They teach us dependence on God as we learn to analyze them, apply the correct antidote to them, and take a new redemptive direction from them.
    3. Problems, though usually caused by violation of a law, can also be used by God to lead to a whole new direction for us. Examples: the Cross; the split between Paul and Barnabas.
    4. Power is guarded by problems; one of the “benefits” God has ordained is that, in a fallen world, *growth is always accompanied by an increase of resistance.*

5. As the ekklesia, we are called to be rulers and to produce rulers.
- B. A redemptive view of problems is essential for good leadership.
1. Problems promote or bind us, depending on how we respond to them.
  2. Problems guard us from touching new levels of responsibility until we are ready. Examples: moth's outer cocoon; Moses' isolation in the desert; Israel's sojourn in the desert (Ex. 13:17) (toughening and preparing them).
  3. Problems reveal what is really in us, and "where we're really at" under pressure.
  4. Problems will radically increase the necessity for ruling skills, as our economy and culture undergo serious reformation and judgment.
  5. Problems force us to understand and apply, with excellence, both leadership (the power of a compelling vision that unifies and motivates) and management (the planned ordering and application of people's assignments, skills, and cooperation, so as to achieve with excellence the goals and spirit of their organization)
  6. Problems reveal that the issue of personal and organizational transformation is all about problem-solving. Life in a fallen world is really about working out in "God's Gym" called life. Our most basic and essential series, "Living Life God's Way," is designed to introduce us to the four basic goals we believe God has for all His rulers-in-training.

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<b>Diagram #1: Producing Problem-Solvers Where We Work</b>	
<p><b>We must have a redemptive view of problems.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We must accept problems as an opportunity to grow as leaders.</li> <li>2. We must accept and appreciate that problems show us things about ourselves, others, and situations that are "hidden" until the problems reveal them.</li> <li>3. We must see that the Bible is a book about problem-solvers (God, Abraham, Joseph, David, Daniel, Deborah, Jesus, Paul, etc.).</li> <li>4. Paul gives us a clear example of a redemptive attitude toward problem-solving:</li> <li>5. Phil. 2:5-11 — The way up is often down</li> <li>6. Phil. 4:11-13 — Exalted or abased</li> <li>7. 1 Cor. 11:19— Problems reveal the true leaders</li> </ol>	<p><b>We must be producing "problem-solvers."</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Beginning at home: spouse, children, extended family</li> <li>2. Through our spheres of influence with our church, work, friends, and as citizens.</li> <li>3. Discipling a nation (Mt. 28:18-20) is a massive problem-solving job which will prepare us all to judge the earth (1 Cor 6:1-5).</li> <li>4. Capital creation and productivity is released through successful problem solving.</li> </ol>

7. Problem solving is an essential part of the four basic pillars of our message.
  - a. Strategic Living: the awareness and the life-style which are produced by working with God, accepting His sovereignty, and planning where you want to go.
  - b. Leadership Training: learning to think and act like a leader.
  - c. Christian Worldview: seeing all the issues of life from a biblical point of view.
  - d. Generational Transfer: living in a biblical relationship of continuity with the generations that surround us.
  
8. In regard to the issue of generational transfer, one of the assignments of God to all of us is to serve God's purposes for our generation (Acts 13:36).
  - a. In our case we are living in the West in the "post-modern" world. That world is characterized by –
    - the end of ideology
    - Nihilism (life is meaningless, with no absolutes)
    - de-constructionism (all social institutions are to be questioned, and their authority structures removed, if possible)
  - b. The Christian problem-solver's job is to fulfill Isaiah 58:12 (NAS):
 

And those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins;  
 You will raise up the age-old foundations;  
 And you will be called the repairer of the breach,  
 The restorer of the streets in which to dwell.
  - c. It would be well worth your time to consider developing and making available some pro-family, Kingdom material to employees who may desire it on a voluntary basis.
  - d. Whoever creates capital and jobs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will lead it!

II. An overview of how to approach basic problem solving

**Diagram #2: The Overview of Problem Solving**

Here we are.

1. **Where are we?**
2. **What are the feedback systems saying?**
3. **Who are my most proven problem-solvers, and what are they saying?**
4. **What prejudices are in me and in others that may be clouding our judgment?**
5. **Is this a "divine interruption" or just a normal problem?**
6. **What kind of help do I need to solve this problem?**

Where do we want to go?

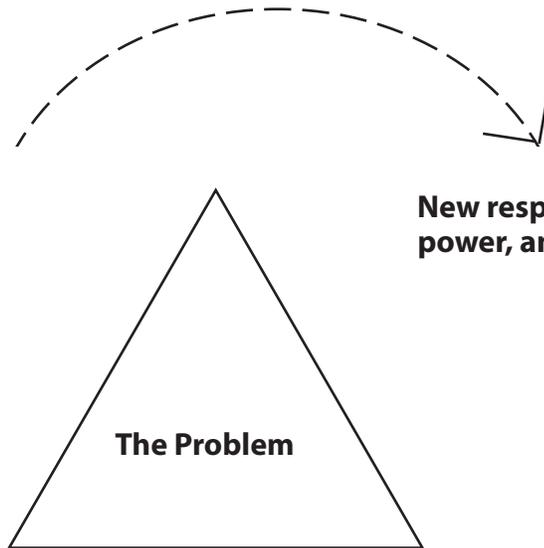
1. **Is the biblical foundation and vision of the person, group, or organization clear?**
2. **Is the problem presenting a threat to that vision, and if so, what is the threat?**
3. **Is the problem revealing a lack of elasticity in the purpose of the organization, and if so, how should we solve it?**
4. **Is the proposed resolution of the problem consistent with our historical purposes and policies?**

What must we overcome to get there?

