



Light from the Word

Edify One Another

Editor's Note: The Bible uses the term "one another" multiple times and it is clear God is very interested in our relationships. Jesus taught that the second greatest commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves. In 2018, we will look at several of the "one another's" in the Bible.

Theme verse: *"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."*¹

Edify is usually defined as promoting another's growth in Christian virtues such as wisdom, faith, holiness, and joy. Edifying one another will necessitate some activity on our part. Indeed, the literal meaning of the word 'edify' as used in the New Testament is "to build up." Applying this important teaching to one another will require us to pay less attention to ourselves and to think more about the needs of others: *"Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification."*² As Christians, we are walking together on the path to Zion and to sincerely seek to edify each other along the way is one of the most positive things we can do.

For us to be successful in edification, this building process must begin with a foundation built upon a firm faith in Christ, and not in the contemporary ideals of society, *"Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."*³

Examples abound in the scriptures of people who were exemplary patterns of edification for us. In terms of edifying others, Jonathan and his father, King Saul, provide one of the best and worst illustrations respectively. Out of jealousy, Saul was intent on slaying David. Jonathan sought not only to defend David, but tried to promote him before his

father, even when doing so cost him the kingship. *"And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David was in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood. And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth."*⁴ In the New Testament, the Apostles gave much of themselves in building and establishing the new church, even under threat of death. *"And he (Paul) spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."*⁵

Reading and meditating on the Word of God will be very uplifting to ourselves and ultimately will profit others as well. *"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all."*⁶ This should involve an active contemplation of God's Word, making a deliberate effort to avoid distractions, *"Mine eyes prevent (anticipate) the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word."*⁷

Prayer is another important factor of edification. When someone expresses a deep need to us, the simple words, "I will pray for you" can be very encouraging. Checking in with them from time to time to see how they are doing shows the sincerity of our feelings for them. *"And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren*

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*in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.”*⁸ Virtually all of us experience difficulties in life and when we humbly share our experiences of answered prayer it is very helpful for others. This should be done in a way that others who are struggling will be able to relate, without making them feel unworthy. David was quick to acknowledge his faults and gave the glory to God when deliverance was achieved. *“This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.”*⁹

Christian fellowship is intended to be an important encouragement to one another, but can easily be taken for granted. The goal of true fellowship is to edify one another and to nurture our relationship with the Lord. Chatting about current events or common interests of everyday life has its place, but true edification only occurs when the conversation centers on spiritual matters. Again, we have the early church as a

good example: *“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”*¹⁰ Fellowship can begin at a young age when parents encourage their children’s participation in organized Sunday school activities. Families will be blessed by visiting other Apostolic Christian congregations when vacationing or visiting relatives.

The psalmist reminds us of how singing has long been a wonderful blessing for our Apostolic Christian brotherhood. *“O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.”*¹¹ We can encourage one another’s participation, regardless of our level of expertise in this area! The result not only brings praise to God, but it will edify all who participate, *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”*¹²

The scriptures also warn us of those things that create a hindrance to edification. We must avoid a carnal or worldly spirit which causes envy, strife, and division.¹³ Another such danger is becoming spiritually lukewarm. This can come about from becoming lax in church

attendance, reading, and praying; or trusting too much in our own strength or even our wealth. The outcome is misery, blindness, and leanness to our soul.¹⁴ In contrast, the early church as portrayed in the book of Acts provides a wonderful example of edifying one another. Nowhere else do we read of such tremendous growth in the church. The Christians were zealous in worship, in reading the Word, and in fervent prayer with fasting. They had a genuine and sacrificial love for one another. The result being that God was praised and the Christians were viewed favorably by all the people.¹⁵ Most importantly, “the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

Endnotes

¹ Romans 14:19

² Romans 15:2

³ Colossians 2:7-8

⁴ 1 Samuel 23:15-17

⁵ Acts 9:29-31

⁶ 1 Timothy 4:13-15

⁷ Psalms 119:148

⁸ Acts 15:36

⁹ Psalms 34:6-8

¹⁰ Acts 2:42

¹¹ Psalms 95:1

¹² Colossians 3:16

¹³ 1 Corinthians 3:1-4

¹⁴ Revelation 3:15-17

¹⁵ Acts 2:47