**Paul’s Dealing with Problems**

The New Testament does not systematically present theology. Rather, most NT writings are actually letters addressing a particular problem (and at least ten letters below respond to heretics). The chart below shows Paul’s unique solution for each situation. The *keyword* for that epistle is *italicized* (cf. NT Survey, 1:24).

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| ***Letter*** | ***Recipient’s Problem*** | ***Paul’s Solution*** |
| ***Galatians***  *(Soteriology)* | ***Heretics*** taught new believers that they must obey the Mosaic Law to be saved | ***Justification*** is by faith alone and not by keeping the Law |
| ***1 Thessalonians***  *(Eschatology)* | ***Heretics*** questioned Paul’s church planting motives and the state of believers at Christ’s Return if they had already died | They should prepare for the ***Rapture*** by seeing Paul’s pure motives and being comforted over believers who died |
| ***2 Thessalonians***  *(Eschatology)* | ***Heretics*** taught the believers were in the Tribulation due to intense persecution so some quit their jobs and became lazy | The Day of the Lord (***Tribulation***) won’t start until after the Church is removed and they must persevere without idleness |
| ***1 Corinthians***  *(Ecclesiology)* | Disorder in the church came from divisions, moral deviations, and false doctrines taught by ***heretics*** | Proper behavior where positional ***sanctification*** becomes practical results only from a true theology of the gospel |
| ***2 Corinthians***  *(Ecclesiology)* | ***Heretics*** undermined Paul’s authority to advise the church | Paul defends his ***apostleship*** in his new covenant ministry to affirm the church’s doctrinal foundation and giving |
| ***Romans***  *(Soteriology)* | ***Jew-Gentile*** struggles disrupted body life in confusion over the role of the Law and insensitivity to one another in gray areas | Living out God’s ***righteousness*** achieved by justification through faith will bring unity before Paul arrives |
| ***Ephesians***  *(Christology)* | ***Jew-Gentile*** disunity within the church hindered their testimony before unbelievers | God’s mystery of Jew-Gentile ***unity*** in the Church under Christ as Head must show itself in love for each other |
| ***Colossians***  *(Christology)* | ***Heretics*** led believers into combining legalism, asceticism, and angel worship | Christ is God (***deity***), so the church must worship Him alone in holy living |
| ***Philemon***  *(Christology)* | A Christian slave owner (Philemon) was tempted to ***mistreat*** his now-believing former slave, Onesimus, who had returned | This master must grant ***forgiveness*** to his former slave to model the reconciliation of believers to God through Christ |
| ***Philippians***  *(Christology)* | Concern over Paul’s fate in prison was complicated by legalistic and libertine ***heretics*** and disunited women | Imitating Christ’s ***attitude*** will give joy, humility, balance between “law extremes” and peace with God and man |
| ***1 Timothy***  *(Ecclesiology)* | Ascetic and speculative ***heretics*** threatened Timothy’s leadership of the Ephesian church | Church ***order*** will follow if Timothy guards his personal life and doctrine and shares leadership with other godly men |
| ***Titus***  *(Ecclesiology)* | ***Heretics*** on Crete hindered the health of the newly planted churches | Teach believers sound ***conduct*** through qualified elders to silence accusations |
| ***2 Timothy***  *(Ecclesiology)* | ***Heretics*** and persecution of believers caused many believers to deny Christ | Persevere in sound ***doctrine*** by preaching and practicing God’s Word despite hardship |

Do you also know the issues *your* people face? Do you ignore them or *resolve* them within your church?