

2. Christians Grow by Edifying and Building Up One Another

Our first step for Christian growth showed that by attending the services of the church and encouraging others to attend, we grow as Christians. The key passage to that lesson was Heb 10:25, where the writer eloquently stated:

25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

When people attend the services, they mutually build one another up in the faith. When they stay home, nothing happens.

Paul expressed the purpose and meaning of the mutual edification of the church in Eph 4:14-16:

14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

When we speak the truth in love to one another, the body, the church, grows and builds itself up, as each part does its work. Every part of our worship contributes to this end, which is our second step to Christian growth.

Teaching and Admonishing One Another

The singing that the church does in worship is not to entertainment. Entertainment in music is what performers do to audiences who are mere spectators. Singing in worship is to God since the music is to the Lord, giving thanks to God, and in the name of Jesus. We all must mutually participate in the singing, offering it as a sacrifice to Lord. Eph 5:19-20 summarizes this concept:

19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Col 3:16 declares the mutual edification of singing when we teach and admonish one another:

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Our singing magnifies our power to grow spiritually, as we teach and admonish one another, and as we offer praise to God with our lips and from our hearts. Heb 13:15 teaches:

15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess his name.

Bearing One Another's Failings and Building Up Each Other

Christians, as frail human beings, are all subject to sin and weakness. Speaking of all people, Paul wrote in Rom 3:22-24:

22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Of Christians, John wrote in 1 John 1:8-9:

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Consistently seeking and giving mutual support against weakness and sin is a fundamental step toward Christian growth. No Christian can do it alone: we need the Lord and we need one another

The power of this Christian support system is advanced by Paul in Rom 15:1-2:

1 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. 2 Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.

And again, he taught in 1 Thess 5: 11: " 11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

The burdens of sin and struggle, borne by us all for us all, fulfill the law of Christ in Gal 6:1-2:"

1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. 2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Allowing the Word of His Grace to Build Us Up

No matter how eloquent the words or dynamic the presentation of men, the power of the grace of God's word is what builds us up. Paul taught in Acts 20:32: "32 "Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified." Each one of us should bring something of the word of God to one another.

In speaking of spiritual gifts, Paul addressed the idea for each bringing something to the other in 1 Cor 14:26:

26 What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.

The passage is limited in context to spiritual gifts, however the scriptures cited in this study expressly teaches the general principal of a mutually edifying membership. To be built up, we must all bring to the worship and take away from the worship.

Building Yourselves Up by Prayer and the Fellowship in the Table of the Lord

Other mutually edifying activities of the worship are Prayer and the Lord's Supper. Jude put prayer in the context of growth in the Lord in Jude 20-21:

20 But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. 21 Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

Paul described the Lord's Table as a participation in the body and blood of the Lord in 1 Cor 10:16-17:

16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? 17

Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

Through this participation with the Lord and one another, we become one body. Thus, the lesson ends where it began in Eph 4:16: "From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

Study Questions from the Scriptures

1. Heb 10:25: What are we not to give up? What should we do for one another?
2. Eph 4:14-16: How does the body grow? What do we speak?
3. Eph 5:19-20: How do we speak to one another? Where do we make music?
4. Col 3:16: How should the word of Christ dwell in us?
5. Heb 13:15: What is the fruit of our lips?
6. Rom 3:22-24: Who has sinned?
7. 1 John 1:8-9: What if we say that we have no sin? What should we do about our sins?
8. Rom 15:1-2: What are the strong to do?
9. 1 Thess 5: 11: What are we to do for one another?
10. Gal 6:1-2: What should happen when someone is caught in a sin? How do we fulfill the law of Christ?
11. Acts 20:32: What can build us up?
12. 1 Cor 14:26: Should we all contribute to the worship?
13. Jude 20-21: In what are we to build ourselves up?
13. 1 Cor 10:16-17: When we take the Lord's Supper, in what do we participate?
14. Eph 4:16: How is the church held together?