THE HARVESTER

"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2)

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WHAT IS NEW TESTAMENT EDIFICATION?

The concept of edification in the New Testament provides a comprehensive blueprint for how the Christian community ought to function, mature, and sustain itself over time. Derived from the Greek noun *oikodome*—which literally describes the act of constructing or erecting a house—edification in a theological context refers to the intentional, structural process of building up and fortifying the collective body of believers. Far from being a superficial attempt to boost human self-esteem, make attendees feel good, or

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provide recreational entertainment, biblical edification is a deeply spiritual enterprise. It is a systematic, ongoing process aimed at establishing strength, endurance, and alignment with God's revealed truth. Just as a physical structure requires a solid, immovable foundation, high-quality building materials, and reliable mortar to withstand environmental stresses, the church's spiritual health relies upon a foundational pattern composed of five distinct yet interconnected pillars: sound doctrine, orderly and participatory worship, personal accountability, spiritual maturity, and selfless brotherly love.

At the core of all true spiritual growth lies the foundation of sound doctrine. A church cannot be built up beyond the quality of the truth upon which it rests. Believers must cultivate a direct, personal, and firsthand relationship with the Scriptures, recognizing that no human commentary, popular Christian literature, or external instructional tool can replace the pure, unadulterated Word of God. Biblical edification begins when individuals develop a deep, visceral hunger for scripture, approaching it with the same instinctual reliance that a newborn infant has for milk. *"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby"* (1 Pet. 2:2). When the Word of God is faithfully studied and applied, it possesses the intrinsic power to build up believers and prepare them for their spiritual inheritance. *"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them*

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God's harvest (Luke 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, address changes and all correspondence to:

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which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). Intimately bound to this reliance on doctrine is a disciplined practice of prayer. Rather than treating prayer as a transactional mechanism to request personal desires or ease immediate anxieties, authentic prayer is an act of spiritual alignment. It demands humbling oneself before God, acknowledging His supreme wisdom, expressing gratitude for both granted and withheld requests, and continuously seeking the wisdom needed to remain steadfast in faith. "*But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost"* (Jude 20).

Beyond foundational doctrine and personal devotion, the corporate gathering of the church serves as a primary engine for mutual edification, requiring worship to be both orderly and active. Worship is not a spectator sport wherein an audience passively consumes a performance; rather, every member carries a responsibility to actively participate. Engagement in public worship—whether through focused listening, diligent note-taking, following along in the scriptures, or singing with intention—directly impacts the spiritual benefit derived from the assembly. When addressing spiritual gifts and the potential chaos surrounding their public display in the early church, New Testament writing stresses that every aspect of the church service must be governed by a singular overarching principle: "*let all things be done unto edifying*" (1 Cor. 14:26). Spiritual gifts, such as speaking in foreign tongues, were never intended to showcase individual status or create emotional spectacles, but were meant to clearly communicate truth and build up the assembly. Furthermore, corporate singing functions as a key instructional mechanism. When the congregation joins in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, they are actively teaching, warning, and encouraging one another, embedding doctrinal truths deep within their shared conscious-

ness .

> *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.* (Col. 3:16)

While corporate assembly provides the framework for collective growth, individual spiritual discipline and personal accountability provide the necessary building blocks for long-term health. A healthy church cannot exist without accountable individual members who are willing to engage in honest, often uncomfortable self-examination. Believers are called to diligently study the scriptures to show themselves approved before God, ensuring that their daily choices, actions, and lifestyle reflect the truths they profess to believe. "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*" (2 Tim. 2:15). Proper handling of the Word of Truth inevitably reshapes individual character and refines daily conduct. A vital area where personal accountability manifests is in the regulation of speech. Corrupt communication—which encompasses not only profane language, but also gossip, backbiting, lying, and sowing division—acts as a destructive force within a community. Believers are commanded to monitor their tongue strictly, ensuring that the words leaving their mouths are exclusively those that impart grace and serve to construct rather than tear down *(*Eph. 4:29; 1 The. 5:11). This level of accountability applies continuously, extending beyond the physical walls of the church building into workplaces, homes, and public life.

