

“Speaking from the Heart”

Lesson 10: How to be a People-Builder

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☞ *“So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another” (Romans 14:19).*

☞ “Building up” is an interesting communication concept. It is a compound Greek term *using oikos*, “a house” and *domeō*, “to build” and it refers to a “house builder.” Pride and integrity are the main concepts. One builds a sturdy house able to stand against destructive elements. Figuratively our English word “edify” is translated from this word. To “edify” another is “to build that person up so that strength and stability are evident; you help them to stand against destructive elements.”

The process of edification is a visible result of “speaking from the heart.” Communication with constructive criticism and positive instruction are spoken to “build up” the one who hears, that one becomes a ☞ suitable dwelling place for God—where the Lord is “at home.” Edification is “Letting the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.” After “putting on Christ” we must, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (Colossians 3:16).

The word “dwell” is an intense term. It indicates that one lives in total security. ☞ The Christian is to communicate the Word of God so that God will feel “at home.” Too many are more concerned about communicating God’s Word so man feels “at home” and any concerns about God are ignored.

The process of ☞ “edification” must neither be ignored nor regarded as optional. Each Christian is a “builder” and the ☞ integrity of their “building” will be exposed at the Judgment. (Matthew 12:36-37).

Inspiration emphasizes this accountability:

“Each will receive his own reward according to his own labor...like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each person must be careful how he builds on it...each one’s work will become evident...will test the quality of each one’s work...If anyone’s work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward” (1 Corinthians 3:8-14).

Our words should focus on building up and encouraging!

Once upon a time there was a bunch of tiny frogs who arranged a running competition. The goal was to reach the top of a very high tower. A big crowd gathered around the tower to see the race and cheer on the contestants. The race began but no one in the crowd really believed that the tiny frogs would reach the top of the tower. You heard statements such as: “Oh, WAY too difficult!!” “They will NEVER make it to the top.” “Not a chance that they will succeed. The tower is too high!” The tiny frogs began collapsing. One by one, except for those who, in a fresh tempo, were climbing higher and higher. The crowd continued to yell, “It is too difficult!!! No one will make it!” More tiny frogs got tired and gave up. But one continued higher and higher and higher. He just wouldn’t give up! At the end everyone else had given up climbing the tower. Except for the one tiny frog who, after a big effort, was the only one who reached the top! All of the other tiny frogs naturally wanted to know how this one frog managed to do it. A contestant asked the tiny frog how he had found the strength to succeed and reach the goal. It turned out that the winner was deaf.

This point raises several ☞ questions begging to be answered asks

- “How will MY building skills be revealed on the Judgment Day?”
- “What kind of builder am I?”
- “Are my building skills carefully used?”
- “What quality is my building?”

Proper building (construction) requires ☞ proper decision-making. One man grew up in west Texas and tornadoes where storms were a constant threat. So, his school often had tornadoes and fire drills to train the students what to do when danger threatened. For tornadoes when the alarm sounded, the students would

huddle in the coat room. For fire drills the students would march outside. One year he had a teacher that never made the correct decision. She always managed to make the wrong decisions. The fire alarm sounded and she gathered students into the coat room; the tornado alarm sounded, and she marched the students outside. It was always the wrong response to the danger alarm! The teacher was totally befuddled and made the wrong decisions.

✚ Christ wants us to make the right decisions and speak from the heart when alarms sound because someone is threatened—their world is about to collapse; they are discouraged; they are fighting various threats to their faithfulness. Christ’s messages to those struggling were always correct!

The Church today must follow Christ’s example. It is to herald the “good news”! Long after we depart this life our presence still lingers in the words that we spoke. The words spoken to us, by others, are ✚ seared into our memory. When a person’s name is mentioned, we instantly recall those words.

Others will have cause to reflect on our lives. Some will not be a longtime friend; maybe they heard you only once. This brings us to a very interesting question...✚ “What is the one trait for which your speech will be remembered?”

Napoleon had his Waterloo; Stalin his purge of the people he hated; Hitler had his death camps. The infamous always provokes ill feelings and tragic sorrow is chiseled into the mind’s memories.

Abraham Lincoln left a life that was sacrificed for freedom. He and all others who leave a noble thought remind us that goodness is amplified in death.

