



John's Schedule

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Grace Energized Men are Built Up by the Truth



Part 15 (080210PM)

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Grace-energized men get "sound in faith" when they are mended (by equipping) and built up (through edification) by the Word of God's truth. Then they go through life building others up (edifying them) by God's Word.

In Christ's church each of us has a different giftedness God wants to use in His construction of the Church. If you come to the building site and do not do what He made you to do—the entire process of building up the Church suffers. And that brings us to [Ephesians 4:11-13](#).

Ephesians 4:11-13 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. NKJV

Mended and Built By The Truth

How is this done within a local church? Paul introduces us to the twin concepts of the "equipping church" and the "edifying church". Both ministries are vital. We all need to grasp our responsibility, so that we come to church and operate as a church in the way that God designed us to serve Him—**mending lives so that those lives can be engaged as tools in Christ's hands building up, helping, exhorting, and disciplining others.**

First, mending means finding that Jesus comes to us by His Spirit, through His Word and gives us the power to reach out and mend others with His Word. This power to do what He has told us to do in the Bible is grace. And all that was to happen within the context of grace-energized, truth-filled lives of those called to be menders.

Secondly, we need to examine the other half of our calling. Look again at [Ephesians 4:12](#).

Ephesians 4:12 "...for the equipping (Gk. # 2677, n. from v. #2675 lit. "mending"; KJV 'perfecting') of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying (Gk. #3619 lit. "building up") of the body of Christ..." NKJV

The second half of the plan is "edifying", or being—

Built up by The Truth

What exactly does an edifying church do? Again, we learn that by seeing the early church in action through the New Testament. And, as we do so, go back to that house-building picture.

Think of what it takes to build a house: a succession of skilled workers that work together with a common goal, following the same plans, and guided by the master builder/contractor who is doing the bidding of the owner. Now think about that.

We are all individual workmen, as Paul told Timothy 'rightly dividing' the plans in God's Word.

The project managers are the elders who are to make sure that everyone is mended and spiritually healthy and as soon as they are—make sure they are helping out in the building.

The Owner is always present and observing our work—and of course that is the Lord.

Edification is just building the house according to the plans God left us. Pleasing Him as we do so.

Now let's do another word study, this time it is on that second half of [Ephesians 4:12](#)

Ephesians 4:12 "...for the equipping (Gk. # 2677, n. from v. #2675 lit. "mending"; KJV 'perfecting') of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying (Gk. #3619 lit. "building up") of the body of Christ..." NKJV

3619 oikodome { oy-kod-om-ay }: n f; AV - edifying 7, building 6, edification 4, wherewith (one) may edify 1; 18x in the N.T.

Definition: (the act of) building, building up; metaphorically= edifying, edification; the act of one who promotes another's growth in Christian wisdom, piety, happiness, holiness; a building (i.e. the thing built, edifice) [1]

- *Matthew 24:1* Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the **buildings** of the temple. NKJV
- *Mark 13:1-2* Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, see what manner of stones and what **buildings** are here!"² And Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down." NKJV
- *Romans 14:19* Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may **edify** another. NKJV
- *Romans 15:2* Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to **edification**. NKJV
- *1 Corinthians 3:9* For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's **building**. NKJV
- *1 Corinthians 14:3, 5, 12, 26* But he who prophesies speaks **edification** and exhortation and comfort to men. ⁵ I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive **edification**.¹² Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the **edification** of the church that you seek to excel.²⁶ How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for **edification**. NKJV
- *2 Corinthians 5:1* For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a **building** from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. NKJV
- *2 Corinthians 10:8* For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for **edification** and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed—NKJV
- *2 Corinthians 12:19* Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But we do all things, beloved, for your **edification**. NKJV
- *2 Corinthians 13:10* Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for **edification** and not for destruction. NKJV
- *Ephesians 2:21* in whom the whole **building**, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, NKJV
- *Ephesians 4:12, 16, 29* for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the **edifying** of the body of Christ,¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the **edifying** of itself in love. ²⁹ Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary **edification**, that it may impart grace to the hearers. NKJV

Before we go any further, let me just explain a life long building ministry we should seek to be a part of. I like to call this—

4 Types of Edifying Friends Every Believer Needs [2]

Tragically, many believers are among the loneliest people on the face of the earth. But that is contrary to all that God has planned for His Church. Edifying friendship is a vital part of New Testament ministry and leadership. Without quality, biblical friendships, we are modeling a flawed Christian lifestyle for our church members. Yet, for many, the difficulties of close friendships outweigh the benefits.

Many believers find themselves in an unhealthy relationship where their marriage partner is their only friend and counselor. I believe our partners should be our best friend, but not our only friend.

If you are a typical believer without close friendships, I urge you to seek out one of each type of these Christians who can build you up by only one thing God blesses—His Word.

God's Word is the tool with which all spiritual building is done.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16–17).

That is the tool with which every believer should be skilled, and should share.

