

## CHAPTER 5

# What Can I Do About My Problems?

### (Part 2)

In the last chapter we saw the need to label our problems correctly. We must first decide whether a problem is real or imaginary. And, if it is a real problem, what *kind* of problem is it? Is it a physical problem? A mental problem? A spiritual problem? A social problem? An economic problem?

Now we are ready to ask another important question, "WHO DOES THIS PROBLEM BELONG TO?" Sometimes we worry about problems that do not even belong to us! This question brings us to our second point.

### 2. I Need To Correctly Connect The Problems.

I must ask myself this question: HOW IS THIS PROBLEM CONNECTED TO ME? Does this problem relate to me *directly* or *indirectly* or not at all? Does this problem belong to me, or does it belong to someone else? In what way is this problem connected to me?

Consider these two problems:

1. There is a burglary five houses down from where you live, and the police are now there to investigate.
2. There is a burglary which has taken place at *your* house and the police are now there to investigate.

Are both of these real problems? \_\_\_\_\_ Which of these problems is more closely connected to you? \_\_\_\_\_ Which of these problems would naturally be of more concern to you? \_\_\_\_\_

There are many things that happen around us which are not directly connected to us. During the past year or two, have there been any fires in your town? Have there been any fires on your street? Has there been a fire in your house? Think of the hospital near where you live. Have there been many operations performed in this hospital during the past year? Do you have any friends or neighbors who had an operation in this hospital during the past year? Did anyone in your family have an operation during the past year? Did you have an operation?

In Luke 13:4 the Lord Jesus made mention of a tower located in Jerusalem which fell one day and crushed some people to death. How many people were directly connected to this tragic problem (and lost their lives because of it)? \_\_\_\_\_ Can you think of those who would have been indirectly connected to this tragic event (such as wives who lost husbands or parents who lost children, etc.)? What about the great majority of people living in Jerusalem? Did this problem belong to them? \_\_\_\_\_

Suppose your friend gets sick with a bad cold. Is this his problem or your problem?

\_\_\_\_\_ A person might worry and think, "I'm afraid I am going to catch that cold from my friend, and tomorrow I'll be sick too!" Does Jesus want us to worry about tomorrow (Matthew 6:34)? \_\_\_\_\_ Are there many problems we worry about which never really become problems at all? \_\_\_\_\_ **DON'T CLAIM TOMORROW'S PROBLEMS UNTIL TOMORROW BECOMES TODAY!**

Suppose you hear on the news that a hurricane is headed toward your state and may arrive in three days. Does this mean you need to hide and find shelter three days ahead of time? \_\_\_\_\_ Are there some things that may need to be done in preparation for the storm, in order to prepare

the house to withstand the winds? \_\_\_\_\_ When is this storm really a problem *for* you -- when you hear the news three days before or when the hurricane is actually passing through?

---

*When* is God our HELPER according to Psalm 46:1 and Psalm 107:6,13,19? (Before the trouble comes, in the trouble, or after the trouble is over?) \_\_\_\_\_

Suppose you turn on the radio and hear this shocking news:

*Iran has invaded Israel.* Is this a real problem (assuming the news is true)? Would this problem be felt all over the world? \_\_\_\_\_ Does this problem really belong to you? Did Russia invade your country? Have Russian soldiers entered your state and town? \_\_\_\_\_ Does the problem of the Iranian invasion of Israel affect you right now? Could you go to bed and sleep that night even though you have heard this shocking news?

Can you think of times when you have worried about a problem which was not even connected to you? Can you think of times when you have worried about a future problem (something you thought would happen in the future) which turned out not to be a problem at all? I need to make a difference between those problems that belong to me and those problems which do not.

Another question that I must ask myself is this: CAN I DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE PROBLEM OR NOT? There are some problems that we can and *should* do something about. There are other problems that we can't and shouldn't do anything about.

God said that there would be seven years of famine in the land of Egypt (Genesis 41:30-31). This famine was a real problem for Joseph and Pharaoh and all the Egyptians. Was there anything Joseph could do to stop the famine from coming? \_\_\_\_\_ Was there anything Joseph and Pharaoh could do to prepare for the famine (Genesis 41:33-36)?

Zacchaeus was not very tall (Luke 19:3), and in some ways his lack of height was a problem to him. Was there anything he could do to grow a few inches taller? What was something he could do (Luke 19:4)? \_\_\_\_\_

Think of the problems of WAR (see Matthew 24:6) and POVERTY (see Matthew 26:11). Is there anything you can do *to bring* an end to these problems? \_\_\_\_\_ Is there anything Christ can do *to bring* an end to these problems (see Isaiah 2:4)? \_\_\_\_\_ Should we expect these problems to be solved before Christ returns to earth as KING? \_\_\_\_\_ WHY NOT?

Sometimes there are problems which do not belong to you, but there is something you *can* and *should* do about them. Read Luke 10:30-35. The priest and Levite may have seen the wounded man and thought something like this: "That's his problem, not mine. I'm thankful those robbers did not get me!" True, it was not their problem, but was there something they could do about the problem?

Can you think of a problem that was not your problem (it was someone else's problem), but there was something that you could and should have done to help this person? Can you think of a time when you tried to do something about a problem when there was really nothing that you could or should have done?

May God help us to see which problems really belong to us. May God help us to see which burdens *we alone must bear* (Galatians 6:5) and which burdens *we ought to share* (Galatians 6:2). May God help us to see which problems we can *do something about* and which problems we can *do nothing about*. May God help us to see which problems we can help others with:

**"As we have therefore \_\_\_\_\_ let us do \_\_\_\_\_ unto \_\_\_\_\_ men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10).**