✚ God urges us to leave a lasting legacy of nobility in speech—to be forever remembered as a “people-builder.” It is one of the greatest needs of our current society AND especially in the Lord’s Church.

Many years ago, Anne Murray’s hit single, “A little good news” reminded us about the tragic negativism surrounding us. “I rolled out this morning the kids had the morning news show on; Bryant Gumble was talking about the fighting in Lebanon; Some Senator was squawking bout the bad economy, it’s gonna get worse you see, we need a change in policy ... we sure could use a little good news today.”

✚ Of all the speech habits and expressions that Christians need to develop that are essential to initiating and maintaining the true quality of righteous living, the most needed and most neglected is the “People-Builder.”

✚ Edification is a fundamental need for all of us; at times good or bad; at any age; in any situation in life. We need regular reminders that we are important and loved. From where will these reminders come in your life?

A tragic legacy is recorded in Job 1:9-10, “Then his wife said to him, ‘Do you still hold firm your integrity? Curse God and die!’ But he said to her, ‘You are speaking as one of the foolish women speaks’.”

- ✚ The world has its products that promise to increase self-esteem and provide security. These are glamorously advertised and presented with confidence. But they fail.
- The Christian has his source by which self-esteem, security, satisfaction, deep joy, and a myriad of other blessings result—that is the biblical process of edification. And, this is the only way that succeeds!

“Like a vitamin that our body must have, but cannot manufacture for itself, edification is something others must provide for us.”

- Man needs “authentic edification.” The world is intent on “tearing down.” ✚ The Christian counters the world’s negativism and offers peace and edification!
- “Authentic edification” ✚ affirms noble qualities and acts; deals honestly with counterproductive ideas and behavior; and, loves unconditionally through it all.

Look at the great need and the pressing duty to become a ✚ “People-Builder” using authentic edification.

✚ The Daily Environment

You need to become a People-Builder because of the discouraging world in which we live. You find only misery if you depend upon the world to boost your self-esteem. The world’s daily environment leaves you empty. This

destructive environment of the world is 🚫 neutralized by two critical factors that make biblical edification possible—“Encouragement” and “Exhortation.”

🚫 *The daily environment of the world fails to build with honesty.*

A famous football coach was on vacation in Maine. They went to see a movie. When they walked into the theatre and sat down, the handful of people there applauded. He turned to his wife and said, “I can’t believe it; people recognize me all the way up here!” He was pumped full of good feelings. Then a man came over and said, “Thanks for coming. They won’t start the movie for less than ten people.”

Encouragement is needed by everyone. Everyone needs to be affirmed, built up, and given regular reminders of the good they do. This realization of one’s “good” qualities is critical. Encouragement is a “must provide” to us by others! A failure to receive this encouragement, results in abnormalities!

Even Christ needed encouragement. Matthew 3:17; 17:5, “This is MY Son. I am very well pleased with Him. He is my Beloved!”

Mark Twain said, “I can live for two months on one good compliment.” Sincere compliments are essential. We are designed for encouragement that is deeper than positive, flattering words. This is the action of “exhortation.”

Exhortation calls us beyond mediocrity and triviality. It calls us to be challenged to a greater maturity, productivity and vision of what each can do to magnify God’s work! This was the Hebrews writer’s purpose in sending “words of exhortation” to brethren.

- “I urge you, brothers and sisters, listen patiently to this word of exhortation” (13:22)
- “(L)et us consider how to encourage one another in love and good deeds” (10:24).

The Christian is expected to exhort men and women to spiritual greatness. This is greatness NOT as the world defines it but as God commands it.

Mark 9:34-35, “(T)hey had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest. And sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, ‘If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all’.”

Let us call our brethren to greatness by authentic encouragement; affirm their noble qualities; applaud their individualism and differences that help the Church to grow; deal honestly with their counterproductive beliefs and behavior; love and accept “as God loved and accepted you”!

This exhortation and call to service urges each Christian to utilize the individual gifts that God has given them. All are not expected to do the same work. Trying to coerce all to do the same thing invalidates People-Building. “For just as we have many parts in one body and all the body’s parts do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually parts of one another. However, since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to use them properly” (Romans 12:4-6).


