

## Why Should I Care About Your Problems? By Paul R. Blake

The story is told of a mouse with a problem. The farmer had placed several mousetraps around the barn hoping to rid his farm of a rodent. The nearsighted mouse was very concerned about this. He was afraid that he might stumble into one of the traps by mistake or that one of his children might get caught without realizing the danger they were in. He asked the chicken, the pig, the cow, and the horse to help him destroy the traps. The chicken replied, "I have no trouble avoiding the traps, and I have no interest in the bait. The traps are your problem; why should I care about your problem?" The pig replied, "My hide is thick and the traps will not hurt me; besides, the bait is too small to interest me. Why should I care about your problem?" The cow and the horse expressed their disinterest, "While we could trample the traps into splinters, the needs of little mice hold no interest for important farm creatures like us. Why should we care about your problem?"

That night, a snake entered the barn and was accidentally caught by the tail in one of the mousetraps. The farmer found the snake in the trap and was bitten when he attempted to remove it. He became very ill, and so the farmer's wife killed the hen to prepare him some chicken soup. However, he did not seem to recover and had to hire temporary help care for his farm. He ordered the hog to be butchered to feed the farm hands. Sadly, the farmer died from the snakebite, and the grieving wife had the cow slaughtered to feed the many mourners who came to pay their respects. Finally, the horse had to be sold to a dog food company to be processed in order to pay for the mortician's services. The mouse's problem was everyone's problem.

"Why should I care about your problems?" It's not a cynical question. Multitudes of conscientious folks overwhelmed with busy lives have to decide on a daily basis, not just how many of their own problems they can juggle, but whether it is possible to help others with their problems. In order to crowd another trouble into an already packed schedule, they have to have a good reason to motivate them to make the necessary sacrifice. It is so easy to slide into the habit of responding with the belief that they will not be impacted by the other person's problem, and therefore withhold any offer of help.

In truth, we cannot know all outcomes; only God can know the results of every matter in this world. We often deal with the byproducts of others' difficulties. The church at Corinth was harmed by the influence of one fornicator (1Cor. 5:1-6). The church at Jerusalem was troubled by the neglect of the Grecian widows (Acts 6:1). Peter's error at Antioch led the Hebrew Christians and Barnabas astray (Gal. 2:11-13).

Looking out for one another's well being is part of Christ's will for His disciples. "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others" (Phil. 2:3-4). Your brother's problems are your problems.

Sharing our blessings with those who are in need is a necessary manifestation of the love of God. "But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?" (1John 3:17). Your brother's needs are your needs.

It is vital that Christians remain aware of how others are feeling. How one feels today often determines what he does (or does not do) tomorrow. "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another" (Rom. 12:15-16). Your brother's highs and lows are your own, and they will lead to actions that can help or hurt, not just the individual, but all those with whom they interact.

Christians are not islands. They are part of a local congregation of Christians that are affected by what each other says and does. Not only have they no right to say, "It's my life; I'll do with it what I want," we have no right to say, "It's their problem; why should I care about their troubles?" We need each other. God put Christians together in groups called churches in order that they might look out of each other and offer help as needed. We fulfill one of God's designs for the local church when we help our brother bear his burdens. "But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary... that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it" (1Cor. 12:20-22, 25-26). Why should I care about my brother's problems? Because his problems are my problems, too.

#### A Moments Wisdom

While looking at the obvious it is easy to overlook the significant.

An idea that rules people inwardly will ultimately rule them outwardly.

Experience is what you get while looking for something else.

A task worth doing and friends worth having make life worth living.

A good way to break a habit is to drop it.

The appearance of religion only on Sunday proves that it is only an appearance.

To avoid the risk of losing their religion, many people do not take it with them when they leave the church building.

We cannot meet spiritual needs by reciting sectarian creeds.

"My memory is almost gone, but I remember one thing: that I am a great sinner and Christ is a great Savior." (John Newton, author of 'Amazing Grace')

The man who removes a mountain begins by carrying away small stones.

The ability to be calm, confident, and decisive in crisis is not an inherited characteristic but is the direct result of how well the individual has prepared himself for the battle.

A stubborn man does not hold opinions; they hold him.

A pessimist is one who feels bad when he feels good for fear he'll feel worse when he feels better.

A pessimist is a man who thinks everybody is as nasty as himself, and hates them for it.