

# Principle of Edification

## Discussion Guide

If you have ever built a home, you know firsthand the seemingly endless array of choices you must make such as selecting carpet colors, paint textures, light fixtures, and so on. At the same time you are making these decisions, your builder is working hard at forming the foundation and fastening the framework, a process that requires intricate architecture and supervision, and can span months and sometimes years. Building a strong home demands precision craftsmanship. After all, we don't only want our homes to look beautiful; we also want them to be well-crafted and long-lasting.

The Bible uses the analogy of building a home to illustrate both the character of a believer and the process of growing spiritually. The word that is most often used in these parables is "edify" which literally means "to build a home." In 1 Corinthians 3:9, Paul calls the human soul the temple or "home" of God. This does not mean that God takes up space inside our body, but that He dwells with us in our hearts and minds.

In this life, there are two buyers: God and His enemy, Satan. Although they both might seek to take up residence in our lives to build up their kingdoms, only God has the perfect blueprints to craft flawless souls. With God the Father as our Builder, Jesus as Supervisor, and the Holy Spirit as our laborer, we can have righteous homes that bring glory to God. While we are on this earth, God is carefully crafting our home to have eternal value. Let's see what we can learn from the Master Builder.

### Opening Thoughts

- **List some things you enjoy. Why are these things pleasing to you?**
- **Which of these things benefit you or others spiritually? Which of these things could possibly damage you or others spiritually? Explain.**
- **When the Bible speaks about edifying or building up another, what does that mean? How can one build up another person?**

### Focus Text

"All things are lawful, but not all things build up." —1 Corinthians 10:23

Again, we return to Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church. And again, he brings up the phrase "All things are lawful" or as we learned in the last lesson, "All things are permitted." But this time, he concludes his sentence explaining that not all things the Christians are permitted to do have spiritual benefits. In fact, some things can be spiritually damaging to a believer.

The verse following our text reads this, "Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor" (1 Cor. 10:24). We should be seeking to build up others before ourselves. This was one of the Corinthians' core problems. They were very self-seeking and erroneously used spiritual gifts to show-off (1 Cor. 12, 14). They were also cliquish and made it known they preferred certain leaders (1 Cor. 1:10-17). Paul found them to be so stuck on themselves that he dedicated over 28 chapters to rebuking their behavior, including one entire chapter devoted exclusively to selflessness (1 Cor. 13). Paul commanded them to seek the edification of others before themselves.

- **What is the danger of standing on erroneous construction?**

- **Why do you think misconstructions happen during a believer's spiritual growth? Are you aware of areas of misconstruction in your life? Explain.**
- **Why do you think God wants us to build up others before ourselves? Is it wrong to build yourself up?**

## Comparison Text

When Paul rebuked the church for seeking self-edification, he had just concluded his famous chapter about love teaching them that godly love does not seek to edify self (1 Cor. 13:5).

In their desire to build up their prideful egos, the Corinthian church was seeking more showy gifts that would imply that they were more spiritual than others. Their assembly services were more of a "show and tell" get together rather than a true commune of believers. However, instead of just rebuking their false imitation of a spiritual gift, Paul gets to the core of their problem. They were seeking to edify themselves, which is the wrong kind of edification since it is based on pride. At the self-centered Corinthian church, it was a constant tug-of-war over who was the greatest.

Paul gives them an alternative by encouraging them to seek to prophesy because it edifies the community of believers. It is also important to note that prophesy is a spiritual gift that can be examined and tested as opposed to the gift of tongues. Thus, Paul was calling them to a more challenging gift. His idea was to utilize their eagerness to build up by setting their passion on another track.

Read 1 Corinthians 14:1-5 and discuss the questions below:

- **What can we learn from this passage of the Bible as it parallels with our main scripture?**
- **In this particular lesson, your responsibility outside of the church is no different from that inside – you must always seek to edify others. What profit does edifying others yield? What happens when we seek to edify ourselves?**
- **What does building others up mean to our decision making? From your list at the beginning of this lesson, what things are easier to discern now? Explain.**

## Closing

It is easy to get caught up in a tug-of-war of pride with others. Pride is a dangerous and insidious sin that caused Satan to fall and lose his place in God's kingdom. When building a healthy strong home for God's spirit, it is important to make choices that first promote the edification of others. If your tough decision cannot be decided by the principal of expedience, then consider the principal of edification. Does what you are seeking to do build up others in God's word?