

# Crises are the reason you are needed!

By Dr. Gregory Wiens

I often tell leaders that are going through difficulties, that challenging times are the reason God calls leaders. Leadership is most evident in the midst of crises. When I face a crisis, I repeatedly tell myself that this is why God needs leaders and the reason why He equips us to lead. Crises are really job security for a leader. Napoleon is attributed with the quote: *“A great leader is not one who does great things, but rather one who does normal things under great pressure.”*

The leaders of the first century church are a great example of this. It’s amazing, but many people tell me they wish their church would be like the first century church. The first century church was fraught with tension, conflict and disgruntled people. Read for yourself:

- After an amazing launch in Acts 2, Peter and John are asked for money they don’t have in Acts 3 and get thrown in jail.
- Everyone shares their belongings with anyone who has a need in Acts 4. Then, in Acts 5, an influential couple is caught lying and they are killed!
- People complain in Acts 6 that others are getting better service than they are.
- A leader is killed in Acts 7.
- In Acts 8, a great persecution breaks out against the church and the congregation is scattered over a wide area (and attendance most likely plummeted in the Jerusalem church). Also, a new convert tries to use money to gain popularity and influence.
- Acts 9: Another new convert isn’t accepted by a lot of people in the church and because he stirs up trouble for the church, they send him back to the place he grew up in.
- Peter goes on a mission in Acts 10 to reach some unreached-people groups and when he gets back to Jerusalem he is severely criticized in Acts 11.
- Peter is again put into prison and only escapes alive through a miracle.
- Paul and Barnabus start several new churches in Acts 12-14 and one of their teams leaves them in the middle of a church plant disillusioned (13.13).
- Paul and Barnabus are threatened repeatedly in several church plants, but they keep going.
- Paul and Barnabus come back to Jerusalem excited about what God is doing, only to be challenged and criticized in a sharp dispute by those in their home church in Acts 15.
- Paul and Barnabus get into a sharp disagreement and go separate ways.

And we are barely half way through the book of Acts! Eight of these twelve points of conflict come from those INSIDE the church. But, enough of the first century church for now; I want to be God’s leader for today’s church. What does that mean, exactly? To be a leader means YOU WILL have to deal with conflict, tension, differing opinions, and challenges.

Once we expect difficult times, we need to do what we see modeled by these Biblical leaders: they lead through the crises. In Acts 6, the people’s complaining didn’t threaten them, nor did they quote Philippians 2.14 (because it hadn’t been written yet!): they acknowledged their structure was broken and changed it. In Acts 8, Peter severely confronts the sin in the new convert’s life (He literally says: may you and your money go to hell). In Acts 11 and 15; when the leaders were challenged and criticized; there was discussion, resolution and an embracing of new things in the church. When Paul and Barnabus couldn’t get along because of competing gifts and visions, they parted as brothers and God honored both.

There is not a boilerplate solution in dealing with problems. These leaders simply prayed, asked for God's wisdom and then they did very normal things. They weren't threatened; they tried to understand all sides and made spirit-led normal decisions. They demonstrated God's grace and confidence in spite of how those around them (within the church) acted.

I know conflict is always tough, but I also know it is in the midst of it, that great leadership is demonstrated.