

**Table of Contents**  
**Encouragement is to be ....**

<b>Example to One Another</b>	2
<b>Nurturer to One Another</b>	5
<b>Committed to One Another</b>	8
<b>Overcomer to One Another</b>	11
<b>Unifier to One Another</b>	14
<b>Respectful to One Another</b>	17
<b>Alert to One Another</b>	20
<b>Giver to One Another</b>	23
<b>Edifier to One Another</b>	26
<b>Mentor to One Another</b>	28
<b>Esteemer to One Another</b>	31
<b>Nourisher to One Another</b>	33
<b>Teacher to One Another</b>	36

## **The Art of Encouragement**

Encouragers are not born. They are made.  
They want to help and not for accolades.  
They give themselves wholly and generously.  
They want to build up others spiritually.

They look for their moments, these holy supporters,  
For they think of the kingdom, its expandable borders.  
They want to uplift and prefer one another,  
Think not of themselves but defer to the other.

There is no set limit for how many can do it.  
It's simple enough, when you get right down to it.  
Just pick out somebody or tow, five or ten.  
Encourage them often and times without end.  
(unknown)

## Example to one Another

**"For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you."**

**John 13:15, NAS95**

This passage is spoken by Jesus immediately after He had washed the disciple's feet. It was customary for a slave to wash the feet of a guest before dinner. No one had provided this service, so Jesus washed at least 24 feet, removing the dirt and grime from 240 toes that had walked through the dusty streets in sandals. Think about that image! Why did He do this? He left a perfect **example** of humility (Philippians 2:5) and a willingness to serve others. Most of the time we simply say, "foot washing is not part of our religion" and then go on about our business. I agree foot washing was not part of the early church worship, HOWEVER, reread John 13:15. The example Jesus gave was to be imitated, "do as I did." I wonder if Peter had this passage when he wrote 1 Peter 2:21? Christ was the pattern that all should follow and imitate. According to the scriptures, we are to imitate the positive examples of those who have walked before us. Not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a **model** for you, so that you would follow our **example**" (2 Thessalonians 3:9). Paul, Peter and James urge their readers to imitate, follow, model, and practice their examples, emphasizing *as he follows Christ* (1 Corinthians 4:16, 11:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; Philippians 3:17; James 5:10). "For you yourselves know how you ought to **follow our example**, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you" (2 Thessalonians 3:7). Their conduct and manner of life was disciplined, right and proper; setting the example for others to follow.

"Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a **manner worthy** of the calling with which you have been called" (Ephesians 4:1). Paul urges his readers to WALK in a worthy manner, to live, act and conduct oneself in a way that should be an example for others to follow, to imitate. "so that you will not be sluggish, but **imitators** of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Hebrews 6:12). Mimic them in the way WE live and walk in a manner that reflects Christ living in us. Then we are providing an example that is worthy to be imitated. NOT because we are ideal or a model, but because as Christ lives in us, we reflect the image of Him in our daily lives. This should be our lifelong goal. "My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is **formed** in you" (Galatians 4:19). This is a long-term project, a work in progress that requires diligent effort to grow in knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18), to put into practice the things we learn, overcoming temptation. "I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because **you have overcome the evil one**. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father" (1 John 2:13).

John could see the progress being made by those to whom he was writing. He commended them for their growing relationship with God that provided the strength to overcome the evil one through the strength from God. The fathers knew God from the beginning, the young men (*usually includes those up to 40 years of age*) knew God and overcame Satan, and the children know God also. May I suggest that this an illustration of how strong positive examples benefit those who imitate the faithful (Hebrews 6:12)? Drawing strength from examples of the faithful helps each of us become stronger. It provides patient endurance until we are completely, wholly

*infused* with Christ and His doctrines until His teachings are the driving force in our daily lives. Leaven is always used in a negative connotation in the scriptures however, this is the very concept described in Galatians 4:19 and Col 1:27.

“But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1) “But as for you, you must speak in a **manner** that befits wholesome teaching” (Titus 2:1, WNT). The emphasis of this verse, in both translations, is on speaking sound doctrine, whether you are older men/women or younger men/women. Your manner of life **MUST** compliment what you teach; practice what you preach.

“In all things show yourself to be an **example** [*pattern*] of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified” (Titus 2:7). In all parts of life demonstrate, display yourself as an example of good works.

Always speak using sound doctrine. “For the time will come when they will not endure **sound doctrine**; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires” (2 Timothy 4:3). This is a growing problem in many places **today**. What is preached is NOT the whole gospel, just the warm fuzzy parts, the feel-good parts. However, that doesn’t require the hearers to make any change in their lives. Some preachers have ceased to really offer what we have called an invitation. **WHY?** They haven’t asked the audience to do anything beyond grace and love. Both things are a wonderful part of God’s plan, but only a part; God provides the grace and love, mankind’s part is to obey the will of the Lord (Romans 10:14).

“In all things make yourself a pattern of good works: in teaching, **show incorruptness, gravity**” (Titus 2:7, Oracle). Preaching and teaching must be with purity, not corrupted. “But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the **simplicity** and purity of devotion to Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:3). Paul was fearful that Christians would be deceived. Just as Satan seduced Eve with deception, cunning, misrepresenting God’s words, presenting less than the whole counsel of God he can again corrupt the minds of the hearers, leading them astray from the “simplicity and purity that is Christ”.

**Remember** - Satan is just trying to get a person to make a slight change **AWAY** from the pure simple gospel. He is not expecting you to take a full step away. Just the slightest change which alters your thinking today, then tomorrow or next week he will be looking for more. More that will move you away from the simplicity of our devotion to Christ, to His church, to His pure doctrine, and from the manner we should live.

## **For Personal Study**

**Define “pattern” and cite passages where it is used.**

**Define follow.**

**Define imitate.**

**Define manner.**

**Define practice.**

**Define leaven.**

Online article—Influence: the potential for good and evil 5/22/11--- Missing the Mark- 10/20/19

**A good example is the greatest gift  
You can give your children and others.  
Your example will be there even  
When you are not.**

## Nurturer to one Another

**“Constantly nourished up in the words of faith.”**

**1 Timothy 4:6**

The scriptures are filled with illustrations and analogies using food and nutrition as the pure word of God to demonstrate the importance for growth and development of Christians. Whether you are young or older, good nutrition is vital for good health and combating disease. I was always intrigued by God providing the wandering Israelites with a diet of milk and honey. Milk is a great source of calcium, protein, potassium and vitamins, especially D and B-12. Honey contains natural sugar (*needed for energy*), minerals, vitamins and antioxidants. When you add manna and quail you complete the 4 food groups that modern man only recognized recently. From the Latin word *nutrire*, which means “to suckle” or “to nourish”, we get our words: nurture, nutrition, nourish, and other forms of the word.

In the New Testament, milk refers to the needs of the infant, babes in Christ, those who have not matured. “And I brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as **to infants in Christ**. I gave you **milk to drink**, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able” (1 Corinthians 3:1-2, NAS95). Why were they not able to receive Paul’s teaching?

“For you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? (1 Corinthians 3:3). They were dealing in the fleshly or carnal world, concerned about jealousy and strife. Dealing with such issues as who had baptized who and other matters irrelevant to salvation. This is one of the ways Satan works, distracting us from important spiritual things.

“Like newborn babies, long for the **pure milk of the word**, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation” (1 Peter 2:2). This passage is a great illustration of the principle of nurturing. The basic or elementary needs are furnished first. Milk is provided by the mother, the perfect food to produce growth and development in the infant. The infant naturally has a strong desire for the mother’s milk. Peter emphasizes that a new “born” Christian must long for (earnestly desire) the sincere pure unadulterated, genuine word of God. Mature Christians have a deep responsibility to nurture and provide the milk of the word to new Christians. As the newborn infant grows with proper nutrition, a new Christian will also grow when given the proper nutrition of God’s Word. Another one of Satan’s deceptive practices is to alter, weaken, or pollute the word, which like the natural milk must be kept pure and unadulterated to promote growth in the infant and the babe in Christ.

