

1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18

### INTRODUCTION:

Last Wednesday night I spoke to you about the Triune, Divine mission of the church of our Lord. I mentioned the combined mission of the New Testament church as :

1. TO PREACH THE GOSPEL, EVANGELIZE THE WHOLE WORLD.
2. TO EDIFY THE WHOLE CHURCH.
3. TO MINISTER TO THE POOR.

These three phases of work embody all the work revealed in the New Testament as the duty and responsibility of the the church. In our lesson tonight we are going to study about that part of the work of the New Testament church known as EDIFICATION. In what way are we to grow as Christians? How is this done and what is the duty and responsibility of the church in this part of our work?

### 1. EDIFICATION

1. Edification means to build, to construct; to organize; to establish.
2. Edification means to instruct and improve. It means especially to instruct and improve by good example.
3. Then again, edification simply means to profit morally and spiritually.

### 2. SOME THINGS WE SHOULD ASK OURSELVES

1. What kind of a person does my Lord want me to be? Ephesians 4:11-16; Titus 3:1,2
2. Do I really and sincerely, want to become this kind of a person? Then we must realize:
  1. That good intentions themselves are not enough. Am I willing to pay the price?
  2. Knowing then, that spiritual edification on our part is going to require great effort, conscious effort, deliberate effort, even difficult and continual effort, AM I WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE?

### 3. SOME THINGS WE SHOULD RECOGNIZE

1. That there is no short cut to spiritual maturity. There must be a discriminating heart yearning for, reaching out for the best and the highest, and prepared to receive it.
  1. You can read every book there is on how to ride a bicycle, how to swim, how to speak in public, how to pray in public, how to make a million dollars, all about the Bible, and how to understand the Bible, and you will never fully understand and master these things until you have really put your learning into practice. You will never understand the Bible by only reading books about the Bible, ~~and on how to understand the Bible.~~ You will never master the fine art of personal work by just reading books on how to do personal work. You will have to learn by doing personal work.
2. We should recognize that spiritual growth, or any growth as to that matter, is never accidental...BUT ALWAYS DELIBERATE.
  1. All growth, spiritual or otherwise, depends upon right activity, and DEVELOPMENT REQUIRES EFFORT, and EFFORT REQUIRES WORK. Paul told Timothy 1; 4:7; "But make it your habit to let worldly and old women's stories alone. Continue training yourself for the religious life." -Willaims translation
3. Nearly any person can begin a worthwhile undertaking, but it takes a person of real quality to see that thing through to its completion.
  1. It takes an unusual person of foresight, know-how, and Christian love, of the mind of Christ, to take the difficulties and set-backs, and sorrows of life as a challenge to overcome, rather than UNJUST punishment which should not have happened to me in the first place, and this ability to take the bumps of life without murmuring and complaining requires faith and courage...a lot of faith and courage.
4. We must recognize, acknowledge our abilities, our possibilities, our potentialities and admit these to be horizons of opportunities all geared to our ability.

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TO THINK TO THE POOR

These three areas of work among all the work we do in the church are the duty and responsibility of the church. In our season of the year we are to study that part of the work of the church which is the duty and responsibility of the church in this part of the year.

Education means to build to create, to expand. Education means to instruct and improve. It means especially to instruct and improve by the use of the Bible and the Word of God.

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4. IN WHAT RESPECTS ARE WE TO GROW?

1. We are to grow by adding the Christian graces and thereby become partakers of the divine nature. 2 Peter 1:4-14
2. We are to grow, BE EDIFIED, by putting on the whole armor of God. Eph. 6:10-18
3. We are to grow in love, in knowledge, and all discernment. Phil. 1:9; "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment-discernment."

5. THINGS THAT HINDER OUR GROWTH.

1. Self-satisfaction. There is no hope ever for the self-satisfied person to grow spiritually. You will have to change your mind-attitude.
2. A lack of desire. Spiritual growth requires both time and effort. Christian growth is not something to be taken for granted. You have to work at it.
3. Dullness of hearing. Heb. 5:11; 6:12.

6. THINGS THAT PROMOTE SPIRITUAL GROWTH

(IT MAY Sometimes be an individual matter)  
But David encouraged himself in the Lord  
his God. 1 Sam. 30:6

1. Spiritual appetite necessary. 1 Peter 2:2
2. Heeding the truth that we hear. Heb. 2:1
3. Diligent and active service. 1 Tim. 4:13-16

7. SOME AVENUES THROUGH WHICH SPIRITUAL GROWTH MAY BE ATTAINED.

1. The teaching program of the congregation. Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-3; 2 Tim. 2:2; Titus 2:1-8
2. Another avenue of spiritual growth is found through encouraging the faint hearted, support the weak, admonishing the disorderly, and long suffering toward all. 1 Thess. 5:11-15
3. Another avenue of spiritual growth is found in the worship services of the church.  
Heb. 10:25; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:15,16

8. FINAL NOTE.

In our search for, and our effort to obtain spiritual growth it might be good, in fact it would be good if ~~we~~ might arm ourselves with the philosophy of the unlettered person who testified at a religious meeting in the following words:

" I ain't what I oughta be, and I ain't

what I'm gonna be, but I ain't what I was."

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... your love may flourish  
... and all his wisdom-discernment

... a lack of desire. Distinct growth requires a firm and effort. Christian growth is not  
... something to be taken for granted. You have to work at it.  
... effects of the law. Heb. 12:18-19

... but have encouraged himself in the law  
... the God. 1 Sam. 10:16

... Millard and native service. 1 Tim. 1:16-18  
... Heb. 12:18-19

... another source of a kind of growth is found in the worship services of the church.  
... the mass, abandoning the disorderly, and long suffering toward all. 1 Thess. 5:11-12  
... The teaching program of the congregation. 1 Cor. 14:26-33; 1 Tim. 4:13; 1 Tim. 5:17-18

... in fact it could be said it is wrong and ourselves with the philosophy of the wilderness  
... period and related at a religious meeting in the following words:

"I ain't what I ought to be and I ain't  
... ain't I'm gonna be, and I ain't what I want."