



LENEXA EDIFIER

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BUILDING UP EACH OTHER

Jim Stauffer

The responsibility each one of God's children have toward others is explicitly stated in Scripture. It is to be a relationship that is so exemplary it is a signal to the world that we are followers of the Messiah (**Joh. 13:34,35**).

If we love one another as He loved us in giving His life on the cross to redeem us, we will have certainly accomplished His plan for us.

The question is how far are we expected to go for a brother in Christ? After all, I have a family to be concerned with that requires much time to provide their needs for sustenance. They have to come first for me.

Obviously we are expected to do both. We must be able to provide temporal needs for our families while at the same time doing those things that strengthen both them and the brethren spiritually.

As we begin to read the epistles we hear expressed, the concept of edification. Paul says, *Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.*

(**Rom. 15:2**) Listen particularly to what he says here. We are to please our neighbor for his good. This does not mean we are to do whatever it takes to make him happy. Rather it means pleasing him in this case means edifying him. The Greek word for edifying means to build something or someone up, strengthen, resulting in an improved or increased strength.

Now Paul speaks of spiritual strength, not physical. The obvious need for spiritual strength is to endure the obvious persecution or rejection society brings to the believer. The early Christians were persecuted at every turn. They needed the encouragement and strength provided by others of *like precious faith.* (**2 Pet. 1:1**)

We have been blessed with much greater acceptance in our country, yet many ridicule our simple faith and trust in the word of God. Men strive every day to find scientific answers to questions they ask in spite of the evidence God has provided in His revelation concerning those things.

As this occurs, brethren can be shaken from their spiritual moorings by the influence powerful men in society can wield in persuading the masses to shout down the story of the Bible.

It is for this reason we need to edify one another. But even more so must we understand what we are building when we build each other up. **Eph. 2:19-21** tells us *19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,*

It is imperative we recognize we are being built up spiritually into a spiritual building. A building God has pledged to support. A building God demands we support and promises condemnation to those who damage and destroy it. **1 Cor. 3:16** *Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.*

The question then is are we for God and Christ or are we against them (**Mat. 12:30**). Let us edify one another in support of the mission of Christ.

SWEARING

"Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord. But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one" (Matthew 5:33-37).

God says that to take an oath is a serious matter. For example in **Leviticus 19**, sometimes called the *Holiness Code*, the Lord said: *"And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD"* (Leviticus 19:12). Twin themes, holiness and love, were to define God's people as HIS people—people who acted toward their Creator and toward each other in honorable ways. Israelite society would be disrupted if its members did not tell the truth. If God is indeed LORD, then His people, in the OT and now, must be people of honesty. Scribal and Pharisaical distortions of the Law allowed for swearing or the taking of an oath as long as one did not invoke the name of God; since God was not a party to the oath, it was not too serious if the oath was broken. Is that, though, how kingdom citizens act?

Jesus says: Don't swear at all! Why? Kingdom citizens are those who always tell the truth. When they say yes, they mean yes. When they say no, they mean no. An oath or invoking the name of God as witness to one's words is not necessary. Neither is it necessarily wrong. But if you invoke the name of the Lord, you need to make doubly sure as to what you are saying or vowing. *"Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few"* (Ecclesiastes 5:2).

Let us remember that Jesus expects kingdom citizens to be beyond the norm of the day. *"For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 5:20). Pharisees particularly, and others, might be known for their "righteousness" but kingdom citizens rise to a higher ethic. True values of the kingdom do not seek to circumvent any aspect of God's law. Rather we need the true desire to obey not only the letter of the law as we imbibe the intent of God's will.

Philo, an early Jewish writer, spoke about the "evil habits of swearing incessantly and thoughtlessly about ordinary matters where there is nothing at all in dispute" (*Decalogue*, 92). Evidently, using God's name in vain, swearing (invoking the name of the Lord in light or frivolous ways), or just downright vulgarity is nothing new. *OMG* is on the lips of people constantly. In this

kind of world—a world of filth—as kingdom citizens we have the responsibility and the opportunity to let our lights shine. As this world becomes darker, more than ever, do we need to let our lights shine. Don't dim your light by your yeas and nays.

Randy Harshbarger

Balance is the Key

My cousin, Sonny, owns and operates a campground near Cooks Forest in Pennsylvania. I used to go there for a few days each year in college before the Fall Semester began for a mini-vacation. In his wife, Darla's, kitchen is a plaque which reads: My house is clean enough to be healthy, but dirty enough to be happy! I have always loved the sentiment of that plaque. It speaks to the need for balance and self-control in our lives.

Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, wrote, *"And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things."* (1 Corinthians 9:25) There is no man's life that is all one thing! All lives are a mosaic of areas, each calling for our attention. The fool will devote all of his attention to one or two areas and leave the other areas untouched. The result is an entirely unbalanced life. Have you ever tried to carry a five gallon bucket full of water in one hand? You can do so for a short while but it is clumsy and if you persist it will hurt you. It is easier to carry two five gallon buckets full of water, one in each hand to balance each other. You can carry more and go further with BALANCE.