**A word of caution:** Today the grocery shelves are fully stocked with every kind of food however, many may have been processed to the point that the valuable nutrients are gone. The same process too often happens with the Gospel. Men have reduced the WORD OF GOD to little more than a “sugary snack” leaving far too many Christians without a well-balanced diet that will prevent spiritual disease and bad health. *Spiritual malnutrition is growing in our world every day.* Satan is busy at work! Wherever you worship, demand the elders and preachers provide unprocessed food, full of life-saving nutrients that fight against spiritual death.

*The bread of life is meant to be for daily use, not cake for special occasions.*

“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come **to need milk** and not solid food” (Hebrews 5:12). This passage reveals what happens if a proper diet is not followed, especially with older Christians. They are old enough to have graduated from *milk only* but have not matured enough to be able to digest solid food [*see the pattern of development*]. It is incumbent on every mature Christian to set the proper example for less mature Christians in maintaining a well-balanced spiritual diet. Preachers should not be required to beg and plead for Christians to read their Bible. We are to **earnestly desire** the word. It is a created habit, a practice that produces mature Christians without which you will still be a *milk only* Christian.

“For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant” (Hebrews 5:13). The writer explains that *milk only Christians* are unskillful and inexperienced in the use of God’s word. “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, **accurately handling** the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). This is a callused-hand person who masters his skills through regular study, application and experience, nurturing younger Christians in accurately handling God’s word. Acts 18:25 describes how Aquila and Pricilla nurtured Apollos with care and concern. They taught him privately to accurately handle the word correctly and to avoid embarrassment for Apollos.

“But solid food is for the **mature**, who because of **practice** have their senses trained to discern good and evil” (Hebrews 5:14). Contrast verse 12 with verse 14, see the growth, maturity and the level of skill that has developed.

In Ephesians 4:11-16, Paul describes how Christ intended for nurturing to work in the growth and development of Christians. He assigned different responsibilities to evangelist, pastors, and teachers. They were to accomplish different goals in equipping (*to make complete*) Christians for the work of service. Such service was to include nurturing, ministering, instructing, and training for the purpose of building up and edifying the body of Christ.

*How long is this necessary?*

“**Until** we all attain to **the unity of the faith**, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13). It is a continual work in progress, as new Christians, who are less skillful, begin the journey to heaven. We have been directed by Christ, through the Apostle, to do our duty in nurturing and mentoring those toward reaching the goal of the fullness of Christ. The wisdom of God can be seen in this instruction: as evangelist, pastors and teachers are fulfilling their responsibilities they are increasing in the knowledge of Christ which helps them nurture and mentor others and that promotes unity of the faith. It is a cycle of learning and grown.

“As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming” (Ephesians 4:14). This process reduces the effects of immature and childish behavior that is unstable and fertile place for Satan to plant his deceitful ideas.

“But speaking the truth in love, we are to **grow up** in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ” (Ephesians 4:15). Paul seems to be saying quit your childish ways and grow up! (1 Corinthians 13:11)

“From whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what **every joint** supplies, according to the proper working of each **individual part**, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love” (Ephesians 4:16). Paul instructs us to be perfectly joined together (1 Corinthians 1:10] so we can supply individually to the nurture, growth and development of every Christian in all aspects into Him who is Christ.

**“O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!”**  
**Psalms 34:8**

**Synonyms to Study**

**Cultivate**

**Promote (1 Corinthians 7:35)**

**Progress (1 Timothy 4:15)**

**Sustainer (Psalms 54:4 & 55:22)**

**Loaning someone your strength  
Instead of  
Reminding them of their weakness**



## Committed to one Another

**“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”**

**Revelation 2:10, NAS95**

How is a normal human being able to be continually faithful throughout their lives? As we examine the scriptures for an answer, you will soon discover words like devotion, steadfast, preserve and hold fast. All these terms paint a word picture of living life in this world as a Christian which can be a long bumpy ride. Satan is putting obstacles in the road to make it a difficult journey. Paul's journey was more difficult than most (2 Corinthians 11) because he was more deeply involved in his daily pursuit of the “crown of life.” He had been given a charge by Jesus Christ himself and was warned that it was going to be a very difficult walk. What about us? Do we expect an easy road to heaven? God never promised that!

It takes a commitment to reach any worthwhile goal. When you examine the often-referenced passage Revelation 2:10, “be faithful until death,” it requires the strongest commitment to the Lord. To be faithful encapsulates the concept of being devoted, steadfast, persevering and enduring until the end.

As a pre-Vietnam era veteran, the draft was still in place, so I committed to defend the country even with my life. I was more fortunate than some as I was never called to put my life on the line. Today we have first responders who are called to be in harm's way often. The U.S. has an all-volunteer army and so does Christ.

Are we soldiers of Jesus Christ? Have you volunteered? Have you committed to give your life in His service?

“Suffer hardship with me, as a **good soldier** of Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:3). Paul states it will be a hard life, you are going to suffer the difficult life of a soldier (Romans 8:17. Paul called Epaphroditus, Apphia and Archippus as fellow soldiers in His service.

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). Paul knew first-hand about soldiers because of his imprisonment. However, this description is not physical but mental, bringing every thought into captivity. Notice in verse 5- bringing down anything that is opposed to the gospel, every high thing [*exalted opinion*], pride, self-righteousness, and vain thoughts that war against the soul. Bring every thought into captivity, subduing pride, and sin, like the inhabitants of a captured city. Christ is the general of His army, the battles waged, and the victories won will be by His power and under His authority. When will this happen? It all depends on when we have our mind and heart totally subjected to His will. All of life's plans should be controlled by His will and our emotions and feelings of the heart should be controlled by Him.

"Let your heart therefore be **wholly devoted** to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and to keep His commandments, as at this day" (1 Kings 8:61).

"But the high places were not taken away; nevertheless, the heart of Asa was **wholly devoted** to the LORD all his days" (1 Kings 15:14).

"Remember now, O LORD, I beseech You, how I have walked before You in truth and with a **whole heart** and have done what is good in Your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly" (2 Kings 20:3).

These 3 old testament passages record perfectly the concept of being completely committed to the Lord. Devotion is an expression displayed in our actions and activities. Notice the Old Testament passages: walk in His statutes, keep His commandments, has done good in God's sight, these were displays of their devotion to their object of worship-GOD.

To successfully wage spiritual warfare, fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 1:18, 6:12). God provides us with the proper weapons to use in battle. We must provide the devotion to Him, persevere through the hardships in battle, and endure till the end to gain the victory.

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, **having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace**; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:10-17). Paul's use of the armor worn by a Roman soldier is used to illustrate what every Christian soldier needs to fight against Satan daily. The forces of wickedness are not physical, although they may manifest themselves that way. Our concern must be about our spiritual soul and most of the battle is for control of the mind. The pieces of armor are designed to protect all the vital parts of the body and when properly used will protect the spiritual body from the schemes of the devil.

Take a stand - prepared by being wholly **devoted** to serving God. 1 Corinthians 16:13

Protect your loins - the power of strength, **truth**. John 8:32

Bullet-proof your chest, heart and lungs, **righteousness**. Matthew 6:33

Combat boots - protect those beautiful feet, **Gospel**. Romans 1:16

Shield protects from incoming threats, **Faith**. Romans 1:17

The scene of the battle is the mind, the helmet of **salvation**. Romans 10:10

The offensive weapon, the Sword or **word of God**. Hebrews 4:12

When we are faithful until death (Revelation 2:10) we will be rewarded with a "crown of life".

“Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the **crown of life** which the Lord has promised to those who love Him” (James 1:12).

“In the future there is laid up for me the **crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearin” (2 Timothy 4:8).

Each one of us will “chose who we will serve today and every day!” (Joshua 24:15).