In my over 30 years of ministry, I have learned that every believer needs at least four types

1. **We Need to be Edified by The Developer:** Your best friend will always be the person who brings out the very best in you. According to Billy Graham, he wouldn't have made it as an evangelist if he had to minister alone. In 1948, Billy Graham met his staff and best friends: Cliff Barrows, George Beverly Shea, and Grady Wilson. These three men protected him, strengthened him, counseled with their wisdom, and corrected him when he needed it. He is convinced that without these friends he would have burned out within a few years after his first groundbreaking crusade in 1949 [3]. Developer friends will bring the gift of encouragement to your life and bring out the very best in you.
2. **We Need to be Edified by The Designer:** We tend to think of mentors as a personal, hands-on coach. The Latin and Greek define them more as "advisors" or "wise men." Jesus was a master mentor. He ministered to thousands, trained hundreds, equipped twelve, and had an intimate friendship with three men. The designer mentors us in our marriage, ministry, child-rearing, civic involvement, business acumen, or any area where we need a model. Designer mentors may live near or far, be acquaintances or strangers, or may even be dead. They "design" our lives through Scripture, books, tapes, articles, or seminars.
3. **We Need to be Edified by The Disturber:** We need friends who will shake up our status quo. Disturbers ask us difficult questions, forcing us to take a closer look at motivations and ambitions. Disturbers know when we have retreated into our comfort zones, and they call us out to greater effectiveness. God uses disturbers in our lives to become the object of greater force that breaks inertia and propels us to greater achievement. A biblical picture of a disturber is in [Deuteronomy 32:11](#). In this passage the mother eagle tears up the soft nest to reveal sharp thorns that bring discomfort to the eaglets. Because of discomfort, the eaglets leave the nest and learn to fly. The mother develops her young by repeatedly pushing them out of the nest and catching them until they become skilled flyers. Eagles were never meant to stay in the nest, and neither were we. The disturber pushes us to learn to fly.
4. **We Need to be Edified by The Discerner:** In a lifetime of relationships, perhaps only a handful of people are willing to play this vital role because it requires mutual vulnerability. More popularly known as accountability partners, discerners bring the gift of spiritual insight into our lives. They know how to speak the truth in love. They know how to exhort and rebuke, seeking to keep their friend on the right track. They are also vulnerable—the true friends who will walk into the room of your life while everyone else is walking out. [Proverbs 27:6](#) reads, "The wounds of a friend are trustworthy, but the kisses of an enemy are excessive." Always be slow in choosing your discerners and even slower in leaving them.

Now, back at the construction site, here are the job descriptions of—

Construction Workers God Always Wants and Uses

Spiritual gifts are the empowerment God uses to build up His Church. There are several New Testament lists of the construction workers God deploys at each building site. The two main gift lists are Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12.

The easiest way to look at these lists is to say that the Corinthian list is primarily pointed at temporary sign gifts and the Roman list is pointed at ongoing gifts that we see today.

For our construction site visit, we'll focus on the list in Romans 12.

*Romans 12:4-12 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function,5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if **prophecy**, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith;7 or **ministry**, let us use it in our ministering; he who **teaches**, in teaching;8 he who **exhorts**, in exhortation; he who **gives**, with liberality; he who **leads**, with diligence; he who shows **mercy**, with cheerfulness. 9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; NKJV*

This passage in Romans 12 gives us seven amazing types of gifted people God wants to use in every church. Three of these seven gifts are mentioned in [1 Corinthians 12:28](#) (prophets, teachers, administration); two of the gifts (prophets and pastor-teachers) are included in [Ephesians 4:11](#); and another two (administering and serving) are listed in [1 Peter 4:10-11](#). So, these seven seem to resonate as a complete set that God loves to use. But whatever gift, or blend of gifts, you have been given, exercise them faithfully as a stewardship from God.

At every construction site where Christ is at work building His church, He will be sending believers that He has gifted for the following construction "jobs" or "duties":

1. **Workers gifted in Speaking Forth God's Word or "prophecy" (Romans 12:6).** This Gr. word means "speaking forth" and does not necessarily have to involve prediction of the future or any other mystical or supernatural aspects. When used of a non-revelatory gift, this word "prophecy" simply identifies the skill of public proclamation of the Word of God ([1 Pet. 4:11](#)). This person may be random, or may be systematic—but they love to proclaim the Word. But the key that tests the prompting of the Spirit is that a person's "prophesying" is to be done **in proportion to the faith**, a better translation would be "in agreement to the (not his) faith."
2. **Workers gifted in Serving God's People or "ministry" (Romans 12:7a).** From the same Gr. word as "deacon," "deaconess" come from, it refers to those who serve. This gift, similar to the gift of helps ([1 Cor. 12:28](#)),

