

Third in a series...

## **Stubbornness: Problem or Opportunity?**

Ed Kruse

Stubbornness is not included among the list of spiritual gifts. We generally regard stubbornness as being undesirable.

Isn't there such a thing as intelligent stubbornness? Perhaps even spiritual stubbornness? Can sticking to our values and refusing to compromise be a good thing, assuming of course, that our values are God pleasing? And sometimes there is certainly a positive stubbornness for some of our beliefs. Stubbornly refusing to deny our Savior Jesus Christ would be a courageous form of stubborn.

On the other hand, being stubborn is a dangerous attitude. "Do not now be stiff necked, but yield yourselves to the Lord and come to his sanctuary." (2 Chronicles 30:8). The population of the children of Israel decreased by 23,000 in one day, because they were stubborn. My mentor would say to me, "That's worth considering."

Bill was the president of his congregation (not in Western Iowa) and he stubbornly refused the \$250.00 gift of a free Congregation Health Survey. When asked why, he said, "We don't need some outside survey to tell us anything." When it was clarified that the survey was to reveal what the congregation itself thinks and feels, Bill harrumphed, "We don't need an outsider to do that. We can do that ourselves."

Not always. Sometimes we need an outside opinion. When it concerns our health, it can be a good idea to get a second opinion. As a result of Bill's stubbornness, his congregation was turned down as not being ready for a Year of Renewal, even though they needed it. Your congregation, and all Western Iowa Synod congregations, are being offered a number of ways to explore the possibility of having a Year of Renewal.

One of Jesus disciples, Nathaniel, stubbornly refused Philip's announcement, "We have found him about whom the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." Nathaniel stubbornly retorted, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip replied, ever so transformationally, "Come and see." (John 1:43-46).

Your congregation is invited to explore the possibility of being renewed by the Holy Spirit. The invitation is being made only to congregations that are open to the idea. For more information contact Jeff Unga, Western Iowa Synod, 712-732-4968, or Ed Kruse, HealthierChurch.org, toll free at 866-610-4496.

A Year of Renewal could increase church attendance, grow in giving, help inactive members participate in congregation ministries, or other ways you can think of that your congregation could use renewal. This could be one of the most important conversations for your congregation's future. Come and see. That's worth considering.