

# Edification

Ephesians 4:11-13

Introduction: The scriptures have many words in it that we don't readily use in our every day language. One such word is "edification." We know it means "to build up" but often it is used to relate the feeling of love or encouragement. This has given me pause to reflect on its meaning.

## I. Literal definition.

A. Literally, the Greek word for edify means "to build."

B. When Jesus said He would build his Church, He used the same Greek word for "build" that elsewhere is translated "edify" (Matt.16:18).

C. The same is true about the wise man who built his house upon the rock (Matt. 7:24). Could it be said that one who hears and applies the Lord's will is a wise man who is being edified?

## II. Scriptural meaning.

A. Edification means to build up spiritually. It is the activity of **spiritual growth** (Eph. 4:16). It is *applying* what we learn that makes us better Christians.

B. Christians are built up to offer spiritual sacrifices i.e. acts of obedience (1 Pet. 2:5).

C. Love itself edifies (1 Cor. 8:1). Love causes us to keep His commands (Jn. 14:15). Love edifies us to be obedient.

D. Even our words can build us up to obedience (Eph. 4:29).

## III. Edification is not a feeling.

A. Comfort is different from edification (1 Thess. 5:11; 1 Cor. 14:3).

B. When Paul wrote the Corinthians he said he did all things for their edification (2 Cor. 12:19; 10:8).

1. In his previous letter Paul ripped into the Corinthians for their many evil deeds. Do we think Paul wrote 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians to make them feel good? He wrote exposing their evil deeds in order to build them up spiritually!

2. Had Paul waited to rebuke them in person he would have used *sharper* language (2 Cor. 13:10). Paul says the sharpness was given him by God for edification. In other words, rebukes are edifying.

C. Were spiritual gifts performed to achieve a good feeling (1 Cor. 14:3-5)?

1. Spiritual gifts were used to confirm God's word (Mk. 16:20).

2. Spiritual gifts edify because they build the church up *to excel* in their obedience (1 Cor. 14:12, 26).

IV. Edification is not necessarily a positive or negative message.

A. When Jesus presented a negative lesson was that bad (Matt. 10:37-38)? Or did His negative message build His disciples up *to excel* in their obedience?

B. "But I'm not being edified."

1. Again, edification means we are being built up spiritually.

Applying what we learn from God's word and participating in the worship services will build us up spiritually!

2. If we are not being edified at services that suggest one of two things:

1) We disagree with what is being done, taught and said from God's word. –OR–

2) Our mind is elsewhere, not on the worship services.

C. Edification is in the songs, it is in the prayers, it is discussed during the Lord's supper and it is found in every message from God's word whether it is a positive or negative message.

V. Seek edification.

A. We should seek after the things that build us up (Rom. 14:19).

B. Coming to church for edification is one of the reasons we gather (Eph. 4:11-12). God put teachers in the church for our edification. If we don't participate in the Bible studies, should we expect to be edified? Is it no wonder that some people aren't being edified when they don't come to the assembly?

C. When you feel you had your foot stepped on during a class or sermon, odds are you are being edified. Unfortunately, some people would rather never hear an edifying word then have to change their conduct.

Conclusion: If we truly believe we haven't been edified in our life as a Christian, perhaps it is recognition that we need repentance. The only thing that would prevent us from being built up in God's word is a resistance to God's word.