🚫 *The daily environment of the world fails to build with truthful values.*


The 🚫 earthly values say with slick persuasion—“You are valuable ONLY IF you are attractive, wealthy, athletic, smart, young, powerful, and sexy.” The total focus is on the outward! Worldly cosmetics are designed for the outward! And, NO ONE feels qualified! Even the “cover girls” pronounce themselves as “flawed.” Most see themselves as “Second rate” or even worse as “Average”!

“One of our greatest statesmen was ridiculed by the press of his day because of his accent and his looks: ‘a slang-whanging stump speaker ... a horrid-looking wrench ... the leanest, lankest, most ungainly mass of legs and arms and hatchet face ever strung on a frame.’ Such were some of the editorial comments in 1860 on one Abraham Lincoln.”

Every day you and all with whom you associate are told how bad all are—too frizzy, too wrinkled, too grey, too common. In the 1980s psychologists coined a phrase describing how the culture was inflected by an 🚫 “epidemic of inferiority.” The youth struggled with this “epidemic.” Sadly, many accept tragic solutions in response to their insecure feelings. There is a pronounced “woe” upon anyone who is “average.”


There are three pronounced problems highlighted by analysts of this culture:


- Those standards discourage.
- Those are false standards of human value.
- These standards do not satisfy! These, following the philosophy of the world, live  in stark contrast with the Christian who says, “My soul is satisfied...and my mouth offers praises with joyful lips” (Psalm 63:5).

The world is a discouraging, demeaning, and belittling environment. A survey was conducted in the mid-1980s among early adolescents. One of the sections asked those surveyed to write down the most pressing question in their lives. Almost unanimous was the reply that those adolescents wanted to know  “What’s wrong with me?”

What would prompt someone to struggle, “What’s wrong with me?” Why would someone feel he can NEVER satisfactorily perform to another’s expectations?


- These are around those who communicate the question, with the spoken word, or, more often, the unspoken word, “Can’t you do ANYTHING right?” It is the tone and tenor of the discouraging voice.
- These constantly hear a negative verdict is rendered on almost everything done. And so, there is a tearing down instead of a building up!

Our daily worldly environment  feeds us with negative messages that demoralize and erase our initiative for activity. A justifiable question: “If there is never positive compliments given to us, why should we continue doing anything?” We are too fat, too frizzy, too frumpy, too wrinkled, too grey, or too ordinary! Like Linda Ronstadt sings of this epidemic of low self-esteem, “You’re no good, you’re no good, you’re no good. Baby you’re no good.”




 Tragically some NEVER give compliments, appreciation or even apologies that are critical to combating the worldly environment! And if any positives are given, they are always a “backhanded comment”—“You did that good which is surprising as you always do...”

 *The daily environment the Church/Christian MUST build with truthful values.*


You need to be an influence totally different from the world! “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by people” (Matthew 5:13). God designed His Church to edify just as He edifies!

-  Our God is a God of affirmation, and He designed His Church to be the source of affirmation in this world of sin and sorrow.


“For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the hostility, which is the Law composed of commandments expressed in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two one new person, in this way establishing peace; and that He might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the hostility” (Ephesians 2:14-16).


- God’s  cosmetics are MUCH more effective—our outward man is fading but our inward man is growing! (2 Corinthians 4:16). “(S)howing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect” (Titus 2:10).
- God  encourages us to achieve and excel. “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10).
- Every time God  communicated with man it was for the purpose of encouraging man to achieve great goals by using his abilities, reason and faith.

“(T)he Lord said to Abram, ‘Go...And I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing; and...in you all the families of the earth will be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3).

- God fulfilled every promise thus  validating each person's value. “Yes! you are of infinite value! I sent my only begotten Son to die for you!”


“For as many as the promises of God are, in Him they are yes; therefore, through Him also is our Amen to the glory of God through us (2 Corinthians 1:20).

- God  affirms and emancipates people in Christ and offers great blessings to all who obey. “(Y)ou are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and are of God's household” (Ephesians 2:19).

 Matthew 5:48, “you shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” As His children we ought to imitate God's example and offer encouragement to others!