**“Excellence is not a gift, but a skill that takes practice.  
We do not act “rightly” but we are excellence,  
In fact, we achieve excellence  
By acting ‘rightly.’”  
Plato**

## Overcomer to one Another

### *Faith is the victory that overcomes the world.*

One of the greatest encouragements we can be to another is to overcome Satan's traps, snares and temptations. "I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have **overcome** the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have **overcome** the evil one" (1 John 2:13-14, NAS95). John writes to three groups of people in the church; youth, young, and the aged. He challenges each group to use their talents to overcome Satan.

John begins by addressing the **fathers**, more mature in life experiences. However, being older doesn't automatically make one wiser. It usually means they have a vast amount of experience from the things they have passed through, which should translate into knowledge and wisdom. The long acquaintance with the scriptures (having known Christ from the beginning) and the application of them will improve lives and be a strong encouragement to others.

He then addresses the **young men**. Most commentators believe this age group is between children and fathers, probably under 40 years old. A group that is actively in conflict with Satan and strived to overcome the evil one. They have triumphed by combatting the attractions of ambition, sensuality, pride and passions (2 Corinthians 2:14). They have demonstrated strength of character and employed that strength to maintain the cause of Christ. John makes a strong appeal to them to employ their talents, vigor and energy in service to Christ and to stand up for God's truth. Calling them strong because they have proven themselves. The word of God abides in you to overcome the evil one.

The address to children is because they are Christians, they know the Father Their sins have been forgiven (verse 12) so they have an opportunity to prove themselves by continuing to overcome Satan. The "teen" world is filled with every roadblock, snare and temptation that Satan can put in the way of a young Christian daily. He most dangerous tool is constantly in their hands. The cell phone is the single most dangerous device ever invented! The access to all that is worldly, sensual, and the tools of Satan are just a click away 24/7. Yes, I know it can be a great resource also. Rat poison has a purpose too but must be controlled.

### *How do we overcome the world?*

John gives the answer in 1 John 2:15, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

When John stated "don't love the world" he is forbidding the objects of man's creation, values, treasures and honors. An inordinate desire, covetousness for these things is the way of the world as created and maintained by Satan for the seduction of mankind (Colossians 2:8 and Matthew 16:26). All these things come from Satan, not God because they are incompatible with God. Just as light and dark CANNOT be in the same place, neither can worldly things and the love of God. The things of the world take away peace, holiness and the joys of heaven (Matthew 6:24).

So, what is in this world John speaks about? “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world” (1 John 2:16). John is very concise, ALL that is in the world, the complete contents are listed here in this verse. The contents of the world are the seeds of lust, defined as an inordinate desire for, an obsession, an unnatural craving for these things (James 1:14). When a person is confronted with a temptation, sin can occur from the lust within the person. When one does not resist to overcome the temptation then sin occurs. The foundation of every temptation is an “unsatisfied desire.”

**Lust of the flesh** - *every kind of sensual behavior* “Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy” (Romans 13:13).

“For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries” (1 Peter 4:3).

**Lust of the eyes** - *designed to gratify the sight*-glitz, glitter and bling. Ambitious affection of pomp, glory of the world, costly clothes, jewels, expensive homes and cars. The eye is one of the access points to the mind.

**Pride of life** - *arrogant assumption*- vain applause, mental boasting (I can dunk the ball, 5’9” and old, lol) self-exalting design, unmerited and over-rated praise. This sense of pride and arrogance can be displayed in our dress, multiple homes/ cars and other stuff. **Caution:** Parents usually pass these attitudes on to their children (James 3:14).

**This is Satan’s playbook. He will use these same temptations against you and me, just as he used it in the past.**

“When the woman saw that the tree was **good for food**, (lust of the flesh) and that it was a **delight to the eyes**, (lust of the eyes) and that the tree was desirable to **make one wise**, [Pride of life]she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate” (Genesis 3:6).

Luke 4:1-12 tells us that Jesus was tempted in the very same way as Eve in Genesis.

**Examine** Mathew 13:18-23. The parable of the sower has the same illustration, the same problem. The seed falls on the wayside, the devil takes it away. The thorns are the world and rocky soil is the flesh.

“Is not from the Father but is from the world” (1 John 2:16).

“You are from God, little children, and have **overcome** them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

“**Who is the one who overcomes the world**, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth” (1 John 5:5 -6).

John asks the question, “Who is the one who overcomes?” This should be of great interest to us.

The next question is, “How can we overcome the world?” There is an ongoing conflict between the spiritual realm and the earthly realm. The conflict exists in the heart of every Christian. Everyone who is born of God can secure the victory, the triumph over the world. "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation but take courage; I have **overcome** the world” (John 16:33). Because Christ overcame the world, we also can have that victory so long as we abide in Him. Through this divine birth we become superior to the world, its desires, pleasures and fears that can be a great hinderance to our faithfulness to God.

“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and **this is the victory** that has overcome the world--our faith” (1 John 5:4). Our faith in Jesus Christ is the weapon and hope that gives us the power to overcome the world.

*The world view of evil*

*First it is overlooked as evil*

*Then evil is permitted*

*Then evil is legalized*

*Then evil is celebrated*

*Then those who call it evil are persecuted*

**“The fear of the Lord is to hate sin: pride, and arrogancy and the evil way.”**

**Proverbs 8:13**

## Unifier to One Another

One of the most promote points in Paul's writings is the idea of oneness, one accord, united, agreeable, compatible, and the same mind. He is promoting peace and unity in the Lord's church and a sense of belonging for individual Christians. In 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Paul uses the human body to fully illustrate the importance of church unity. "I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well" (Psalms 139:14, NAS95). There is nothing more complex or complicated than the human body. Designed and created by God Himself for the benefit of mankind but with the sole purpose of glorifying God the creator.

"For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:12). If you want to be an **unifier for others** Paul says it will begin with being one in Christ. The comparison of the human body to the church is ingenious in explaining how all these elements work together to benefit others. Every member has a place and purpose. He illustrates, eye is not better than the foot or the thumb better than the toe, every member has a distinction. The variety of the members contributes to the functionality and beauty of the Lord's church, both local and universally.

We can see God's wisdom in the design of the human body. It is a remarkable arrangement of bone, muscle, and other items that allows a person to do amazing things Why? Because God set them in place as it pleased Him.

God also set the church as it pleased Him. "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11). Every member has a purpose in the local church, "For the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12). God designed this arrangement so the body would build up itself forever through continuing education. The growth of a Christian should NEVER end. The KJV states, "for the perfecting of the saints" who are striving to reach the ultimate goal. "Until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). Continual growth, looking to Jesus as the measure, the standard to work toward. A state of strength, vigor, wisdom and moral character which allows us to put off childish behavior. "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong" (1 Corinthians 16:13).

"From whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:16).

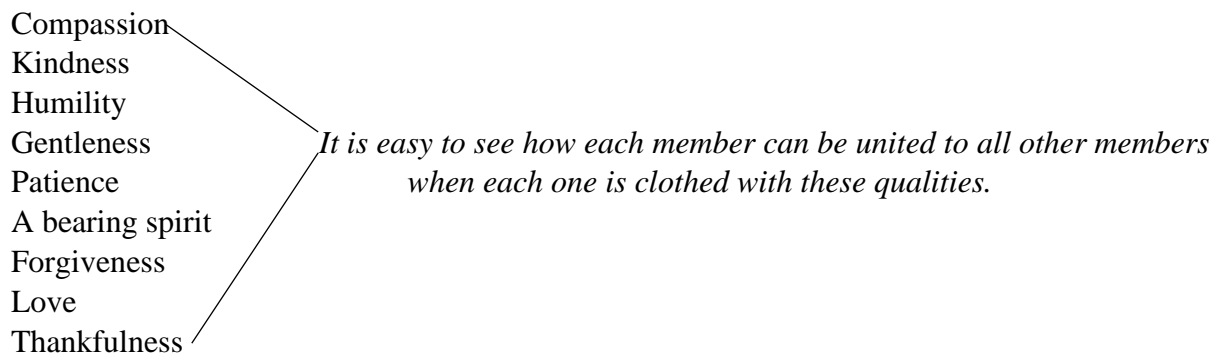
The comparison of the human body to the church continues, teaching us a vital lesson about God's desire for the church. The human head conveys all the directions and influence to the rest of the body including the impulse that causes the heart to beat (over 115,000 times a day and the lungs to function). Christ, as the head of the church, performs the function of giving direction to the body, creating the same harmonious actions throughout the body. Every member and joint contribute to the harmony of the Lord's body. Being in the best place (fitly framed together) knit, compacted, and bound together, united by blood vessels, tendons and muscles. All connecting

and each part contributing to the support and harmony of the whole body. Every part is important and contributes to the effectiveness of the body.

