Tackle Tough Situations . LifeGroups @ Central

How can I best tackle tough situations in biblical ways?

Background: Paul, and later Titus, addressed several problems. First, the young church in Corinth was divided about lifestyle issues. Second, false teachers didn't like some of the teachings of Jesus and they sought to discredit Paul by spreading rumors about him. And a third problem was that Paul and Titus saw opportunity to resolve the ongoing division between Jewish and Gentile Christians. As we move into today's text, we see that the action they took resulted in changed hearts and reconciled relationships! How they dealt with difficult situations gives us an example of how *we can make a difference* when we face problems.

Face Problems Head-On (2 Cor. 7:6-9, 13b-15)

1. (Just for fun!) When faced difficult situations, I respond like:
    A. **an ostrich:** denial, sticking my head in the sand
    B. **an eagle:** take flight as quickly as possible
    C. **a tiger:** turn to attack
    D. **a grizzly:** seek to kill!
    E. **a kuala bear:** overlook
    F. **a mountain sheep:** hammer out some arbitration
    G. **a donkey:** no budge
    H. **a contented cow:** let's negotiate
    I. other _____

2. Name some potential consequences of avoiding a problem?

3. In these verses, Titus meets up with Paul shortly after dealing 'head-on" with the problems in Corinth. How do the Corinthian Christians feel about Paul now? How is Paul feeling? Titus?

4. What might we learn about conflict resolution among Christians from Paul's example?

5. What do we learn about God? What has He done? What is His desire?

Take the Initiative (2 Cor. 8:6, 16-17, 23)

Background: The Gentile churches, one of which was the church in Corinth, had been collecting money to assist the impoverished Jewish church in Jerusalem. However, the Corinthian church stopped collecting while the others had already finished their collection. Now that reconciliation has occurred between Paul and the church in Corinth, he again enlists and sends Titus to encourage the church in Corinth to finish the collection ("*this act of grace*") they had begun. Paul took the initiative to "make a difference" by addressing the ongoing problem of division between the Jewish and Gentile Christians. Paul's desire was to bring healing between them. The Corinthian Christians need to experience the "grace of giving" (8:7) as much as the Jerusalem Christians needed the help.

1. Why is taking the initiative sometimes difficult? What are some reasons why we hesitate to take the initiative to solve problems that involve ourselves? Other people's problems?

2. What qualities do we discover about Titus in verses 16-17? How might these characteristics "make a difference" in motivating the church in Corinth to respond?

Complete Unfinished Tasks (Titus 1:5, 10-11: 2:15; 3:14)

Background: When Paul needed to deal with problems in the church in Corinth, Titus gets the call. When dealing with the offering for the poor once again Paul turned to his trusted friend Titus. Later,

Paul needed someone to pastor the churches on the island of Crete. Again, he knew exactly who he could count on to be their shepherd. In Paul's letter to Titus, Paul provides clues as to the nature of the unfinished business to which Titus must give his attention.

1. "The work of the church is never finished. We never wake up to discover all tasks finished, all ministries fulfilled, all instruction finished, all the training completed." How does that reality make you feel? Exhausted? Challenged? Other? Why?

2. Discuss the possible benefits and results of Paul and Titus' perseverance and trust in God to make a difference while working through some difficult situations?

Care and Prayer: How can we help one another through prayer?

Do you know someone who is facing a difficult situation? What can you do to comfort them?

Do you need God's wisdom and power to tackle a difficult situation?