

Question of the Week:

What are three ways the Bible tells believers to edify one another?

Paul uses three metaphors to help us understand our corporate identity in the book of Ephesians. As I have been studying this book I began to see that God doesn't want us just to understand our personal identity in Christ but also our corporate identity. The three metaphors Paul uses are:

1. Body (Ephesians 1:21-23)
2. Building (Ephesians 2:19-22)
3. Bride (Ephesians 5:24-32)

Ephesians 1:20-23 (MSG)

"All this energy issues from Christ: God raised him from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven, in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for the time being, but forever. He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the center of all this, Christ rules the church. The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence."

These verses help us see God's priority of the church. The church is not to be peripheral in our lives but actually the core. The church is Jesus' body in the earth. Paul uses this "body" several times in his letters to help the church understand their interconnectedness and need for one another. Take some time to read Romans 12:3-8; I Corinthians 12:1-31; Ephesians 4:7-16.

Ephesians 2:19-22

"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. In whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."

In this portion of scripture Paul uses the metaphor building/household of God. The Greek word is oikodome which means architecture, a structure, edify (ification, ing).

As I studied this portion of scripture a few thoughts came to mind:

1. We are no longer strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens. I think one of Satan's tactics which keeps us from corporately fitting together is to cause us to feel that we don't belong or fit. To cause us to feel strange or out of place in God's house.
2. We are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. I like the way the Message Bible says this:
"That's plain enough, isn't it? You're no longer wandering exiles. This kingdom of faith is now your home country. You're no longer strangers or outsiders. You belong here, with as much right to the name Christian as anyone." (MSG)

3. We are being fitted together. This is a neat word. It means to render close jointed together, organize compactly. One of the root words used here is the word Lego. I instantly thought of a Lego set. How as you connect the pieces together you begin to construct a structure. God desires for us His building to be joined together through the process of association and companionship. Fitly framed together for a dwelling place of God. WOW! We are Lego pieces (smile).

Darrow Miller says in his book 'Discipling the Nations', "The Greek word for house, oikos, and its family of words help us understand the metaphor of God's house, and our role in it, more clearly. English derivatives of oikos include ecology (study of the house), economics (stewardship, administration of the house), and edification (building up the house). All three realms describe what God calls us to do as His representatives on earth. That call is God's ultimate purpose for us."

We are to understand, steward, and edify the household of God.

Yes, we have a personal identity in Christ but we also have a corporate identity in Christ. Let's be a part of His House - let's be fitted together.

The first person to contact me with the answer to the question we began with will win a free book. You must have the Bible verses with your answer.

Have a great week and join us this week-end at Buckley's Canoe on West M-20 between Winn and Coldwater Roads. We will be camping Friday - Sunday and having a cook-out on Saturday @ 4:00 pm.

Pastor Ron

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