

9 – Building One Another Up
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We are in a sermon series called Stronger Together. We've been preaching on the one-another commands of the Bible. So far, we've taught on how we are members of one another. Then we taught on loving one another because love is the motivation to obey the one-another commands.

We've also taught on greeting one another, showing affection to one another, having compassion for another, comforting one another, carrying one another's burdens, waiting for one another, forgiving one another and honoring one another.

Today I am preaching on Building One Another Up. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 says:

Encourage one another and build each other up.

What does it mean to build one another up? The Amplified Versions tells us:

Encourage (admonish, exhort) one another and edify (strengthen and build up) one another.

Synonyms for building up are edify and strengthen. To edify means to instruct, improve, train, coach. The New Testament Greek word literally means, "to build up from the foundation." It also means to restore, repair and rebuild.

That's part of our role as the body of Christ – to build each other up from the foundation. That means we work together for growth in Christian wisdom, love, grace, virtue, holiness, and in ministry. In Acts 20:32, Paul said:

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.

We see here three things that build us up:

God builds us up

His word builds us up

His grace builds us up

And notice Paul was involved in this process of building others up. We, too should be involved in building each other up.

We can do that like Paul did by praying for others and committing them to God so He can build them up. But there are other practical things we can do!

God's goal is to build us up TOGETHER!

Ephesians 2:19-22 says:

You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone.

In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit.

God is building us together to be a habitation for His presence. Yes, He dwells in us individually – but He also desires a corporate expression of His presence.

To accomplish that – He sent Jesus to be the chief cornerstone. He is the only foundation we should build our lives and church on.

But God uses apostles and prophets to build on that foundation. Ephesians 4:11-13 says:

It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

These verses speak of the 5-fold ministry composed of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. We need all five of these ministries in order to be built up together. I want to expand our understanding of who these people are. We usually limit them to those who hold the office of a prophet or a pastor. Those who operate in this calling as a full-time ministry. But I believe all of us can also operate in these ministries to build each other up.

Having a limited view of the 5-fold ministry limits our ability to build one another up. A limited view causes us to think that only full-time ministers can do this. NOT TRUE! Building one another up requires all of us! Ephesians 4:16 says:

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.

Notice that the body of Christ builds itself up in love as:

The apostles and prophets do their work?

The pastors and elders do their work?

The full-time ministers do their work?

NO!

As each part does its work.

That's means all of us – including you – have a part to do in building each other up and building the church up!

I want to speak for a few moments on the 5-fold ministry. I want you to understand that all five are a reflection of Christ.

- He is the great Apostle sent by God to earth to save mankind.
- He is the great Prophet who speaks forth the revelation of God.
- He is the great Evangelist who proclaims good news to the poor.
- He is the great Shepherd who leads, heals and liberates His sheep.
- He is the great Teacher who speaks truth that sets us free.

That is the ministry of Christ and when He ascended on high His ministry was given to the body of Christ and when that 5-fold ministry is at work, it results in the fullness of Christ being built in us. We all have a part in that!

Pastor Deb and I are the founding apostles who led the planting of this church and who oversee the overall vision of the church. But others can fulfill the apostolic function of strategizing and organizing.

The prophetic leaders of a church hear from God and speak His truth boldly. But all of us can hear from God and speak His truth in love!

Evangelists share the gospel and lead others to Christ. But all of us should be witnesses to others!

Teachers help others understand the truths of God's word. But we can all help others learn about God and the Bible.

Pastors lead and feed the sheep and help them heal when needed. But we can all be there for others when they are in need.

The main difference is that some people are called to be equippers in the body of Christ – helping them discover their gifts and calling and equipping them to do the work of their ministry.

But we are all called to build each other up! To do so we must first build ourselves up! Colossians 2:6-7 says:

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

You build yourself up in the faith when you continue to live in Christ –
When you continue in the teachings of His word –
When you continue in thanksgiving, praise and worship.

Jude 20 gives us another way to build ourselves up: *But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.*

Praying in the spirit – which is praying in tongues – builds up your faith!
Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 14:14-15

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding.

Have you ever experienced a circumstance where you just didn't know how to pray? Where your understanding was not enough? It is faith building at those times say, "God – I don't know how to pray in this situation – pray your will through me" – and then begin to pray in the spirit. Romans 8:26-27 says:

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

When we pray in the spirit it builds our faith because we have the confidence that the Holy Spirit is praying the perfect will of God through us.

So – we must be diligent in building ourselves up. But the goal is to not just build ourselves up, but to build each other up! Romans 15:1-3 says:

We must not just please ourselves. We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord. For even Christ didn't live to please Himself.

Everything we do should build others up, not tear them down. One way we build each other up is through the gifts of the Spirit. These are given to profit us all. 1 Corinthians 14:1-5 says:

Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.

But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. The person who speaks in a tongue builds himself up, but he who prophesies builds up the church.

I wish all of you spoke in tongues, but even more that you prophesied. The person who prophesies is greater than the person who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets so that the church may be built up.

