

Teamwork in the Local Church
Lesson Five: Facing Great Challenges Together
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Introduction: How Do You Climb a “Great Mountain”?

- A. Like mountain climbing, sometimes Christians face great challenges that can be difficult to overcome.
- B. Yet even the smallest seed of faith has the potential to grow and enlarge, enabling us to take on any challenge of life (**Mat. 17:14-21; cf. Mark 4:31-32**).
- C. Putting our faith in God involves working together with God’s people.
 - 1. The Lord does not want us to face our challenges alone, but to gain necessary comfort from one another (**2 Cor. 1:3-7**).
 - 2. Just as reaching the top of a mountain requires teamwork, so often does challenges of faithfulness call for teamwork.
 - 3. The bigger the challenge ahead of us, the more we may need to lean on one another for strength and courage.

I. Facing Great Challenges Requires Faith and “Vision.”

- A. The work the Lord has called His church to do is very substantial.
 - 1. Evangelism (teaching the lost the gospel) (**Mat. 28:18-20**).
 - 2. Edifying (building up) the church (**Eph. 4:16**).
 - 3. Benevolence (charity, good will) for needy saints (**Acts 2:42-45**).
 - 4. The work God has called us to do is challenging, yet with the help of God who works in us, we can do it! (**Eph. 3:20-21**).
- B. To achieve this work, we must maintain faith and “vision.”
 - 1. Nothing God has asked us to do is impossible for us to achieve if we will just believe! (**Mat. 17:20**).
 - 2. Our faith grows stronger by hearing God’s word (**Rom. 10:17**).
 - 3. The Bible was given to us so we could envision God’s plan for us and prosper spiritually (**Prov. 29:18**; “vision” / revelation).
 - 4. God’s Word is like a vision that illuminates our path and gives us the direction we need to be successful as a local church (**Ps. 119:105**).
 - 5. When we do not maintain faith and vision, the church will not grow, but instead it will surely die (**Prov. 19:16 / Rev. 3:1-3; Rev. 2:5**).
 - 6. For our future growth and prosperity, faith, love, and hope must reign in our hearts and be demonstrated by our works (**1 Thes. 1:2-3**).

II. Facing Great Challenges Requires Teamwork.

A. A united team

1. A church that is united, that cooperates with one another and supports one another as partners in Christ, has great strength (**Eccl. 4:9-10**).
2. Example: To combat the influence of false doctrines, a unified membership in the truth is very effective (**Eph. 4:14-16**).
3. Example: Achieving church growth requires in part a unified effort (**1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Thes. 1:8; Eph. 4:16**).
4. Example: Unity is essential to restoring the erring brother or sister in Christ or administering church discipline (**Mat. 18:15-17; 2 Thes 3:6, 14**).
5. Unpleasant or troublesome challenges that may confront the church must be addressed in a unified way (e.g., **Titus 3:10-11; 3 John 9-10**).

B. Walking together in wisdom

1. Example: Great zeal to reach the lost is good, but not at the cost of wisdom or truth (cf. **Rom. 10:2**).
2. Example: Many churches have been over zealous to appoint elders or overseers even when there are no men qualified (**1 Tim. 3:1-7**).
3. In every work the church does, caution and wisdom must be followed (**Eph. 5:15-17**); brethren must take the time to understand God's will.

C. Determined to "see things through" (Perseverance)

1. How long does it take for a church to grow? How long does it take to restore the erring brother? How long does it take to teach the lost? Etc.
2. Instead of giving up easily when the going gets tough, the church must pull together and never give up doing the work of the Lord (**1 Cor. 15:58**).
3. Despite sufferings or persecutions, we remain faithful to the Lord's cause and committed to the Lord's church (**2 Thes. 1:3-4**).

D. Sacrificial love for the good of all

1. We cannot wait until it is convenient to face our great challenges; we must be willing to make sacrifices for the Lord's cause (**Luke 9:23**).
2. We are to love one another the way Jesus loved us (**Jn 15:12-13**); we are to do everything in our power to help one another.
3. When there is an important work to be done, we work together and step up to meet that need (e.g., **2 Cor. 8:1-5**).

Conclusion: Great Challenges are not Causes to Fear, but Opportunities to "Grow"! The Church May in Fact Become Stronger as a Result (James 1:2-4; Rev. 2:8-11).