

## Making Things Work

### I. The church is building project.

1. Saints are told to be "building up yourselves on your most holy faith" (**Jud 1:20**).
2. Building up ourselves is contrasted with those who "separate themselves" (**Jud 1:19**).
3. The church is the body of Christ to which God has given a pastor to edify it (**Eph 4:11-12**).
  - A. Edify *v.* - 1. *trans.* To build; to construct (a dwelling, edifice) of the usual building materials. 3. *trans.* In religious use: To build up (the church, the soul) in faith and holiness; to benefit spiritually; to strengthen, support.
  - B. The end of this edifying is for us all to come in the *unity* of the faith unto a perfect man like Christ (**Eph 4:13**).
    - i. Unity *n.* - II. 3. The quality or condition of being one in mind, feeling, opinion, purpose, or action; harmonious combination together of the various parties or sections (of the Church, a state, etc.) into one body; concord or harmony amongst several persons or between two or more.
    - ii. Purpose *n.* - 1. a. That which one sets before oneself as a thing to be done or attained; the object which one has in view.
    - iii. Concord *n.* - 1. Agreement between persons; concurrence in feeling and opinion; harmony, accord.
    - iv. Harmony *n.* - 1. Combination or adaptation of parts, elements, or related things, so as to form a consistent and orderly whole; agreement, accord, congruity.
    - v. We are exhorted many times in the scripture to be unified (**1Co 1:10; 2Co 13:11; Rom 12:16; Rom 15:5-6; Phi 1:27; Phi 2:2; Act 4:32**).
    - vi. Paul exhorted two brethren by name to be of the same mind in the Lord (**Phi 4:2**).
  - C. The goal is to build the church into a body which is compactly joined together so that it will be able to increase and edify itself in love (**Eph 4:16**).
    - i. Compacted *ppl. adj.* - Firmly and closely joined or pressed together; knit together, compactly made up or composed; condensed, consolidated, compact.
    - ii. The church body is likened to the human body in which every member or part is necessary and works together (**1Co 12:12-27**).
    - iii. God puts the members into a church as it pleases Him (**1Co 12:18**).
    - iv. Every member of a church is necessary and beneficial to the rest of the church (**1Co 12:14-17,19-23**).
    - v. Every person is a member of the church for a reason.
    - vi. *God* tempers a church body together (**1Co 12:24**).
    - vii. God puts a church together in such a way that there should be no schism in the body (**1Co 12:25**).
      - a. Schism *n.* - 2. *Eccl.* a. A breach of the unity of the visible Church; the division, either of the whole Church or of some portion of it, into separate and mutually hostile organizations; the condition of being so divided, or an instance of this.
      - b. Can you imagine a human body that was divided against itself?
      - c. Can you imagine a man walking around with his hands covering his eyes because his hands had a beef against his eyes?

- viii. Because the church is all one body in Christ, when one member suffers, the other members should suffer with him (**1Co 12:26**).
  - a. We should bear each other's burdens (**Gal 6:2**).
  - b. We should feel as if we were going through whatever our brethren are going through because we in the same body as them (**Heb 13:3**).
- ix. We should prefer one another before ourselves (**Rom 12:10**).
  - a. Prefer *v.* - III. 7. a. To set or hold (one thing) before others in favour or esteem; to favour or esteem more; to choose or approve rather; to like better.
  - b. We should esteem others better than ourselves (**Phi 2:3**).
    - 1) Nothing should be done through strife or vainglory.
    - 2) Strife *n.* - 1. a. The action of striving together or contending in opposition; a condition of antagonism, enmity, or discord; contention, dispute.
    - 3) Vainglory *n.* - 1. Glory that is vain, empty, or worthless; inordinate or unwarranted pride in one's accomplishments or qualities; disposition or tendency to exalt oneself unduly; idle boasting or vaunting.
  - c. We should be more concerned about others than ourselves (**Phi 2:4**).
  - d. Ask yourself before making any decision or action whether you are doing it for your own interests or for the best interest of the church.
  - e. We should seek each other's wealth and not our own (**1Co 10:24**).
  - f. We should follow Abraham's example (**Gen 13:8-9**).

II. Every building project will have its difficulties and obstacles to overcome.

- 1. If God is not the center of the building program, it's a waste of time (**Psa 127:1**).
  - A. Ministers have to build up the church *with God* (**1Co 3:6-9**).
  - B. They have to make sure that we are building on the proper foundation of Jesus Christ (**1Co 3:10-11; Eph 2:20-22**).
- 2. The church will be able to accomplish more working together than individually (**Ecc 4:9-12**).
- 3. When God opens doors for evangelism, there are always adversaries who will try to prevent it (**1Co 16:9**).
  - A. We need to pray that the word of the Lord will have free course and be glorified (**2Th 3:1**).
  - B. And also that we will be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men (**2Th 3:2**).
- 4. When Israel was entering the land of Canaan to inhabit the promised land, there were obstacles to overcome.
  - A. They ran out of water (**Exo 17:1**).
    - i. The people murmured and complained (**Exo 17:2-3**).
    - ii. Don't do that (**Phi 2:14**).
    - iii. God was able to overcome the obstacle (**Exo 17:4-6**).
  - B. They had a limited variety of food (**Exo 16:14-15**).
    - i. The people murmured and complained (**Num 11:1-6**).
    - ii. Don't do that (**Jud 1:16**).
  - C. When they got to the land they found it to be inhabited by giants and they felt inferior (**Num 13:26-33**).

- i. The people murmured and complained (**Num 14:1-4**).
    - ii. At this point, God was ready to totally destroy Israel (**Num 14:11-12**).
    - iii. But because of Moses' plea, God spared them (**Num 14:15-20**).
    - iv. Though He didn't kill them, God still judged them by not allowing that generation to enter the promised land (**Num 14:21-24**).
    - v. Let's learn from their mistakes (**1Co 10:1-11**).
  - D. They had enemies that would not let them pass through peaceably so they had to find another way (**Num 20:14-21**).
  - E. As they say, "Where there's a will, there's a way."
- 5. When Israel returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity to rebuild the temple and the city, there were obstacles to overcome.
  - A. Enemies tried to hinder their building efforts.
    - i. Enemies laughed and scorned them (**Neh 2:9-10,19**).
    - ii. Enemies withstood them (**Neh 4:7-8; Neh 6:1-2**).
    - iii. Enemies tried to infiltrate them and pretended to desire to help them in the building effort (**Ezr 4:1-2**).
    - iv. The fathers of Israel didn't fall for it (**Ezr 4:3**).
    - v. They then got some lawyers and used legal tactics (**Ezr 4:4-6, 11-16**).
    - vi. God, the king, and the law were on their side though (**Ezr 6:1-12**).
  - B. Israel was able to overcome them because they banded together and worked toward a common purpose.
    - i. The prophets spurred and encouraged the people to continue the work (**Ezr 5:1-2 c/w Hag 1:1-5**).
    - ii. The children of Israel were united as one man (**Ezr 3:1**).
    - iii. The people had a mind to work and they overcame the roadblocks (**Neh 4:6**).
    - iv. They prayed to God and trusted Him, but also took the initiative to do the work and defend themselves (**Neh 4:9,17-18**).
- 6. If a church is going to grow and be built up, it has to work together and overcome the obstacles the devil throws its way.