Every member has an important part in the growth of the body as well. If a member becomes uninvolved in the edifying of the body, they are like an idle blood vessel, or an **unemployed muscle**, which creates disharmony. When this happens in the human body, we see a doctor. Thus, spiritually we need to see the Great Physician for help with our problem. Therefore, Christians who float from one congregation to another, considered members-at-large, often become spiritually weak. They are not contributing to the body as a whole.

Verse 16- *edifying or building itself up in love*- in mutual harmony. “That there should be **no schism** in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another” (1 Corinthians 12:25). No discord but mutual harmony should promote edification and growth of the body, all are united in one, living together in unison to the glory of God.

With these thoughts in mind we can now look to the scriptures for practical ways to be more effective as a unifier. In the Colossians letter, Paul gives us instructions on this very point. Colossians 3:12-17 is very specific about promoting unity and edification. “Therefore, as **God's People**, consecrated and dear to him, clothe yourselves with tenderness of heart, kindness, humility, gentleness, forbearance” (Colossians 3:12, TCNT). Paul is instructing Christians, God’s children, to be clothed with the items necessary to promote unity, harmony and growth in the Lord’s church.



“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father” (Colossians 3:17).



## **Ten Rules to Promote Harmony Among Church Members**

(unknown)

1. Remember that we are all subject to fallings of one kind or another.
2. Bear with (not magnify) each other's infirmities (Galatians 6:1-2)
3. Pray for one another in our meetings, and particularly in private. (James 5:26)
4. Avoid going from house to house for the purpose of bearing news and interfering with other people's business.
5. Always turn-a-deaf-ear to any slanderous report and lay no charge against any person until well founded.
6. If a member is at fault, tell them of it in private, before it is mentioned to others.
7. Be careful of avoiding someone because of some action that has the appearance of opposition or resentment.
8. If a member has offended, consider how God-like it is to forgive and how unlike it is to seek revenge.
9. Remember that a giant artifice of the devil to promote animosities among the members of the church. So, we should therefore try hard not to let him succeed.
10. Consider how much better we can do in the world and in the church in particular, when we are united in love.

## Respectful of One Another

“They also honored us with many **marks of respect**; and when we were setting sail, they supplied us with all we needed” (Acts 28:10, NAS95). In the context of this verse Paul is speaking of the gifts and honors they were given as they were leaving Malta.

What are the marks of respect?

How does a person earn the respect of others?

What are some synonyms for respect?

What are some antonyms of respect?

**\*\*\* Take a few moments to answer these questions in your own mind before you continue**

### The Marks of Respect

We will begin with the characteristics that cause us to look with respect at another person, to admire, appreciate and have regard for them because of their actions. Regard is a general term of taking notice, observing one’s actions. Respect is given after considered evaluation and admiration is enthusiastic appreciation.

#### **1. Love your neighbor.**

"In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12). (Matthew 22:39) This is a primary characteristic and beginning for earning respect from others, as well as being pleasing to the Lord. Showing love to your neighbor at a time when we don’t know our neighbors or have time to be concerned please remember Luke 10. To the world it is called the “golden rule” although the world often does not practice it. This gives Christians the open opportunity to demonstrate love and further the cause of Christ.

#### **2. Listen and learn.**

Being a good listener is a positive attribute for every person. It is a learned skill that takes practice, patience and determination. Most of us are a work in progress on this subject. Listen to all the conversation before giving an answer. There are 275 verses with the word listen, most are instructing us to listen to God but some are about listening so we can learn from others. “Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise and apply your mind to my knowledge” (Proverbs 19:20). “Listen to counsel and accept discipline, that you may be wise the rest of your days” (Proverbs 22:17).

“This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger” (James 1:19). There is great wisdom in this verse: listen and learn, speak after thinking about what you will say rather than shooting from the hip.

### 3. Be considerate.

“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” (1 Peter 2:18). If you are a servant, employed by others and most are, then Peter’s instruction is to submit by showing respect to your employer even if they are “*forward*”(crooked, bent, perverted, wicked, unjust or peevish-Barnes). Show them **respect**. WHY? “For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps (1 Peter 2:21).

“Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart” (Ephesians 6:5-6). Paul’s instruction is the same as Peter’s, do the right thing, always. Every Christian should perform their duties at work properly with the same sincerity (singleness of heart) as you would when serving the Lord. He continues, not just when the boss is looking, (eye service) but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. God requires us to be industrious, conscientiousness, and being submissive. “Not secretly stealing, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things but manifesting perfect fidelity and kind feeling, in order to bring honor to the teaching of our Savior, God, in all things” (Titus 2:10, Oracl & WNT ). Regardless of which version you use, the message is the same; let your conduct display respect to God in all you do, and man will see it also (Colossians 3:22 & 1Timothy 6:1).

### 4. Being reliable

Do what you say you’ll do. Nothing destroys a person’s respect like flaky, unreliable behavior. A Christian should never have the reputation as being undependable. “In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy” (1 Corinthians 4:2). In Philippians 2:29-30 Paul commends Epaphroditus to them, to be held in high regard because of his actions in service to Paul and the Lord, to be respected because of his dependability, and being reliable.

### 5. Be a servant

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

“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**” (Mark 9:35). There are always those who can use your help, sick, shut-ins, aged, lonely and most of all the spiritually weak. They are in the greatest need. Go above and beyond the minimum to finish the job. Go the extra mile. "Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two” (Matthew 5:41). Remember the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 25:35-45.

### 6. Learn to anticipate the needs of others-

Do things for others without being asked. Offer prayers for those in need, sick, hurting, lonely and the spiritually weak. "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must **help the weak** and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, *'It is more blessed to give than to receive'*”(Acts 20:35).

“We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, *encourage the fainthearted*, **help the weak**, be patient with” (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for **the interests of others**” (Philippians 2:3-4).

## 7. Compliment the work of Others.

Be honest and sincere in your compliments for actions, deeds and ideas that help others and deserve praise. Paul was quick to give praise to those who were worthy of respect for the actions in the gospel. “In view of **your participation in the gospel** from the first day until now. For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:5-6).

“Nevertheless, **you have done well** to share with me in my affliction. You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone” (Philippians 4:14-15).

“For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem” (Romans 15:26).

Many other passages demonstrate the respect Paul had for those with whom he had a close relationship in the spreading of the gospel.

## 8 Dealing peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements

Humility is required to reach this goal. Incorporate the previous 7 items with humility in our daily lives. We must oversee our own emotions to be effective in helping others who are struggling to control theirs. “If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at **peace** with all men” (Romans 12:18). Make sure you are not the source of the problem. “So then let us **pursue** the things which make for **peace** and the building up of one another” (Romans 14:19).

“Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, **live in peace**; and the God of love and peace will be with you” (2 Corinthians 13:11).