The ultimate structural goal toward which all biblical edification strives is spiritual maturity and unity among believers. God's design for the organizational structure of the church—including various leadership roles was instituted

specifically for the perfecting of the saints, the execution of ministry, and the progressive building up of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11–13). The objective of this continuous growth is for every believer to move away from spiritual infancy, achieving a stability that cannot be easily swayed, deceived, or tossed about by shifting cultural trends or cunning false doctrines. Spiritual maturity functions as a form of preventative spiritual medicine. As believers transition from spiritual milk to solid spiritual food, their senses become trained through practice to clearly discern between good and evil, right and wrong, and truth and error. *"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil"* (Heb. 5:14). This heightened discernment protects both the individual and the larger congregation from spiritual drift and internal corruption.

Finally, brotherly love acts as the vital mortar that binds these individual components into a cohesive, enduring structure. Sound knowledge and intellectual understanding, while necessary, can easily lead to pride and arrogance if detached from genuine care for others; it is love alone that builds up the body in a lasting way. "*Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth*" (1 Cor. 8:1). Demonstrating biblical love requires a profound spirit of selflessness, where stronger believers willingly bear the infirmities of the weak and prioritize the spiritual well-being of their neighbors over their own preferences or rights. "*We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification"* (Rom. 15:1-2). This self-denial means that a Christian may freely choose to forego lawful or permissible activities if engaging in them risks causing a weaker brother or sister

to stumble or fall away from faith. "*Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another*" (Rom. 14:19). When believers actively put the spiritual growth and safety of others ahead of their personal freedom, they embody the true spirit of Christ. Through an unwavering commitment to pure doctrine, orderly and meaningful worship, rigorous personal accountability, collective maturity, and self-sacrificing love, the church fulfills its divine calling as a spiritual house built to endure.

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WHY MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE?

The Bible Says So

- "*Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*" (Psa. 119:11)
- *"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".* (Col. 3:16)

Jesus Example

- "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*" (Mat. 4:4; Deu. 8:3).
- "*Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*" (Mat. 4:7; Deu. 6:16)
- "*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him shalt thou serve*" (Mat. 4:10; Deu. 6:13).
- *"Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female"* (Mat. 19:4; Gen.

1:27).

Peter Example

- "*And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."* (Acts 2:17-21; Joel 2:28-32)

Paul Example

- "*… The just shall live by faith.*"
  (Rom. 1:17b; Hab. 2:4)

To Refute the Devil's Misuse of Scripture

- The Devil quoted, "F*or he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. (Psa. 91:11-12)* in an attempt to persuade Jesus to act presumptuously (Mat. 4:6).

To Share the Gospel

- "*Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you*" (1 Pet. 3:15).

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Why desire the milk of the Word?
2. Why should we study the Word of Truth?
3. How should we speak the truth?
4. Knowledge puffeth up but _____ edifieth.
5. In Matthew 4 when the devil tempted Jesus, from which book of scripture did Jesus quote?

   ...ANSWERS NEXT MONTH

And remember last month's questions?

1. How many stories were in the ark?
   THREE (Gen. 6:16)
2. What caused Hezekiah's sickness?
   A BOIL (INFECTION) (2 Kin. 20:7)
3. When does the blessed man meditate on the law of the Lord? DAY AND NIGHT (Psa. 1:1-2)
4. What happened to the house built upon the sand?
   IT FELL (Mat. 7:27)
5. How do you receive the gift of the Holy Ghost?
   REPENT AND BE BAPTISED (Acts 2:38)

AUDIO SERMONS REQUEST

The Harvester seeks Gospel sermon recordings from the 1950s–1970s, especially those featuring speakers such as Vernon Boland, Byron Hanson, or Jeffie C. Hunt Sr. Please contact us at (256) 610-2228 if you have any.