



Pretenders vs. Contenders: Round 2

Acts 6:1-7 (NIV)

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. ² So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. ³ Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them ⁴ and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." ⁵ This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. ⁶ They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. ⁷ So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

I. Contenders are willing servants.

- The core of Christian commitment is service.

Where do I serve?

- * Place of skill
- * Place of passion
- * Place of greatest need

- Servants realize there is nothing beneath them.
- Serving in a place of need is a launching pad for greater opportunity.
- Serving well softens the hearts of the greatest antagonists. (Acts 6:7)

Acts 6:8-13 (NIV)

Acts 7:51-60 (NIV)

II. Contenders shine in suffering. (Acts 6:15)

How Contenders see suffering:

I. Not as a punishment.

- Sometimes God's will for us is suffering.
- How we handle suffering reveals who has a handle on us. (1 Peter 2:20b-21)

2. Part of a photo album not merely a snapshot. (Acts 8:1-2)

3. Not as the end of the game.

2 Corinthians 4:17 (NIV)

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

1 Corinthians 2:9 (NIV)

However, as it is written: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived"—the things God has prepared for those who love him—