Paul gives us a complete road map [*google map*] to reach the ultimate goal in Romans 12. “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may **prove** what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2). Paul offers directions in this verse that will lead us to heaven and provides others an opportunity to see how God works in the lives of mankind. We are the witnesses, the testimonies of the perfect will of God. We have many opportunities to demonstrate the perfect will of God to the world when we show our godly conduct daily. There is never a time NOT to show the fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5). However, I have found that non-believing family members are more receptive and more observant when we are: mourning with the family, showing hospitality, praying with the bereaved, showing kindness, goodness and offering help in the time of need (Matthew 10).

## Alert for one Another

“**Be on the alert**, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong” (1 Corinthians 16:13, NAS95). Paul uses a military term coming from the duty of a sentry to guard the city (Nehemiah 4:22). If we are going to help others, we must be on the alert against erroneous doctrine, disorder, and false teachers. One of the greatest dangers are the ones of which we are unaware. “For certain persons have **crept in unnoticed**, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” (Jude 1:4).

“But it was because of the false brethren **secretly brought in**, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage” (Galatians 2:4).

“But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will **secretly introduce** destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves” (2 Peter 2:1). We must be awake and vigilant (1Thessessialoians 5:6), always aware that Satan is near and desires to endanger our salvation.

“Be of *sober* spirit, be on the **alert**. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

Paul continues in 1 Corinthians 16:13, instructing us to stand fast (firm) in the faith, ready to defend (as the sentry) the gospel with a determination of unwavering confidence in God. We are called on to “act like men” show yourselves to be brave and bold against the enemies of the Lord who sneak in under false pretenses. Be strong, fixed to defend God’s truth. “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might” (Ephesians 6:10). There are other terms that reflect this same idea: **Be ready** (Luke 12:40; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 3:15; 2 Peter 1:12), **on guard** (Luke 21:34; 2 Timothy 4:15) and **watch yourselves** (2 John 1:8).

“With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be **on the alert** with all perseverance and petition for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:18). This verse comes at the conclusion of Paul instructing us to put on the whole armor of God. Having completed that task, we are now ready to pray for ourselves and all the saints to be on alert to defend the gospel.

“Devote yourselves to prayer, **keeping alert** in it with an attitude of thanksgiving” (Colossians 4:2). This is general advice to all those mentioned in the previous chapter [*wives, husbands, children, parents, servants, and masters*] no one was left out. How often do we pray for strength to do out duties as a husband or wife? In marriages, some become unhappy and cannot be maintained because NEITHER party is earnestly seeking God for the strength necessary to be husbands and wives.

There is no greater need for vigilance, alertness and being prepared than the coming day of the Lord. Any student of God’s word is aware of the proclamation of His coming. However, because we do not know when He will return, we must always be alert and prepared.

“Take heed, **keep on the alert**; for you do not know when the appointed time will come” (Mark 13:33).

"Be on **guard**, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the **worries of life**, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. But **keep on the alert at all times**, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:34-36).

"But **take heed** to yourselves lest your hearts be surcharged with **self-indulgence** and drunkenness and **worldly cares**, and that day catches you suddenly like a trap. "For it will come upon all the dwellers on the face of the earth. "So **be on your guard at all times**, praying that you may be worthy to escape these things that shall come to pass, and to take your stand in the presence of the Son of man" (Luke 21:34-36, MNT). Jesus gives a warning of some things that could distract us from being alert:

1. not knowing the timing of the Lord's return, only God knows the day or hour.
2. heart weighted down with \_\_\_\_\_ (self-indulgence, drunkenness, worldly cares, worries of this life)

The results - standing unprepared before the Son of God unable to escape. How can we help others if we are not alert to these things? (Luke 12:39-40).

The heart of 2 Peter 3 is devoted to "stir up," bringing to remembrance the things spoken about the second coming of the Lord.

1. Know this first- this is the beginning, casting doubt on the scriptures. Their motivation is their own lusts, not searching for the truth (verse3).
2. They are willfully ignorant of the scriptures (verse5).
3. Notice verse 8 where Peter draws attention to an unmistakable fact. God is not bound by time. He is eternal. 1,000 years to us is forever but with God is as a day.
4. God is not slow or slack in keeping His promises but patient, longsuffering. He suffers long with the sins of mankind, desiring all should come to repentance and be saved (Titus 2:11-14).
5. We must be alert- (verse10). The day of the Lord will come! When? At an unexpected time, like a thief in the night (Luke 12:39-40; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; Rev. 16:15).
6. Verse 10 refutes two false doctrines: A.D. 70 and premillennialism. Everything will melt, burned up and destroyed with hot heat, everything.

Question-What kind of people should we be? What should our spiritual conduct be? Are we sleeping or indifferent? Are we anxiously looking for this day? Praying that it will come soon? What do we expect after this comes?

The plan for the salvation of mankind is in place, the patience of God is on full display, the instructions to mankind are well established to lead us to the "new heaven and new earth" wherein dwells righteousness. Verse 14 makes one aware of what God has promised. This warning and admonition is for us. **Be diligent, be spotless, and blameless before the Lord because God has done everything to prepare us for this very day.** We should consider His patience as our salvation. Peter closes the chapter and book with this final instruction, "You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen" (2 Peter 3:17-18).

**BE ALERT AND OF SOBER MIND**

**Your enemy the devil prowls around like a  
roaring lion looking for someone to devour.**

**Resist Him, standing firm in the faith,  
Because you know that the family of believers**

**Throughout the world is undergoing the**

**Same kind of suffering.**

**1 Peter 3:8-9**

**NIV**

## Giver to One Another

"In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, '**It is more blessed to give than to receive**'" (Acts 20:35, NAS95).

The words give and giving are action words, whereas the word giver is a noun. In the scriptures, it is most often used to describe what God has done and continues to do: provide, give, render, and deliver to us for our benefit. There are numerous passages instructing us to give praise to God. "So that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 15:6).

And for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, "Therefore I will give praise to you among the gentiles, and i will sing to your name" (Romans 15:9).

Other passages to consider are: Romans 16:4; Colossians 1:3; 1Thessessians 5:18; Hebrews 13:17.

The God of heaven is the ultimate giver of good gifts to all mankind. The list is too long to complete, beginning with the breath of life, the perfect environment to live in, and a marvelous made body to house the soul. God has blessed us with so much that list is also too long to complete, including the promise of eternal life and a crown of righteousness that will be given to all who are faithful until the end (2 Timothy 4:8).

After reviewing the incredible blessings FROM the God of heaven, He asks very little **from** us. Although we are abundantly blessed by His hand, we have almost, almost nothing to give Him that He has not given us. **The only thing we can give God that he hasn't given us is praise, honor and worship.** These are the things that God desires FROM us, this part of our obedience to Him (Hebrew 11:6).

God gave His only begotten Son as a sacrifice. This act of total love provides us the opportunity to have our sins forgiven, cleansed and purified. Then, and only then, are we eligible to approach God in praise, honor and worship. Without that gift we would still be sinners, unclean and not qualified to give praise to God.

God has also given us His word (John 1:1-4) which supplies us with, "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). This is a roadmap to living life on this planet, preparing us for that heavenly home God has promised to the faithful. "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).

"And that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to **give you the wisdom** that *leads to salvation* through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15).

"But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and **give you instruction**" (1 Thessalonians 5:12).

"For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts **to give the Light of the knowledge** of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6).



These passages show some of the things that God's word provides us, directing us to eternal life. God's word supplies the very foundational instruction on how to **"Be a giver to one another."**

"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor" (Romans 12:10).

"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another" (Romans 12:10). Barnes Commentary suggests Paul's point is that we should have tender affection for fellow Christians, like family, because we are united in the same principles.

"By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). Jesus intended for "brotherly love" to show as a badge of identify for all men to see recognizing that we belong to Christ. Brotherly love is a demonstration of our relationship with Christ.

In honor, showing respect **by preferring one another** (leading by example, striving to excel) in promoting the welfare and benefit of others" (Philippians 2:3-4). By mutual kindness, which will produce happiness in the Christian community, give order benefit to the Lord's church. Following these scriptures will remove the worldly appetite for ambition, envy, strife and malice and replace them with contentment, harmony, and peace for God's people (James 3:14; Philippians 2:2-5). Paul expounds on how to determine the proper attitude about giving in 2 Corinthians 7.

"Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart" (1 Peter 1:22). Pouring forth from a pure heart is an intense affection for fellow Christians, not cold and formal but a strong, ardent and genuine love that is on display as a badge of identify for the world to see.

"We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth" (1 John 3:14-18).

John lays out exactly how we should copy, follow, emulate Jesus Christ in demonstrating how to be a **"giver"** to others. If we are a Christian, we abide in Christ (John 3:15) **as if Christ is always with us**. Ponder that thought. Whatever our thoughts are, intentions, desires, He is there. Wherever we go, whatever we do He is there. This should be our constant state of mind, having a permanency within our lives.

The most revealing point in these verses is the final statement in verse 1, "let us not love with word or with tongue, but indeed and truth." Don't just tell me, show your love as a badge of identify, by showing compassion, **not shutting up your bowels**, even to giving my life for you. **John makes giving very personal.**

## **The Gift of Giving**

Give out of love, not obligation

Give when it's least expected.

Give without strings attached

Give from the heart.

Give to show that you care

Give help without causing helplessness

Give something that takes personal sacrifice

Give to make a difference

Give without keeping score

Give for no reason at all

Give a little if you can't give a lot

Gift without attracting attention to yourself

Give without being asked

Give of your experience

Give to those who need it the most.

## Edifier to One Another

“Therefore encourage one another and **build up one another**,  
just as you also are doing”

1 Thessalonians 5:11, NAS95

The word edify means to build up, strengthen, and enlighten. When applied to spiritual education it would include teaching, counseling, advising or anything that will aid Christians to reach their ultimate goal of growing toward heaven. Thayer’s comments about an edifier, “the act of one who promotes another’s growth in Christian wisdom, piety, holiness, happiness.” W.E. Vine state, “edifying promotes the spiritual growth and development of character of believers, by teaching and example, suggesting such spiritual progress is the result of patient labor.” One of the highest duties that a Christian has is to encourage one another. After a week of listening to the gripes and complaints of this sin-sick world, Christians should look to periods of worship as an isle of retreat, a place where God’s name is blessed, not cursed. A place where we can enjoy the “seasons of refreshing which only God can provide,” (Padfield).

“And let us consider how to **stimulate** one another to love and good deeds” (Hebrews 10:24). First, consider the best way to “stir up,” and encourage one another to perform deeds of love, kindness, or sympathy. Secondly, after considering the how, put your thoughts into action, to arouse, excite or call to action that will result to the benefit of others.

In Ephesians 4:29 Paul provides further instructions on the subject in a “not/but” statement: speak only **profitable** edification. “Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear” (Ephesians 4:29). First, we must consider the needs of one another. How can my words instruct, counsel or comfort another? Considering edification that is useful for that moment. I wonder if Paul had Philippians 2:3-4 in mind as he penned the Ephesian letter. Speech is such a valuable tool to teach, edify, promote the gospel and purity, when properly controlled, can be used to great advantage in His service. HOWEVER, James 3 gives strong warnings about the misuse of the tongue.

“Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification” (Romans 15:1-2).

*This is edification in action-* to bear, lift the load of another (understanding the context is about meat offered to idols) The principle of edifying, strengthening, exhorting to brotherly love, with mutual kindness to the benefit of others EVEN when it does not please us. When we are truly seeking the welfare of others we may be inconvenienced. We may even become aggravated because of the lack of knowledge and understanding or their unwillingness to study and learn as we want.

“So then let us pursue the things which make for peace” (Romans 14:19). There are two great duties in this verse. First, is peace [peace ableness]; without it, it is very difficult to edify. Peace must not come by destroying the purity of the gospel (James 3:17). Webster defines pursue, “to follow in order to overtake.” To pursue peace takes great effort. Sometimes, overtaking peace may be hard but that is Paul’s instruction. Diligent efforts may be needed. “Finally, brethren,

rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you” (2 Corinthians 13:11). Churches have destroyed the peace over small unimportant matters such as paint color, carpet, etc. Psalms 34:14 and 2 Timothy 2:22 speak of the search or pursuit of peace. Once we have a measure of peace, we can complete the second duty.

The second is mutual edification. In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul speaks about spiritual gifts. Verse 3 speaks of prophesy, edification, exhortation and consolation. Verse 4 speaks of edification of the church. We usually casually pass over these discussions because spiritual gifts have ceased **HOWEVER**, carefully examine verse 12. “So also, you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, **seek to abound** for the **edification** of the church” (1 Corinthians 14:12). Paul says the gifts of the spirit are beneficial and valuable to the church **BUT** he exhorts us to seek and excel in edification. Seek to excel in conveying the gospel in a clear and plain manner (2 Corinthians 3:12). Seek to distinguish yourselves as a purveyor of sound speech (Titus 2:8). This was important then and the need is very great today.

Paul concludes the chapter with this passage: “What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. **Let all things be done for edification**” (1 Corinthians 14:26).

### **If it is not edifying, don't do it!**

Here is a list of ways we can grow spiritually while edifying others.

1. Urgently live and work to reach others each day (2 Peter 3).
2. Be enthusiastic, as you see the day approaching (Hebrews 10:25).
3. Count your blessings by making a list. Be grateful to and dependent on God (Acts 17:24-28).
4. Maintain a list of your faults, probably should be first. Pray for strength to overcome and submit to God (James 4:7).
5. Quiet time- to pray, study and mediate (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18).
6. Visit someone every week; a weak member, one who is ill, or a non-Christian (Matthew 25:35-36).
7. Make every effort to have a monthly Bible study in your home (Matthew 5:13-16).

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:19-22).

***Make a commitment to be a builder for the Lord every day.***

**The knowledge of Christ's love for us should cause us to love Him**

**In such a way that it is demonstrated in our attitude, conduct**

**COMMITMENT TO SERVE GOD.**

**Spiritual maturity is knowledge being put into**

**ACTION.**

**Ed. Bedore**

## Mentoring to one Another

Mentoring is defined as, “having an influence in the life of another.” Mentorship is a relationship in which the more experienced and knowledgeable person helps guide the less experienced and knowledgeable person, age notwithstanding. (Example: ask your 6-10-year-old about your smart phone.)

Sometimes the influence is negative as demonstrated in 2 Chronicles 22:3 and Nahum 1:11. We must give great care that a *positive influence* will come from mentoring others or receiving mentoring from others.

As we look to God’s word, we can find many references to guides, pilots and tutors however, counselor seems to be a good example of mentoring. Wise counsel is the art of advising with prudence (Proverbs 1:5). Wise counsel will guide (Proverbs 11:3; 12:26; 73:24). When seeking counsel look for a person with insight (1 Chronicles 26:14) and understanding (Proverbs 27:32).

“Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance” (Titus 2:2). Other versions use words like sensible, serious, vigilant, patient, discreet and self-controlled. All these are descriptive of a person with experience, understanding and knowledge. One who can provide insight, understanding and guidance, **mentoring** to others. There is a Farmers’ Insurance commercial that illustrates this principle, “We know a thing or two because we have seen a thing or two.”

In the following verses Paul gives instructions on mentoring others. Older women are to establish their good behavior and then teach the younger women. Younger men are to lead by example (1 Timothy 4:12). In 2 Thessalonians 3:7 Paul states they had been good examples by leading disciplined lives for. Not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a **model** for you, so that you would follow our example” (2 Thessalonians 3:9). He always welcomed the opportunity to demonstrate Christ living in him serving as an example, pattern and model of righteous living.