- has broad application to include every kind of practical help (cf. [Acts 20:35](#); [1 Cor. 12:28](#)). This person never needs to be pointed towards a job, they are always looking for things to do for others.
3. **Workers gifted in Explaining God's Word or "teaching" (Romans 12:7b).** The ability to interpret, clarify, systematize, and explain God's truth clearly (cf. [Acts 18:24-25](#); [2 Tim. 2:2](#)). Pastors must have the gift of teaching ([1 Tim. 3:2](#); [Titus 1:9](#); cf. [1 Tim. 4:16](#)), but many mature, qualified laymen also have this gift. This differs from preaching (prophecy), not in content, but in the unique skill for public proclamation. This person is very systematic and able to clearly communicate truth, even though they may be quiet and even prefer a small group.
 4. **Workers gifted in Inspiring others to obey God's Word or "exhortation" (Romans 12:8a).** The gift which enables a believer to effectively call others to obey and follow God's truth. In a negative sense this person may love to admonish and correct others regarding sin ([2 Tim. 4:2](#)), or in a positive sense, this person may be always drawn to encourage, comfort, and strengthen struggling believers (cf. [2 Cor. 1:3-5](#); [Heb. 10:24, 25](#)).
 5. **Workers gifted in Pouring out what they have for others or "gives" (Romans 12:8b).** This denotes the sacrificial sharing and giving of one's resources and self to meet the needs of others (cf. [2 Cor. 8:3-5](#), 9; [11; Eph. 4:28](#)). This person has a simple desire, to just offer to others a single-minded and openhearted generosity. Contributing is to be done with generosity (en haploteuti), not skimpily (cf. [2 Cor. 8:2](#); [9:11, 13](#)). Prompted by the Spirit, they will give with no desire for thanks and personal recognition, but to glorify God (see also [Matt. 6:2](#); [Acts 2:44-45](#); [4:37-5:11](#); [2 Cor. 8:2-5](#)).
 6. **Workers gifted in Showing others the best way or "leads" (Romans 12:8c).** The Greek word means lit. "standing before", and when Paul describes this gift to the Corinthians he calls it "administrations" ([1 Cor. 12:28](#)). This word also means "to guide" and was used of the pilot who steered the ship ([Acts 27:11](#); [Rev. 18:17](#)). In the NT, this word is used to describe only leadership in the home ([1 Tim. 3:4-5, 12](#)) and the church ([1 Cor. 12:28](#); [1 Tim. 5:17](#); cf. [Acts 27:11](#); [Rev. 18:17](#)). This managing, leading, or administering is to be done **diligently** (,en spoudeuµ" in eagerness, earnestness"), not lazily or halfheartedly.
 7. **Workers gifted in Incarnating Christ's Compassion or "shows mercy" (Romans 12:8d).** This person loves to actively show sympathy and sensitivity to those in suffering and sorrow; and they give both the willingness and the resources to help lessen the afflictions of those in need. Frequently, this gift accompanies the gift of exhortation. But when prompted by the Spirit there is also an evident **cheerfulness**. This spirit-energized attitude is vital to ensure that the gift of mercy becomes a genuine help, not a discouraging commiseration with those who are suffering (see also [Prov. 14:21, 31](#); [Luke 4:18-19](#)) [4].

Edification is God's Plan For All of us

The terms edify and edification, were some of Paul's favorite words, when describing our ministry in Christ's church as believers. These words come from the realm of building and architecture and mean literally "to build up". Even today we get the term popular in health clubs of "body building" and the disciplined usage of exercises to accomplish that goal. Paul lived in a world where athletics and body building were paramount, so using the words of his culture he called saints to action.

The basic meaning of the Greek word for **edify** (oikodomeo) is "to build a house" and by extension led to mean the building of anything. When used in our New Testaments it took the meaning of growing spiritually and helping others to grow up in a spiritual way. Anything that contributes to spiritual growth was said to edify.

Peter exhorts everyone at the end of his epistle to "grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ" ([II Peter 3:18](#)), and to do that we can find in God's Word at least three basic means that God uses through us to grow others:

1. **God's Word.** As Paul was leaving behind the beloved church he had invested his life into for over three years, he told the elders of the church standing with him at the port city of Miletus, "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified" ([Acts 20:32](#)). The Bible, God's Word, is the key tool that the Lord uses to build our spiritual lives ([John 17:17](#)).
2. **Preaching and teaching.** Later in this letter to the Corinthians Paul tells them that, rather than being so concerned about speaking in tongues, they should focus on prophesying, or preaching, which "speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation." The "one who prophesies edifies the church" ([1 Cor. 14:3-4](#)).
3. **Obedient Ministry prompted by Love.** Our purpose as believers is to do "the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" ([Eph. 4:12](#)); and as Paul reminds us only with love can this edify others, because only "love edifies" ([1 Cor. 8:1](#)).

The conclusion is that every believer is called to be an edifier.

"Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. For even Christ did not please Himself" (Rom 15:2-3).

"Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing" (1 Thess. 5:11).

[1] *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1995.

[2] Adapted and mostly quoted from the 2001 article written by Ike Reighard, *the Founding*

Pastor of NorthStar Church in Kennesaw, Georgia, redone in a LifeWay article adapted by Craig Webb from the previously published article and found online at www.CrossWalk.com.
[3] *Just as I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*, pp. 125-129.
[4] This list has been abridged, edited and adapted from John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Dallas: Word Publishing) 1997.

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