

Edification-The Profit

Text - Eph 4:12-16

Introduction: What is edification, and why is it so important in the lives of believers? The word used for “edification” in the New Testament translates literally as “to build a house.” The word appears in the King James Bible only about 20 times, and then only in the New Testament. Interestingly, its usage is also limited to Paul’s letters.

The dictionary definition of *edify* is “to instruct and improve, especially in moral and religious knowledge.” According to *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, the word indicates the promotion of “spiritual growth and development of character of believers, by teaching or by example, suggesting such spiritual progress as the result of patient labor.”

Edification is more than just encouragement; it includes any activity which results in more Christlikeness, either in oneself or in another believer. Edification may be individual or corporate. Individually, one can edify oneself by participating in the various spiritual disciplines (Bible intake, private prayer, private worship, etc).

Generally, however, the concept of edification in the New Testament is applied to the corporate body (mutual edification). Mutual edification involves helping one another along the road to Christlikeness, and it requires the participation of all members of the church. Teaching and preaching improve our understanding of God; encouragement promotes conduct that develops Christlike character. When we exhort one another and hold one another accountable, we are prompted to engage in activities that promote godliness. Accountability means we lovingly check each other’s spiritual progress. Christlike service ensures that the needs of the church are met, and true fellowship is the interaction we have with each other on a deeper spiritual level. The corporate nature of edification cannot be overemphasized. Without mutual edification, the church becomes a collection of spiritual weaklings, a perpetual nursery for spiritual infants, rather than a body (1 Cor. 12:27) or a building (Eph. 2:20-22).

The Process - "building up" not Tearing down - Eph. :11-16

Involves: Unity / Knowledge / Measuring Up to Christ / Caution / Truth / Love / Growing Up

The Profit

Ephesians 4:12

- For The Perfecting Of The Saints,
- For The Work Of The Ministry,
- For The Edifying Of The Body Of Christ:
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- **Individually.....Maturity**

Someone has defined maturity as “the ability to live in somebody else’s world and not complain.” The mature believer is not afraid of diversity or change, nor is he or she threatened by the gifts and ministries of others. The mature person promotes unity, not division, and resists the *conformity* that stops people from growing. Paul described it in **Eph. 4:13-16**

We live in a world of giants and midgets. We are giants in knowledge, midgets in wisdom. We are giants in controlling nature, but we are midgets when it comes to controlling ourselves. We are giants in material things, midgets in spiritual things. We need to grow up.

This is also true of the local church. The marks of immaturity are in many churches: Selfishness, Instability, Gullibility, Being Tossed To And Fro By Every New Teaching That Comes Along.

If you want to help our church grow spiritually, then follow these principles:

Principle #1: The body matures from within. A body does not grow by addition. **It grows by nutrition.** The cells do not add - they multiply. And that multiplication comes from nutrition. Imagine a child who is underweight. The mother goes to the butcher shop, buys several pounds of meat and puts it on the child. She weighs the child and rejoices to see that now the child’s weight is just right. But is the child healthier? No! The child has “grown” from addition but not from nutrition. The physical body matures from within.

In the same way, **the church body matures from within.** This inner growth comes when we feed on the Word of God. Paul called this “speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15). God’s truth, ministered in love, provides spiritual nutrition to the body. As you and I grow in our knowledge of Christ and His Word, then we will add to the maturity of the church. The Bible is our meat and our milk (I Cor. 3:1,2.) It is also our bread (Matt. 4:4) and our honey (Ps. 119:103). **When you and I feed on the**

Word of God, when our church is nourished on the Word of God, then there will be nutrition, multiplication and edification.

But I fear that today we are facing a famine of the Word of God. Many people are not being fed the Word of God, nor do they know how to feed themselves. Instead of exposition and edification, we major on entertainment.

Pastors and Sunday school teachers need to realize how great a responsibility it is to teach and preach the Word of God. When you are ministering the Word of God, it is important to plan the diet and keep it balanced. We must not serve our people a meal of leftovers because we were too busy to prepare a fresh meal. And we must not turn the church family over to baby-sitters, who may only feed them “fast food” that will not nourish them.

Churches do not grow by addition. They grow by nutrition, as each part of the church body takes in the food of the Word of God and then does the work of the ministry. “For the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying [building up] of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:12).

Principle #2: The body matures in an atmosphere of love.

Some years ago in a New York founding hospital, the nurses performed a simple experiment. They divided a ward of little children into two groups. Each child was given the usual care, except for one thing: One group was not given love. They were fed, clothed and kept clean and safe; but they were not hugged or talked to, cuddled or loved. They had everything but tender loving attention.

Interestingly enough, the group that was not loved caught more sickness, had more problems and did not seem to grow as rapidly as the group that received special love. The experiment proved that love is essential to balanced growth.

This is true in the local church: Truth and love must go together. “But, speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15). Literally, Paul wrote: “But truthing in love.” By “truthing” he meant saying the truth and doing the truth. Truth is objective; love is subjective. And we must have both. You cannot build the Body of Christ in an atmosphere of law.

Truth and love must go together in the local church. Blessed are the balanced!

- **Collectively**

"Meeting together"

- **Corporately**

"The Church as a Body of believers"

The Provisions

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To some, edification, may sound like one of those words they teach you in college so that you can sound smart regardless of the truth. We certainly don’t want to be like the college English student who was working on suffixes and thought that if “humidification” meant to make something more humid, and if “solidification” meant to make something more solid, then “edification” must mean to make something more like someone named “Ed”.

Edification, according to Webster, simply means, “enlightening of ignorance, or moral or spiritual instruction.” In the New Testament the word often translated as “**edify**” or “**edification**,” is a compound word made up of οίκος (Oikos), which means house, & δομεω (Domeo), which means to build. These two words together literally mean, “**to build a house**.”

It is used in the **literal** sense many places in the New Testament in reference to a house or other building.

It is used in relation to the temple (Acts 7:47), a Synagogue, a barn (Lk 12:8), a tower (Mt 21:33) and even the sepulchers of the prophets (Mt. 23:29).

The word is also used **figuratively**,

The first figurative usage refers to the coming into existence and expansion of the church. Jesus says in Mt 16:8, “upon this rock I will **build** my church.” Jesus is not referring to some physical building somewhere, but the universal church made up of all those who believe in Him. 1 Peter 2:5 says in a similar way that Christians, “as living stones, are being **built up** as a spiritual house . . .”. Paul states directly in 1 Cor 3:9 that Christians are “**God’s building**”. The nature of this building of God, the Church, is that it is to grow. (Eph 2:21).

Another figurative usage of “edification” is “enlightening of ignorance, or moral or spiritual instruction.” This is to **build up** spiritually. We will see how that is done in the church in a moment, but before I go on, let me add a footnote here why I have told you so much background on this word we often translate as “**edification**.”

Acts 9:31 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.

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

1 Corinthians 8:1 Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity **edifieth**.

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

1 Corinthians 14:4 He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue **edifieth** himself; but he that prophesieth **edifieth** the church.

1 Corinthians 14:5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater *is* he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive **edifying**.

1 Corinthians 14:12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek that ye may excel to the **edifying** of the church.

1 Corinthians 14:17 For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not **edified**.

1 Corinthians 14:26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto **edifying**.

2 Corinthians 12:19 Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but *we do* all things, dearly beloved, for your **edifying**.

Ephesians 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the **edifying** of the body of Christ:

Ephesians 4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the **edifying** of itself in love.

Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of **edifying**, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

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

1 Timothy 1:4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly **edifying** which is in faith: *so do*.