 *The daily environment of the Church/Christian builds with these actions.*



The 1872 “home on the range, where seldom is heard a discouraging word,” is elusive in our culture. Discouragement distracts and redirects our attention away from our mission objectives. The Christian should have a positive vocabulary voicing a trusting faith in the Almighty God.

The basis for confidence when attacked by discouragement is expressed in  Psalm 59, “On account of the sin of their mouths and the words of their lips...and on account of curses and lies which they tell...they howl like a dog, and prowl around the city...and murmur...But as for me, I will sing of Your strength; yes, I will joyfully sing of Your faithfulness in the morning, for You have been my refuge and a place of refuge on the day of my distress” (59:12-16).


The world seeks to misdirect our focus. This misdirection places emphasis upon money, possessions, worldly associations, status and prestige in society. This misdirection robs us of eternal reward waiting for the steadfast!

Again, think back to Bunyan. “Little-Faith” was a Christian pilgrim on his way to the Celestial City. He is attacked and robbed by three rogues (Fainthearted, Mistrust, and Guilt). They took all of his silver but overlooked his most valued possession, his inheritance and certificate of admission into the Celestial City. Little-Faith was devastated by the loss of his silver. He still had his inheritance but all he could think about was his personal loss. From that point on, he was a depressed, discouraged Pilgrim!

 “Don't invest your hearts heavily in earthly possessions. Why should I fear anything that cannot rob me of God and why should I desire anything that cannot give me possession of God?”

God's way of encouragement has changed. Once He talked directly with those He needed to encourage. But now  His encouragement comes through the Bible and His Church. He has delegated the duty of encouragement to the individual Christian. Christian encouragement is THE front-line defense against sin.  In the Church we should find People-Builders who see the best in us and expect the best from us AND verbally communicates in People-Building words. Two key New Testament words describe this duty. These were discussed above but consider them in review as you evaluate your People-Building actions and attitudes:

➤ EDIFICATION

The etymology of this term was discussed above. We are all building  a house (in a figurative sense) as we obey God (Matthew 7:24, 25; Ephesians 2:19-22). This process is not done in isolation. The local congregation is a “house raising” for each member!

- Romans 15:1-3—We edify by being gentle with weak ones.
- 1 Corinthians 8:1, 2—We edify with a sensitive love and not arrogance.
- Colossians 1:28—We edify to attain a goal of spiritual “maturity.”
- Hebrews 3:13—We edify by holding fast to sound doctrine.
- Ephesians 4:13-16—We edify by discovering each individual's unique talents.
- 1 Corinthians 14:12—We strive to use the gift of edification.

Being a People-Builder, in the Church, ☞ requires us to choose patience, graciousness, and love. It is ☞ no insignificant duty and should never be ignored. God expects ☞ EACH member of the congregation to serve in this construction! Do you accept and perform this expected service?

“For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh but serve one another through love” (Galatians 5:13).

➤ ☞ EXHORTATION

Barnabas is the historic illustration of this action (Acts 4:36). The Greek term literally means to “comfort; entreat; encourage.” The idea is to call someone to your side and give the needed assistance. This was Barnabas. He would come alongside a discouraged or weak brother and help them (Hebrews 3:13).

The process of exhortation is illustrated in the work of the Holy Spirit (John 14-16). The Holy Spirit ☞ is the “Comforter.” He exhorts, encourages and comforts. The supply line providing proper “exhortation” comes from the Holy Spirit. This is ☞ NOT some goosebump feeling of the Spirit “leading” us. This comes ☞ from the Word of God that the Holy Spirit inspired. ☞ The Holy Spirit speaks today ONLY through the Scriptures. This is found specifically in a number of texts but look at Hebrews 3:7, “Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says...” The Greek verb is in the present continuous and thus “The Holy Spirit IS SAYING.” When we read the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit is talking to us.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

Our exhortation is to, “consider how to encourage one another in love and good deeds” (Hebrews 10:24).

