

- **\*Read Ephesians 4:11-16\*** In Paul's great essay on the church, he here describes for us God's plan for the building up of Christ's Body. I notice 4 times when the concept of equipping, growing, or building is referenced in these short 5 verses. While it is not mentioned in the NASB because it is not a common phrase or word in our vernacular, the word 'edifying' is used twice in the verses to convey the idea of growth within the body and the Christian's edification. Our common definition for the idea of 'edification' is to say that it simply means to build up. Much like a wall that is being constructed, our faith must be continually strengthened if we are to grow into the mature man that is mentioned in **v.13**.
- The definition of 'to build up' doesn't give us too much, though, in the way of details. It doesn't give us much of the who, what, when, or where. And because it doesn't give us much, we sometimes feel lost and we don't give the idea of edification much thought at all. I'd like to share with you the best definition/explanation of edification that I have ever heard. I think this explanation really conveys the true idea of what it means to be edified as a Christian. Edification is....**"The application of Bible truth to my life and circumstances so that I am more like Christ."** -Max Dawson. This definition is a summation of the text that we read just a few minutes ago, and I'd like for us to consider how and why we should be edified in our faiths as Christians.

**"The application of Bible truth to my life and circumstances so that I am more like Christ." -Max Dawson**

**I. "The application..."**

- A. Application defined is..."the action of putting something into practice."
  1. When we think of application in regards to building a wall, then what comes to our mind is the applying of the building materials on top of one another in order to raise the wall.
  2. Just having the bricks and mortar does us no good at all. What we must have is the application of the mortar to the bricks and the bricks on top of one another so that the wall can be erected.
- B. Therefore, the beginnings of edification in my life as a Christian is taking something and adding it to myself in order to grow.
  1. We must recognize that the norm is for a new convert to not have an expansive knowledge of God's word or how it affects them.
  2. With this being the case, it is the responsibility of the new convert to do what they can in order to build their "wall" of faith in order to grow stronger, but they must make sure that they are applying the correct materials to their "wall" of faith.
  3. One of the important aspects of building anything, especially a wall is having the best building materials and a proper foundation. The worthwhile contractor would use only the best of materials to construct a wall that would be able to do its job. The lazy or foolish builder would do something different. **(Matt. 7:24-27)**
  4. Likewise, the Christian must be sure to build their faith with the best of materials, and the next portion of our working definition for 'Edification' will let us know what the proper materials consist of.

**II. "...of Bible truth..."**

- A. We must be busy applying those things that are from the all powerful and knowing mind of God.
  1. The things written in the Bible are not the "think sos" or ideas of man, but they have been recorded based upon the will of God and His Holy Spirit. **(II Peter 2:20,21)**
  2. The teachings of the Bible are those things that teach us what is right, how to get right, and how to stay right. **(II Tim. 3:16,17)**
  3. This is the reason for God blessing some within the church with the ability to give their time and energies to God's Word and the proper teaching of it. It is their job and responsibility to feed the saints with those things that will equip them for proper working of the church. **(4:12)**
- B. Not only must it come from the Bible, but we must make sure that we are accurately applying the teachings that are found within the Bible.
  1. Peter admits that it is possible for the words of inspired men to be twisted, distorted, and misused. **(II Peter 3:16)**
  2. This leaves us with a great responsibility to make sure that we are accurately handling God's Words and that we are not pulling them out of context or misusing them. **(II Tim. 2:15)**
  3. Therefore, when we are taught that something is true, then we ought to search God's Word and make sure that the teaching is correct and proper. **(Acts 11:17)**

4. We do this to make sure that we are not spiritual children that are easily led away by the trickery of men and their false teachings. **(4:14)**
5. But what exactly should we apply these Biblical truths to? Our definition tells us that next.

### III. "...to my life and circumstances..."

- A. The first point I want to focus on in this section of our definition is the "my."
  1. It can be really easy for us to listen to good Biblical teachings or read and study through our Bibles and constantly think to ourselves, "I sure hope brother Jim Bob heard that" or "hey, sister Ima Lu sure needs to read this so I'm gonna post it on Facebook."
  2. While those things might even be true, our focus must first and foremost be on ourselves. We certainly wouldn't want to be that person who is focuses on the specks in others eyes, while we have a 2x4 sticking out of our own eyes. **(Matt. 7:5)**
  3. I am responsible for my part in strengthening the body **(4:16)**, but if I'm concerned with others to the extent that I fail to consider my part in growing, then I am falling short of true edification.
- B. So what am I to do with that Biblical truth that has been presented to me? I am to take it and make the proper applications of it to where I am right now as a Christian.
  1. Not everyone's life or circumstances are the same, so a particular truth might affect one person differently than it does another.
  2. My level of spiritual maturity isn't the same as others, so what might be necessary for my edification isn't necessarily the same thing that might be need for others.
  3. Regardless, again considering Paul's admonition to Timothy, **"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God." (II Tim. 2:15)** I must make sure that I am giving every effort to make sure that I am taking the truths of God's Word and using them to build my faith in such a way that I am doing my part to make sure that the body is strong.
  4. And my part that I can do to make sure the body is strong is given in the last portion of our definition.

### IV. "...so that I am more like Christ."

- A. This is the ultimate goal of edification, to become more like Jesus.
  1. As disciples, we follow Jesus because we believe that His way is the right and best way.
  2. As Christians, we dedicated ourselves to try and be Christ-like in all that we do. Therefore, the goal that we are striving for in our edification is to be like Jesus.
  3. This goal is the goal that Paul was desiring for the Ephesians and all Christians to aim for here in our text of **Ephesians 4:11-16**.
  4. God gave these spiritual leaders to equip the saints so that they would grow to maturity, to be more like the fullness of Christ, to not be tossed about false teachings, and to grow up in all things even as Christ did. **(4:13-15)**
- B. The wall of faith that we ought to be building should look just like our Lord.
  1. So when we listen to a lesson, when we sit in a Bible class, or when we are studying and meditating on God's Word...our goal and purpose in doing so is to see how we can be more like Jesus in our lives.
  2. When we run across difficulties in this life, our move should be to look to God's Word and see how Jesus would have for us to approach them. We should allow the Bible's truths to to guide us in our current circumstances so that we would do as Jesus would do.
  3. Therefore, as be take in more and more Biblical teachings, we should see more and more Jesus in our wall of faith. We should see the attributes of Jesus shining through more and more in our lives, and our spiritual growth should be evident in the way that we approach the day to day activities of our lives and the circumstances that we find ourselves in.

We often speak of being edified and built up, but that doesn't always translate to Disciples being edified or built up. Sometimes our words need to find a Biblical basis and possibly no other text gives us greater detail of the Christian's edification than **Ephesians 4:11-16**. May God help us to consider these words and use them as brick and mortar to build a strong wall of faith that will be able to stand regardless of our circumstances in life. May God help us to be more like His Son, so that just as Jesus did, we can glorify God in all things.