“Brethren join in following my example and **observe those** who walk according to the pattern you have in us” (Philippians 3:17). Paul is putting us on notice: every Christian of any age should live seeking to offer his life as an example to be followed, a pattern or model of correct behavior. Most congregations are made up of two groups of members: those who are diligently striving to imitate Christ in their lives, setting their minds on being a good example for other to follow, and those who may be sincere but more casual about their example. “The things you have learned and received and heard and **seen in me**, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you (Philippians 4:9). Seek the purest and most spiritual members with whom to associate because most spiritual people will be associating with other spiritual people.

“My son, observe the commandment of your father And do not forsake the teaching of your mother” (Proverbs 6:20-23). Some of world’s greatest mentors are fathers and mothers We correctly call it parenting yet it is also a form of mentoring, providing a positive guiding influence in another’s life. Notice the verbs used by the wise father, **observe** the commandants, **not forsaking** the teachings of your mother; placing responsibilities on father, mother and children to diligently fulfill their roles.

Bind them continually on your heart; tie them around your neck. Use different methods to keep us in remembrance of what is important before smart phone reminders. Have you ever set a reminder to read, study or pray? “The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you” (Philippians 4:9).

When you walk about, they will guide you; guides are very important in so many instances. “And he said, ‘Well, how could I, unless someone **guides** me?’ And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him” (Acts 8:31). If you are going into Mammoth Cave you need a guide because there are over 400 miles of passages, you could be lost for days without a guide.

“When you sleep, they will watch over you; And when you awake, they will talk to you. They will become part of your life, part of who you should strive to be. My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you” (Galatians 4:19). Paul stated that he was in labor-until Christ was formed in you. He was mentoring the Galatians to reach a point that Christ wholly reigned in their hearts, they fully embraced Jesus as the sacrifice, and Christ the savior of all.

For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light. Lamps provide light to keep us from stumbling in the dark. Mentor’s provide insight and understanding that enlighten the direction we need to go.

“And reproofs for discipline are the way of life” (Proverbs 3:12).

“For whom the LORD loves He reproveth, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights” (Proverbs 12:1).

The relationship between a mentor and the mentee, regardless of age, is one that should grow and develop as they share in a study of God’s word. It should be a partnership because both are trying to reach the same goal. There is a sharing of insight, understanding and values of the gospel. “By referring to this, when you read you can **understand my insight** into the mystery of Christ” (Ephesians 3:4).

Whether you think of yourself as a mentor or not always remember, “**someone is watching.**” It may be a new Christian looking for someone to help them grow or it might be a young child looking up to you to see what you are doing. It might be a mature Christian who is struggling with their life.

With the thought that **someone is always watching** be mindful of your responsibilities to others:

1. Faithful in attendance- remember Hebrews 10:24 and let us consider how to “stimulate one another to love and good deeds.” Then consider 10:25, “not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging **one another**; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”
2. Bring a good attitude with you to services. If you just nonchalantly stroll into services, it may appear to the weak you really don’t want to be there.
3. Pack your enthusiasm with your Bible. It is as contagious as the flu but with far better results.
4. Be prepared to participate in Bible class. The question/comment might help someone too shy to speak.
5. Maintain an open heart to receive the truth that is presented.

6. Contribute to the local work in the church. Provide financial support for edification, evangelism, and benevolence.
7. Support the local church with your time and talents. We all have one, two or five. All have something to contribute and if we don't use our talents, they will be taken from us (Matthew 25:14-30).
8. Be dependable and practice what you speak.

## **A Good Mentor**

**Will unleash your passion**

**Channel your energy**

**Guide your growth**

**Encourage your success**



## Esteemer to one Another

“He said to me, ‘O Daniel, **man of high esteem**, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.’ And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling” (Daniel 10:11, NAS95). In verse 19 Daniel is again referred to as a man of high esteem.

Webster defines **esteem**, “a means to recognize the value of a person or thing.” **Regard** is a general term that is usually qualified with “high” regard. **Respect** implies an estimation or evaluation. **Esteem** implies greater warmth of feeling accompanied by high evaluation. When we look at the passage in Daniel, it is God who has placed the high value on Daniel because of his commitment to obedience, regardless of the consequences.

The word **honor** is used throughout the scriptures in various ways to describe specific relationships.

Father and Mother - "For God said, '**HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,**' and, '**HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH**'" (Matthew 15:4).

God - “For even though they knew God, they did **not honor** Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened” (Romans 1:21).

Yourself - “Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a **vessel for honor**, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work” (2 Timothy 2:20-21).

Each verse is speaking of different groups of people.

In 1 Peter 2:17 we are obligated to “honor all men,” because we are all made in the image of God who shows NO partiality, then neither should we. The deference and respect we show our fellowman will say a lot about us in judgement. As a side note, it is difficult to reach the lost if we treat them indifferently before we get to know them. Romans 13:7 calls on us to obey civil government because they are God’s representatives for our good (Romans 13:4; John 19:11).

The church is called to honor the elders “for their works sake” (1Thessalonians 5:12-13). Their character has humbled them to become servants of all. They have assumed the burden of responsibility for shepherding the souls of the entire flock (James 3:1; Hebrews 13:17). Their sacrifice and service calls for respect and honor. Children are commanded to honor their parents because they sacrifice for their children (Ephesians 6:2; Matthew 15:4).

The scriptures teach us to give honor to several groups of people however, there is a difficult life lesson to be learned. Sometimes we are disappointed when parents fail, elders digress, governments become corrupt and men become wicked. In times like these, we must remember that the honor we give each other reflects the high esteem we have for Jesus Christ (Ephesians 6:5-7).



For the purpose of this study we will look at how to esteem others. “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each **esteem others** better than himself” (Philippians 2:3, NKJV).

“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind **regard one another** as more important than yourselves” (Philippians 2:3). In order to esteem others, we must learn and apply humility. This is the first skill that must be in place, getting self out of the way so we can focus on others.

“You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, **clothe yourselves with humility** toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5). Peter had spoken in verses 1-5 about elders, now he speaks to the younger. “Clothe yourselves,” uses a word to describe a garment that was commonly worn by slaves. A humble person will be willing to perform any job that is needed in order to serve and benefit others.

“Therefore, **humble yourselves** under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time” (1 Peter 5:6). Let God be in control. He already is but sometimes we are the last to recognize that fact, we often want to do it my way instead of His way (Proverbs 15:33)

“The reward of **humility** and the **fear of the LORD** are riches, honor and life (Proverbs 22:4). (Matthew 6:33)

“And be subject to one another in the fear of Christ” (Ephesians 5:21). Why does Paul give this instruction? In this general principle, Paul instructs each group how they should treat each other to bring glory to God. Wives, children, and particularly instructing husbands of their duty to love their wives with tenderness (Ephesians 5:23-25). Fathers are to treat their children so they can easily obey (Ephesians 6:4) and masters are to treat servants with kindness, remembering that we have a master in heaven who watches over us. This confirms the proper authority, make every relationship work to the good of all involved.

Now that we have replaced self and pride with humility, we are ready to focus on esteeming others. To build others up is the most holy faith, by teaching, counseling, and advising others, especially how to deal with difficult situations that arise in life. Personal illness, family illness, persecution, anything that would add difficulty in our service to God.

“Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble” (Hebrews 12:12). We should have hands dropping from weariness and exhaustion. We are commanded to strengthen those drooping hands; help bear some of their burden. Knees become feeble with age and from long effort in service to others. We can encourage them by giving them help and hope of victory, help them refocus on the reward of heaven in the very presence of God. A courageous mind supports the feeble body and hope renews the spirit to preserve (Job 4:3-4; Isaiah 35:3).

**Pride is concerned with who is right**  
**Humility is concerned with what is right**  
**Ezra T. Benson**

## Nourisher to One Another

“Constantly nourished up in the words of faith.”

### 1 Timothy 4:6

The scriptures are filled with references using food and nutrition as an illustration or an analogy for the importance of the pure word of God in the growth and development of Christians. Whether you are young or older, good nutrition is vital for good health and combating disease. I was always intrigued by God providing the wandering Israelites with a diet of milk and honey. Milk is a great source of calcium, protein, potassium and many vitamins, especially D and B-12. Honey contains natural sugar needed for energy, many minerals and vitamins, and antioxidants. When you add manna and quail you complete the four food groups which modern man discovered just a few years ago.