The process of exhorting with the Holy Spirit follows these principles ☞ from John 14:

- “Spirit of Truth” (14:17). A true Exhorter will be honest with another and point them to God’s Truth that sets all free from sin.
- Remind of teaching (14:26). A true Exhorter points to Christ’s teachings and doctrinal commands as solutions to problems and sources of the blessed hope.
- Provide the peace of God (14:27). The true Exhorter does not offer the solutions that the worldly life prescribes for peace in troubling situations. The true exhorter points to the solutions found in God’s forgiveness that assures true peace.
- Be with us forever (14:16-18). A true Exhorter will never forsake another. “(T)here is a friend who sticks closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24).

☞ The Mission Strategy

There is a very specific plan by which God wants His People to act and become “People-Builders” by speaking from their hearts...

Be a People-builder in worshipping assemblies.

The assemblies are not the only place you should do this, but it is in the assemblies that special attention should be paid to building up one another (Hebrews 10:25). We assemble to worship God and to give and receive encouragement from God’s Truth and our brethren. Attending these assemblies is a deliberate choice to encourage (Hebrews 10:24). When we miss assemblies, we forsake God and forsake our brethren’s needs as well as our own.

- Some say, “I just don’t get the encouragement I need when I go.” That person is missing the point in Hebrews 10:24-25.
- The real issue is “Are YOU coming and are YOU offering the encouragement that another needs?”

☞ *Be a People-Builder by limiting critical words, facial expressions, and condescending gestures!*

Some find it easier to use critical words rather than encouraging words. In fact, some have forgotten how to be encouragers. Tragically some were brought up in a home where never an encouraging word was

spoken to the child by the parent! Sadly, some will use bitter and cutting words to those closest. Some relish bringing out the “Trophy Hurts” to justify their insecurities and hurtful communication.

🔑 You choose what words you communicate. You have two options:

- “Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones” (Proverbs 16:24).
- “You love all words that devour” (Psalm 52:4).

🔑 Our concern should be that echoed by the Psalmist: “May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, Lord, my rock and my Redeemer” (Psalm 19:14).

🔑 *Be a People-Builder by specific communication.*

Identify exactly what another has done that is good (Ephesians 1:15, 16; Colossians 1:3-8).

🔑 *Be a People-Builder by affirmation not manipulation.*

Be sincere in your communication.

🔑 *Be a People-Builder by clarity.*

Communicate exactly HOW the person has acted or spoken that resulted in good deeds glory to God. Do not mix words of encouragement with unclear or sarcastic comments—“I can’t believe YOU did such a good job!”

🔑 *Be a People-Builder by writing short notes.*

Send a text or an email. A written card or letter can be kept, cherished, and re-read.

Implement Your Intentions to Become a People-Builder

A Christian suffered a nervous breakdown. Nothing could lift him out of his depression. One day a friend suggested this therapy: Identify some person who has had a positive impact upon your life and write them a simple thank you note. He thought of a schoolteacher who early in his life had instilled in him a love for learning. He wrote to her and expressed his thankfulness. Sometime later a letter arrived from the teacher, long since retired: “You have warmed my old heart. I have taught school for fifty years. Yours is the first letter of thanks I ever received from a student, and I shall cherish it until I die.” The Christian went on to write some 500 such letters of thanks; his “encouragement-therapy” played a major role in working his way back from a crippling despondency.

When we talk about “taming our tongue,” “pruning the grapevine,” “wearing Granny’s Glasses” or avoiding “angry words that are nursed by a sack of rocks or polished Trophy Hurts,” we ought to conclude that the best way of speaking from our hearts is done by 🔑 becoming a God-fearing “People-builder.”

- 🔑 Such will never gossip, backbite, or slander.
- 🔑 Such will avoid profanity.
- 🔑 Such will cause us to control angry impulses.

I hope you will determine to use these biblical principles and become a great “People-builder” in this congregation! If you choose to do this, then a wonderful residual benefit result—it will build you up as well. It will develop within you a keen eye for the true, noble, lovely, admirable, and praiseworthy (Philippians 4:8).

Words of exhortation and edification are powerful enhancers of “the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love.”

Hopefully this class will lead you to a 🔑 critical “So, then...” response!

The Pitiful Builder— “I waited for sympathy, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none” (Psalm 69:20).

The People Builder—“So, then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another” (Romans 14:19).

The Final Text to remember...

“The Lord God has given Me the tongue of disciples, so that I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word” (Isaiah 50:4).