Notice that this passage agrees with the Jude passage saying the praying in the spirit builds up the individual believer. However, in the church – speaking in tongues in church does not benefit anyone else unless it is interpreted. When interpreted – it is equal to prophecy in building others up. That's why 1 Corinthians 14:26 says:

When you meet together, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some

special revelation God has given, one will speak in tongues, and another will interpret what is said. But everything that is done must be for building up.

I told you in the beginning The New Testament Greek word for build literally means, “to build up from the foundation.” It also means to restore, repair and rebuild. Some people build on a faulty foundation and when storms come in their life – everything falls apart. We must help them put their lives back together. We must bring healing to their wounds and freedom to their bondage.

And remember that the Amplified Version of 1 Thess. 5:11 tells us:

Encourage (admonish, exhort) one another and edify (strengthen and build up) one another.

We build each other up by encouraging one another. And there are two parts to encouraging – admonishing and exhorting.

Exhorting is what we normally think that encouragement means. But encouraging also includes admonishing, which means to warn. We encourage people through exhortation by cheering them on in life. But, when people get off track – they don’t need us to encourage them to keep going in the wrong direction. The encouragement they need is the warning to get back on track.

In the Greek, the word for encourage is parakaleo (par-ak-al-eh'-o); which means to call near, to appeal to exhort and to comfort. It also means to pray for.

Different people need different ministry at different times. That’s why Ephesians 4:29 says:

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Remember – life and death are in the power of the tongue! Your words either build people up or tear them down. But we need discernment to know what to say and when to say it. How do we know? 1 Thessalonians 5:14 tells us:

Brothers and sisters, we urge you to warn those who are lazy, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

The Amplified Version says:

Admonish (warn and seriously advise) those who are out of line (the loafers, the disorderly, and the unruly); encourage the timid and fainthearted, help and give your support to the weak souls, and be very patient with everybody (always keeping your temper).

There’s a difference between lazy, unruly people – timid people – and weak people.

And we need to patiently minister to them accordingly.

It might be easier to think of a physical example. Think about a person who injured their leg and they working to rehab their weak leg. You don't admonish them for their disability. You don't call them lazy and tell them to start running. NO! You support them – you help them get around and you encourage them to press through the pain of rehab.

But if someone is healthy but lazy – you need to admonish them to get up and get busy. If someone is capable but lacking in courage – they need encouragement to step out in faith.

Do you get the picture? There are different ways to encourage one another and build one another up.

The New Testament commands us twice to admonish one another. Biblically, to admonish means “to caution, warn or reprove gently.” There are times when lovingly warning or correcting someone is appropriate. When you do, do it according to Ephesians 4:15 – *Speak the truth in love*. How you say something is as important as what you say!

In life – all of us need encouragement and confrontation. Sometimes we need to be built up – other times we need to be brought down a notch or two!
 In life – people are usually do one of those things – but not both.
 Some people are good at encouraging everyone.
 Some people are good at confronting everything.
 But you need to do both and you need people doing both for you!

You need people who will encourage you in your walk with God.
 There are many voices out there trying to get you to give up, turn back, or stop believing.
 You need voices encouraging you to keep on keeping on!
 And you need voices warning you when you get off track!

Over the years, I've had to tell some people some hard things. I always try to do it in love. I've had to tell people who were going to leave their spouse for someone else - “You know I love you, but what you are doing is not good!
 This may feel good to you right now – but the consequences will not be good!
 It won't be good for you. It won't be good for your children. If you think good results will come from this – you are dead wrong. Please don't do this!”

Sometimes they listen and sometimes they don't. Sometimes they even get offended. I'm telling you in love today – if you don't have people who can speak into your life when you get off track – you will have a tough time in life. And if you get offended whenever someone speaks the truth in love to you – you will spend your life in anger and bitterness and the enemy will always have a hook in your jaw!

Everyone needs building up and everyone needs to build others up.
We all need encouragement and we all need to be encouragers.

When our grandson David was younger he loved to play computer games. He was playing a new game one day and said, "Grandpa, this game is not working." I said, "Yes it is." He said, "Then why isn't it saying, "good job"?"

I asked, "What do you mean?" And he told me the other games he played encouraged right answers by saying "good job."

The new game was not the same without the encouragement.
The game's not as much fun without encouragement.
Life is not as much fun without the encouragement we give each other.

In relationships, we can either build people up or tear them down.
Who would you rather be around, those who build you up or put you down?

Everything in the enemy's kingdom is designed to tear down and tear apart.
But God wants us to build together and build each other up. We each need to be built up. That's why Hebrews 10:25 says:

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another.

The point of this verse is not just to go to a church building – but to be church builders by encouraging one another and building one another up.

You can become a people builder by starting to encourage others.
Look for specific things to praise.
Catch them doing something right. Then praise them for it.

I want to build you up today by encouraging you with this:
For those who feel lost in life – God sent His only Son to save you!
For those who are sick – by His stripes you are healed!
For those who are addicted – Jesus died to set you free!
For those who are empty – The Holy Spirit can fill you!
For those who are down – the garment of praise will pick you up!

I want to remind you that if you are born again – in Christ you are:
A child of the most High God
Seated in heavenly places with Him
More than a conqueror
Accepted in the beloved
Complete in Him
He's not finished with you yet!
He's still working all things for your good!