1. **Let's examine the problem:**
  - **What is our agenda for solving the problem?**
  - **What is the perceived agenda of the people in the problem?**
2. **What are the relational, conceptual, and executional issues involved in the problem?**
3. **Is the problem a "wake-up call"? For whom? Are we awake yet? Are we ready to learn?**
4. **How will we leverage the solution to educate others in the organization and upgrade everyone's skills?**

**Diagram #3: The Three Things Problem Solving Requires Us to Learn**

1. **Problem analysis (symptoms v. root issues)**
2. **Resource analysis (tools required to solve the problem)**
3. **Character analysis (what character skills are required?)**



## III. The major dynamics of problems (causes)

- A. Problems have a relational dynamic (the first place to look toward resolution is here). We will continue to focus on relational skills, especially how to make disciples where we work.
1. Human personalities, with both personal and group dynamics, are by nature problematic.
  2. Inappropriate responses cause problems: under-reaction, overreaction, wrong reaction. Our responses must be trained.
  3. A “rights” v. responsibility relational base (a vision problem) causes problems.
  4. An unstable or fearful work atmosphere (a managerial problem) causes problems. Faith and fear are incompatible.
  5. People doing jobs they are unqualified or improperly attuned to do causes problems.
- B. Problems have a conceptual dynamic, i.e., what people do not properly understand concerning their task. Here are some of the possible issues:
1. The purpose of the task isn't clear (a management problem) to the people involved.
  2. The person's (or department's) understanding of how their function and product fits into the whole vision of the organization is unclear (a leadership problem).
  3. The communication resources have obviously not been properly applied:
    - a. The vision hasn't been expressed clearly enough or written (Hab. 2:2) or reinforced (Deut. 6:7-9).
    - b. The authority of those leading the vision isn't properly working.
      - Improper or absence of commissioning (authority, faith)
    - c. The boundaries of the tasks have not been secured, which creates anger, frustration, inefficiency, and presumption (2 Cor. 10:13-15; Ps. 131).
- C. Problems have an executional dynamic as well, and this is where people usually place blame for all the problems.
1. The resources or tools are inadequate or are being improperly used.
  2. The people doing the job are not sufficiently trained.

### IV. The disciplines required of the problem solver

- A. Problem solving requires intellectual, emotional, and physical discipline.
  - 1. Problems require proper amounts of time investment to solve and prevent further reoccurrences. How much time will this problem likely take to resolve?
  - 2. Problems force us to marshal, control, and correctly apply all of our resources to them (discipline).
- B. Good problem solvers must—
  - 1. Lead by example (clarity of vision, concepts, relational poise, and authority).
  - 2. Lead and correct by reinforcement of the agreements and standards (v. fear, threats, coercion). The rules v. preferences must be very clear.
  - 3. Recognize the problems caused by an undisciplined anointing or engiftment. Satan is a classic example of this problem.
  - 4. Clearly understand and practice the reality that discipline is a by-product of the motivation instilled through vision (Heb. 12).
  - 5. Function in the Holy Spirit in your calling at work so as to engage God's resources.

### V. The seven basic rules of problem solving

- A. Dealing with problems properly always takes more time than we think; factor in plenty of time.
- B. Question #1: Who is responsible to solve the problem?
- C. Question #2: With whom is the problem?
- D. Question #3: Diagram the problem:
  - 1. The relational nature of the problem (factor in any vested interests)
  - 2. The conceptual nature of the problem: Who doesn't understand what?
  - 3. The executional nature of the problem: Who is doing what wrong?
  - 4. Should you isolate this problem or integrate it into other issues (leveraging other problems to be solved with it)?
  - 5. Have you factored in your own biases and engiftment perspectives?

- E. Learn how to recognize problems that are outside of your sphere (Ps. 131).
- F. Build a balanced council to help solve problems, if at all possible (Prov. 11:14).
- G. Some “unsolvable problems” are often a sign to go back to a past, wrong decision or to alert us to a paradigm shift.

VI. Some major concepts that are in play in solving problems God’s way:

- A. There is no biblical separation of spirit and matter in terms of keeping our “spiritual lives” separate from our “normal lives.”
- B. We must live and operate in faith where we work and are called to minister.
- C. We must have a Christian worldview in terms of people, organizations, and concepts of reality.
- D. Building a business is about building people, because God builds relationally.
- E. Transformation begins with us, and that which is not growing is dying.