

Edify One Another

We are in the process of building a new storage shed on the church property. That building began with an idea; we should build a bigger storage shed. Then someone prepared the site. Then they poured concrete. Then they set the walls up, and then the roof. Now we are preparing for siding. We all understand the process of building.

Spiritually speaking, all Christians are somewhere along in the process of building. We begin the process by being saved—faith in Christ is the foundation of our building, and then the rest of our lives, we are in the process of building. We want to experience that building up process in our own lives, and we want to promote the building up process in the lives of others.

The word that describes the process of building up is “edify” (οικοδομή). To edify is to build up spiritually.

I titled the Summer Sermon Series that we’ve been going through Building Up One Another because all the one another responsibilities are means of building up one another. We edify one another by fulfilling these one another responsibilities.

Today we will finish our One Another series by focusing on the word “edify.” The word is often used literally of building a structure and figuratively of Christian growth.

Rom 14:19 *Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may **edify another**.*

Rom 15:2 *Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good **to edification**.*

1 Th 5:11 *Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and **edify one another**, even as also ye do.*

The Bible commands us to edify one another. All of us ought to be involved in this process. Let’s notice several things about the edification.

- I. Take heed to your own spiritual condition.
 - A. Edification begins at salvation. The foundation of our building is Jesus.

1 Corinthians 3:11 *For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

On that foundation, we build our Christian lives.

- B. Once you are a Christian, you begin receiving edification. Other people begin building us up in the faith. We go to church, we attend SS classes, we go to Christian camps and conferences, others lead us in devotions, perhaps we attend a discipleship class. Other Christians invest in our lives.
- C. Others are edifying us, and we are responsible for our own edification. We should be seeking to build ourselves up in the faith.

Jude 20–21 *But you, beloved, **building** (ἐποικοδομέω) **yourselves up on your most holy faith**, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, ...*

App: One of the most foundational and fundamental means of our own edification is daily devotions—take time to read the Bible and pray every day. Personal edification comes through regular Bible reading and prayer.

- D. So we must take some personal responsibility to pursue our own edification. We ought to be actively pursuing our own spiritual growth.

App: I wonder if us are still growing, are you still experiencing edification, or perhaps we are more stagnant or at a plateau? Maybe not much edification has happened in your life lately. If that's true, then you need to follow these steps for edification.

Trans: Another step in the process of edification is ...

- II. Follow legitimate spiritual authority.

2 Corinthians 10:8 ... *the Lord gave us **[authority] for edification** ...*

2 Corinthians 13:10 *Therefore I write these things ... according to the **authority which the Lord has given me for edification** ...*

- A. A primary goal for pastors and other Christian leaders is “the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph 4:12). Pastors seek to work with those who are “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine” and help them to be “sound in the faith” (Titus 1:13).
- B. Pastors and teachers edify others by preaching the Word (2 Tim 4:2). Biblical, accurate, understandable preaching edifies the church (1 Cor 14:4, 17). Simply listening to the preacher and applying the Word of God to our lives is a means of edification.

1 Corinthians 14:3 *But he who prophesies **speaks edification** and exhortation and comfort to men.*

Php 4:9 *Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: ...*

Colossians 2:7 *rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, **as you have been taught**, abounding in it with thanksgiving.*

Heb 13:7 *Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.*

- C. When you listen to a sermon or a Bible lesson, you ought to be considering how you are receiving edification through it. We ought to be asking how this teaching can build us up.

Trans: Part of the edification process is simply learning from those who are trying to teach us. We grow by following legitimate spiritual leaders.

Likewise, we become edified when we ...

III. Listen to the Word of God.

Edification is directly associated with regular exposure to God’s Word.

One reason that so many Christians are weak and shallow is that they often neglect God’s Word.

- A. Ultimately, God builds people up through the Word of God and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 20:32 ... *I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is **able to build you up** and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.*

- B. Listening to the preaching and teaching of God's word edifies us. One of the simplest and easiest ways of gaining Christian growth is reading the Bible and listening to good sermons.

App: That is a very good reason for attending the services of the church. And you will be further edified by coming out to SS, the afternoon service, and Wed pm services. If you want to be built up, you have to listen to the preaching and teaching of God's Word. We should make use of opportunities to hear God's Word. The church provides these occasions so that we can be built up in the faith.

On Sunday afternoons, I just started a series in apologetics. I was edified in preparing the material, and I'm sure that anyone who attends the service will be edified.

- C. Beyond that, in addition to church services, we have access to the very best teachers and speakers in the world through media. We can learn a lot and gain much from listening to those who teach the Bible.
- D. Of course, we must be discerning and careful as we listen. We do not want to be listening to false teachers or those who corrupt/pervert the Word of God. Cf. Acts 17:11—search the Scriptures; “test the spirits.”

Trans: One of the most significant means of edification is simply reading and hearing the word of God.

IV. Participate in spiritual disciplines.

- A. Edification is God's work, yet it is directly tied to spiritual disciplines—Bible reading, church attendance, prayer, singing, worship, giving, meditation, fellowship, service, evangelism, etc. We build ourselves up in the faith as we participate in these activities.
- B. If you are feeling spiritually weak, it's probably because you have not been using the resources God supplies to us for our edification. If you neglect the spiritual disciplines, you will not grow.