The devout Christian's life is not all worship. He must earn his living just like other men and women. He will devote the proper time to each pursuit in his life. His wife and children place demands on his time, and the time he devotes to them in leading them in the Christian life and teaching them the way of the Lord, playing baseball or hunting all fall under the heading of spiritual duties in the BALANCED CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Cleveland Reddinger

Jump Start # 1663

Roger Shouse

1 Peter 2:18 *"Servants be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable"*

Our verse is a tough one today. It's not hard to understand, it's hard to do. Peter is addressing slave-master relationships, and thankfully, in the Western world, that doesn't exist anymore. It's hard to "own" someone and live the golden rule. The Bible never directly condemned slavery, but the principles that it creates within a heart of a person will lead to that. It is easy therefore to dismiss these verses because I am not a slave nor do I own slaves. But there are principles here that cross all relationships, including home, work

and church.

It is easy to be nice to those who are good and gentle. But what about the "unreasonable" people? Those who are not good. Those who are not gentle. They may come in the form of a boss, a parent, a husband, or a friend. Unreasonable. Unreasonable demands expected of you. Unreasonable guilt. Unreasonable. "They're killing us at work," is a common expression I hear. More work. Less help. Running at break neck speed. Little time for lunch. Some do not even get bathroom breaks. Forget what the law says, unreasonable work loads won't allow that. The simple answer is quit. Sure, and then do what? Then how are we to survive?

Unreasonable. It comes from families at holidays who expect you to make the whirlwind tour of seeing people who you barely know but because they are "family" you are expected to be there. Unreasonable guilt. Unreasonable demands from a mate who is inconsiderate of you.

Peter may be talking about slaves but we know all too well the world of "unreasonable." In Titus, we also find, *"Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect" (2:9)*. Be subject. Be well-pleasing. And then, "not argumentative." Again, don't limit these thoughts to just the slave-master relationship. It is inconsistent to think that the Christian slave should not be argumentative, but the Christian free man could. Don't be argumentative. That's one I have to work on. I tend to be a rebel at spirit. I can fuss with the best of them. Don't, is what the passage is telling us. That's tough at home. I've seen this spill over in the church. In a Bible class, people arguing, and not being nice about it.

There is an African proverb that states, "When two elephants fight, the grass suffers." I like that. You can only imagine how the dust flies in the air when two large bull elephants are going after each other. They will fight for position and after a while, the score is settled and they move on with the rest of the elephants. But the aftermath is visibly seen in the dirt and grass. They tore the place up. It will take a while for the land to recover.

Unreasonable people can make us become argumentative. Remember, the grass suffers.

The grass may be the small children who run to their rooms when they hear mom and dad fighting. The raised voices, the insults, the hurtful tones, scares the little ones. The grass suffers.

The grass may be the new Christian who witnesses ugliness among brethren. He hears mean things being said. He sees people avoiding others on purpose. He witnesses insults and name calling among those who are supposed to be of the same family in Christ. The grass suffers.

The grass may be the co-worker who knows that you

are a Christian, but sees you tear into someone and argue all the time. They become confused and disillusioned about Christianity. The light isn't shining very bright when we act this way. The grass suffers.

And it often takes a long time for the grass to recover.

There are times to stand your ground. There are times to defend your position. But do so with respect, gentleness and kindness. Don't destroy a person, so you get what you want. The grass suffers. Your points are made more sensible and right by the volume of your voice. Shouting louder and louder doesn't prove your point. Insulting a person. Attacking their character. Bringing up the past. This is the way third graders behave. It is the way politicians behave. We are Christians. We must rise above that.

In a perfect world, there are no unreasonable people and never a need to be argumentative. But this world isn't perfect. Mr. Rogers is gone. Not everyone is nice in the neighborhood. Living among unreasonable people is hard. It tries our patience and tests our faith. There are days that we just want to scream, but you don't. There are days you could just punch someone, but you won't. There are days that you can't wait to be over.

I have found that it is hard to reason with unreasonable people. Often, their minds are closed, made up and not willing to listen to any other ideas or options. It's their way or the highway. Their way won't work. Their way is too expensive. Their way adds to your burdens. This is especially hard when the unreasonable person is a boss, or in Peter's words, your master. The slave back in the first century had no options. There was no labor board to call. There was no union rep to step in. There was no one. The slave was viewed as a tool, much like a shovel. If the tool breaks, get another. Little thought was given to how the slave felt or how he was doing. Motivation often came from a whip. Philemon's slave ran away. Paul sent him back. Paul reminded Philemon to be a Christian. He let him know that the run-away was now a Christian. He was to treat him as a fellow Christian.

What to do with the unreasonable folks in your life? Pray, first of all. Pray for understanding. Pray for yourself. Pray for them. Look for ways to show kindness. Some can see how they have been and change. Others won't get it, even if Jesus were to knock on their front door. They live in their own world and everything is about them and only them. Don't get into a marriage with someone like that. You will feel like a slave and be treated like a slave. Keep your eyes open for another job. It may take time. You don't have to spend time with every idiot in the family because mom guilts you into that. Let her go visit them. Some people we would have nothing to do with, except they happen to share the same last name. Some relationships are toxic and they beat us down spiritually. Unreasonable people...argumentative...grass that suffers. It's good to remember those things.

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1 Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

Elders Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer

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NEWS AND NOTES: REMEMBER THE SICK IN PRAYERS AND VISITS.

JAN PATRICK, STEPHEN KIMKER, AND SARA DENT.

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS:
RELIGIOUS CONFUSION - JIM STAUFFER

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS:
ECCLESIASTES - BYRON TAYLOR

SUNDAY SERMON: AN ANALYSIS OF THE JUSTICE OF GOD



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10