From the Latin word *nutrire*, which means “to suckle” to nourish, we get our words: nurture, nutrition, nourish, and other forms of the word.

In the New Testament, milk refers to the needs of the infant, babes in Christ, those who have not matured. “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as **to infants in Christ**. I gave you **milk to drink**, not solid food” (1 Corinthians 3:1-2). Jesus spoke to His disciples in parables because they were not prepared at that time to receive the gospel to its fullness (John 16:13). As we are helping to nurture others we must begin to teach where they are, at the level of knowledge. This may mean feeding them milk and then gradually add food with more substance. Many new Christians want to start studying Revelation but should begin with more foundational books like the gospels or Acts.

“For you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able” (1 Corinthians 3:2). Why were they not able to receive Paul’s teaching?

“For you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?” (1 Corinthians 3:3). They were dealing in the fleshly or carnal world, concerned about jealousy and strife, who had baptized who, things that don’t matter. This is one of the ways Satan works, distracting us from important spiritual matters. It is difficult to see much growth in the Corinthians at this time and they had many problems which can be traced to the lack of growth, lack of spirituality.

“Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing” (Hebrews 5:11). From the previous verses the writer is speaking about Melchizedek, a type or foreshadow of Christ. There are many things about him that are hard to grasp however, the Hebrew writer seems to have understanding about him that is not revealed in these passages. What is revealed for us is their lack of growth, hindered by being **dull of hearing**?

“Therefore, I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand” (Matthew 13:13-14). In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, “You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; you will

keep on seeing but will not perceive” (Isaiah 6:9). Jesus continues in Matthew 13:15-16, “For the heart of this people has become dull, with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes, otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I would heal them. But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.” How many times did Jesus use the phrase, “he that has ears let him hear?” Almost everyone has ears but NOT everyone uses them to gain a full understanding of the scripture as these verses plainly show.

“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil” (Hebrews 5:12-14). The Hebrew writer explains why this group has not reached a higher level of growth, they are still on milk. The word picture is of a 200-pound man with a baby bottle in his mouth. We would fall down laughing at that picture however, in many churches today they are not hard to find. This is our challenge- to nourish up in the faith (1 Timothy 4:6) The greatest danger beyond the loss of individual souls is the devastating effect on the church. The whole group could easily be subverted, carried away by false doctrine because none are able to stand for the truth.

To be a nourisher to one another begins by helping develop a pattern of growth to strengthen all who are in need (2 Timothy 4:6). “After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you” (1 Peter 5:10). Peter states that God will provide these things for us to use in nourishing ourselves and helping others.

Paul shows us the pattern of growth that Timothy followed to reach the level to help nurture others. “For I am mindful of the **sincere faith within you**, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well” (2 Timothy 1:5).

“Now you **followed my teaching, conduct**, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance” (2 Timothy 3:10).

“You, however, **continue in the things you have learned** and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:14-15).

Notice the specific pattern of growth:

1. Family had sincere faith.
2. Instructed child in the scriptures. You cannot inherit faith, but you can demonstrate it to your children.
3. Followed Paul’s teachings and we can today.
4. Emulate the conduct of the faithful.
5. Learn the purpose of the faithful.
6. Continue (persevere) in the doctrine of Christ.
7. Gain wisdom from the scriptures.
8. Obtain salvation through faith in Christ.

We can also see the application of growth prescribed in 1Timothy 4:11-16. Paul has given us a roadmap to be a nourisher to one another.

Jesus told Peter three times in John 21, “feed my sheep.” We should follow that command as well.

**God wants to be praised for nourishing and cherishing**

**For God cherishes all creatures.**

**God is not only the creator,**

**But also the sustainer and nourisher.**

**Martin Luther**

## Teacher to one Another

Why do we need teachers? What purpose do they serve? Who is responsible to teach? Are only preachers and elders required to teach? Do I, as an individual Christian, have a responsibility to teach?

*Look for the answer to these question throughout this lesson.*

The idea of a teaching is to “guide a study,” “impart knowledge,” “instruct by precept, example or experience,” according to Webster’s online dictionary. In the scriptures we find terms like “give instruction, teach, taught, teaching” more than 200 times. Imparting knowledge is just part of teaching, creating understanding is a large part of being a successful teacher. Jesus used different teaching methods to create understanding of the message. In His early ministry He taught in parables, illustrations of known subjects to make a spiritual point.

We usually think of teaching as a public function like Bible classes, preaching, maybe one-on-one or small group study. However, the single greatest opportunity and responsible is to teach in the home. Scriptures place the responsible of teaching and training children on the parents. This may be the greatest failure among Christians today. If teaching in the home is lacking it can have a devastating effect on both the parents and the child. Sending a child to a quiet place to do their Bible study, without follow-up, is NOT teaching, it is spiritual neglect (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

There are two aspects of teaching:

1. Imparting the knowledge of the gospel, salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. This is first and foremost in our teaching of anyone who is not a Christian.
2. Equally important but secondary is strengthening and encouraging Christians of every age. It is an ongoing process to continually “nourish up in the word of faith” (1 Timothy 4:6) (Refer to lesson 12.)

“For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Romans 15:4). Paul is showing us the benefit of the scripture which is to confirm our hope and give assurance of eternal life (John 20:31).

“What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life-- and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us” (1 John 1:1-2). John’s testimony proclaims the evidence of eternal life, to reassure us that in times of trouble and difficulty God is still there and eternal life is still ours if we preserve through trial and testing.

Who should be taught the elementary principles?

Children - Deuteronomy 4:10, 6:7, 11:19

Those who are “ignorant of God’s law” - Ezra 7:25

Transgressors/sinners - Psalms 51:13 and Luke 19:10

What should be taught?

Statutes and ordinances - Ezra 7:10

Difference between holy and profane - Ezra 44:23

The way of God in truth - Luke 20:21

How to pray - Luke 11:1

God's word provides us everything need in this life and prepares us to life with God and Christ in the world to come. "Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence" (2 Peter 1:3-4).

"For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust" (2 Peter 1:4). Peter makes known that God has provided us everything we need in this life to apply His word which will prepare us for the life with God and Christ in the world to come. God has granted to every believer precious and magnificent promises and made us partakers of the divine nature. We have a duty, an honor and a privilege to obey His will. Peter then refines the instructions in verses 5-8. Sometimes called the "building blocks of faith," they will provide us the tools needed to reach the highest levels of spiritual maturity and holiness.

"For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:8). When these qualities are **yours**, becoming a part of you, they will prevent you from being useless or unfruitful. Can you think of anything worse than being told by God you are worthless like the one talent man? (Matthew 7:17-19).

"For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins" (2 Peter 1:9) When we are not actively increasing these qualities, we forget what God has done for us. We can't see past the things of the world and become unfruitful and useless in the work of the Lord. If we are still pretending to be faithful, we are more than worthless even disgusting to the Lord (Revelation 3:16) Be Real!

"Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, **you will never stumble**" (2 Peter 1:10). Focus on Peter's statement and be diligent in practicing these things and you will never stumble. This very statement makes the mission of teaching so critical, to start babies and never stop teaching, learning and applying God's word to our lives (2 Timothy 3:15).

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

"And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, **third teachers**, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues" (1 Corinthians 12:28). Take a moment to note that all the other groups have been done away with but teachers remain because of the importance of the role of teachers in every aspect of spiritual life.

“The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, **able to teach**, [apt] patient when wronged” (2 Timothy 2:24).

**Teaching is the life blood of becoming, increasing and remaining fruitful in God's kingdom.**

**The mediocre teacher tells,  
The good teacher explains,  
The great teacher demonstrates,  
The superior teacher inspires.  
Wm. A. Ward.**