App: If we neglect the spiritual disciplines, we are not likely to grow much. Little or no growth is possible for those who neglect these spiritual disciplines. Failure to grow, backsliding, apathy and ignorance result from such neglect.

Heb 10:25 warns us not to neglect the assembly—the church. That’s where most of these edifying activities take place. If we want to be edified, we must participate in the life of the church.

Trans: Once you are fairly well built up in the faith yourself, you can ...

V. Seek to edify others.

- A. As we are built up, we seek to build up others. We want to bring others with us in our edification process. We want to aid others in their edification process.

Ro 15:2 Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.

- B. We are responsible to edify one another. We ought to be interested in how well others are doing spiritually. We should be interested in helping others grow.

Perhaps people have a hard time living the Christian life because no one is edifying them; no one is investing in their lives.

- C. In Rom 15:2, to “please” your neighbor is to show interest in him and seek his good. So we focus our attention on others and seek to be a blessing to them.

Philippians 2:4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

- D. We seek to please others and do good for them for the purpose of their edification/Christian growth.

1. Sometimes we do this *formally* (e.g., teaching a class). Teachers are not merely entertaining the students or providing child care. Teachers must strive to edify their students through teaching God’s Word to them on their level.

2. Sometimes we do this *informally* (fellowship gatherings, conversations). Anytime we assemble with other believers, it is an opportunity for edification.

I can edify others because others have edified me. So we ought to be helping one another grow spiritually. We ought to be investing in others.

Look around for people to edify. Use your relationships to build up others in the faith.

Trans: Another step in the edification process is to ...

VI. Love the brethren

- A. The desire to edify others is an expression of Christian love. Paul teaches that “knowledge puffs up, but love edifies” (1 Cor 8:1). Genuine Christian love seeks the best for the other person. Love motivates us to build up, not tear down.
- B. We build up others because we love them. We are concerned about how well others are doing spiritually because we love them. We want to see other people stable and growing in the faith out of a sense of Christian love.
- C. In this Summer Sermon Series, I did not prepare a separate message on the command to “love one another.” I probably could have worked up a message on that theme, but in reality, this whole series was a study on what it means to love one another.

We love one another by fulfilling these “one another” responsibilities. We demonstrate Christian love for one another through fellowship, devotion, unity, acceptance, admonition, service, bearing with one another, bearing one another’s burdens, submitting to one another, comforting one another, and edifying one another. That’s what loving one another looks like; that’s how we demonstrate Christian love.

Trans: Christian love edifies. If you want to edify someone, demonstrate some Christian love toward him. If you love others, seek to edify them.

VII. Avoid things that do not edify.

Unfortunately, even Christians at times use words and actions that tend to tear down rather than build up. We must guard against this.

1 Corinthians 10:23 *All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but **not all things edify**.*

Some things are not beneficial; some things do not build up. Some things we do tear down and are harmful. So we ought to avoid such things.

- A. Some of these things might be “lawful,” but it is still wise to avoid them because they are not “expedient” – i.e., beneficial, profitable, helpful.

E.g., alcohol, gambling, tobacco use—not beneficial and do not build up anyone; these things present many dangers and few benefits.

Complaining and criticizing usually do not edify others. Gossip does not edify. Harsh words and cold indifference does not edify. So don’t do any of those things.

Heb 12:1 *..., let us **lay aside** every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset [us], and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*

Colossians 3:8 *But now you yourselves are to **put off all these**: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.*

- B. We should be very careful (1 Cor 8:9 “take heed lest by any means...”) that we do not pressure others to do anything that would weaken them spiritually.
- C. Christian love demands that we willingly limit our behavior for the benefit of others. We should be willing to get rid of anything in our lives that does not edify (1 Cor 10:23).

App: We ought to take a moment to consider if we are tolerating things in our lives that do not build us up—things that are not beneficial or profitable. Perhaps we are allowing things in our lives that are actively tearing us down. Obviously, we should be seeking to build ourselves up in the faith and get rid of anything that tears us down. E.g., things on the Internet, movies, music, books/magazines, relationships, immoral conduct. We should strive to reduce and eliminate things in our lives that are not edifying.

And likewise, we should be striving to build others up and not tear them down. We must avoid any kind of behavior that would lead others to backslide instead of grow. We ought to avoid words and actions that cause offense. Instead, we should use words and actions that cause Christian growth, stability, and strength.

App: As you consider your life, are you more involved in building people up or tearing them down? Would other people describe you as edifying or damaging?

We must avoid those kinds of behaviors that tear others down.

Ro 14:19 *Let us therefore follow after the things ... wherewith one may edify another.*

The word “follow after” (διώκω) means “to pursue, to make every effort, to seek eagerly or earnestly.” So edification for ourselves and for others should be a top priority; we are to seek it, pursue it, and eagerly engage in it.

We seek it for ourselves so that we can edify others. We must be spiritually built up ourselves before we can help build up others. Once we have built up a strong and solid house on the foundation of Christ, then we ought to help others do the same.

And the key means of edification is the Word of God. The Word of God builds us up as we read it and listen to it. We are built up as we participate in spiritual disciplines such as Bible study and prayer, worship, fellowship, evangelism, and Christian service.

In order to pursue edification, we must avoid those things that tear us down spiritually and seek those things that build us up. Let’s pursue those things whereby we may edify one another.

That ends our study of the one another passages in the NT. I hope this series has been both edifying and challenging.