

The Grace of God



"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us..." (Titus 2:11-12).

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(Note: A brother requested that this article be printed for the benefit of all the readers. Good article. dwh)

How To Build Up or Tear Down The Church

edited

1. **Attend it up** (Heb. 10:25; Acts 20:7). No congregation can grow unless the members are faithful in attendance and participating.

2. **Talk it up** (Heb. 3:13). "But EXHORT one another daily, while it is called TODAY." To exhort is to "urge onward". We need to speak for the truth and against error. This means that we urge one another onward to greater maturity in Christ and deeper spirituality. When we do this, then Christ's church is truly built up and we become more and more the family of God.

3. **Sing, Pray, and Preach it up.** While worship glorifies God, it also benefits the worshipper. We need to sing with all our heart, pray fervently and preach the good news with a concern for the souls of men.

4. **Clean it up** (Rom. 16:17). "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned and avoid them." We have an obligation to the erring brother or sister. Let us seek to "restore" any that are lost (Gal. 6).

5. **Live it up** (Matt. 5:16). "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Godly character allows the gospel to shine through our lives. This world is full of darkness, and God expects us to demonstrate the truth to others that they may be saved.

The above mentions things that would **BUILD UP** the church. Now, let's mention a few things

that would **TEAR DOWN** the church for which Christ died.

1. **Be late for services** and take no part in Bible classes and do not attend midweek services.

2. **Stay at home** if you can think of any excuses at all.

3. If you attend, **don't sing** and look as if you are bored to death.

4. **Criticize** the song leader, the Bible teacher, the preacher and everyone else who doesn't fit into the mold of your opinions.

5. **Don't give** unless everything goes exactly like you want it to. If you do give, give grudgingly and sparingly.

6. If there is ever a problem, be sure to **tell everyone**, even outsiders. Keep it stirred up, don't let it die.

7. Be sure to **find fault** with everyone and everything. If there is sin, overlook it; but meddling in everything else is game.

8. **Be pessimistic** and let everyone know about it. That always helps to discourage many people, especially new converts, the recently restored and potential converts. It also discourages those who are stronger. If they hear it day after day, then eventually they may give up too.

9. **Don't take responsibility** for your actions. Apologizing is fine, but never really change your mind. That way people think you have changed when you really haven't.

Remember, if we tear down the church we are destroying the body of Christ... the church for which He died.

DO YOU HAVE A PAST - OR DOES YOUR PAST HAVE YOU?

edited

No amount of wishing can do away with our past decisions. Every person in the Bible no matter how righteous, save Jesus Himself, all had sins in their past they regretted. Paul in his letter to the Ephesian church recognized that Christians there and he himself had a past before they obeyed the gospel. He said, "Among whom we

also all once lived in the lust of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest" (Eph. 2:3). Even though he knew it would be foolish to pretend like they had never done anything wrong, he at the same time did not want them to dwell on it. Thus, he immediately writes in the next two verses: "But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved)" (Eph. 2:4-5). One easy lesson the Holy Spirit is trying to get across here is that there is a difference in "owning up" to one's past and allowing one's past to "own you". Paul taught them that even though they had a past, they also had a present and a future that were polar opposites from each other.

When we begin to let our past control us physically, emotionally and spiritually we are taking two steps back with every one we try to take forward. Sometimes we may hear a name or a song or even see something that reminds us of the past. It may be something we ourselves have done or something someone else has done to us. When this happens, we can easily allow the past (what we cannot change) to hold on to us and drag us down.

Recall that Peter betrayed the Lord both by fleeing in the garden and then by outright denial while He was being tried. In all the years that Peter remained at Jerusalem, do you think he ever passed by those same places where he denied the Lord? Might that not cause him to remember and to regret? Might that not, if dwelled on improperly, discourage him?

What of Paul? Do you think that he ever walked by the same places in Jerusalem where he had arrested so many Christians before his conversion? Paul said, "And I was still unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ: but they only heard say, He that once persecuted us now preaches the faith of which he once made havoc;" (Gal. 1:22-23).

Or what about when Peter played the hypocrite, influenced many to sin and was publicly rebuked for it (Gal. 2)? How are we to handle such things in our lives?

Notice Paul's attitude and understanding: "I **thank Him** that enabled me, even Christ Jesus our Lord, for that he counted me faithful, appointing me to his service; though I was **before** a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: **howbeit I obtained mercy**, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief; and **the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly** with faith

and love which is in Christ Jesus. Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save **sinners; of whom I am chief: howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy**, that in me as chief **might Jesus Christ show forth all his longsuffering, for an ensample** of them that should thereafter believe on him unto eternal life." (1 Tim. 1:12-16).

Simply put. Paul repented of his sins, thankfully accepted the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ and recognized that the Lord can use him as an example of pardon by which to help others. Thank the Lord for Paul's example. We all need it.

PEOPLE TO REMEMBER & PRAY FOR

Jerry Taylor, Jean Gambrell (back), **Johanna Fletcher, Othena Kinnard** (leukemia has returned), **Mag Bumbalough, Mary Cox** (gall bladder), **Monie Petty, Dave Poteet** (NHC 225), **Marilyn Poteet-Langford, Betty England** (arm surgery 22nd), **Thelma Klein, Joshua Hill** (ending his seizure meds), **Ed Williams, Michelle Austin, Lydia Poe, Anthony & Christy Rece, Ralph & Gail Sims, Marci Sims, Jo Miller, Chad & Jamie Sims, Larry Bumbalough, Jake Hale, Joshua & Misty Poteet, Carolyn Williams, Kenley Streeval. Matthew Taylor** (leukemia), **Joyce Simmons Wagner, Lorene Myers** (Rece's Grandmother), **David Price** (David Price's father), **Bill Frazier** (cancer), **Michelle Cunningham** (Lydia's sister), **W.C. Randolph** (Jamie Sims' grandfather), **Emma Featherston** (Adam's grandmother), **Michael Laurence** (evangelist who had eye surgery), **Michael Harris** (Gerald Harris's Son, medical complications).

OBEDIENT TO THE GOSPEL!!!

Hear (Rom. 10:17) Believe (Mark 16:16)

Repent (Acts 17:30-31) Confess (Rom. 10:9)

Be Baptized (Acts 2:38) Live Faithfully (Rev. 2:10)

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Radio Program** - Every Sun. 2pm, AM 1050 WSMT
- **Home Bible Study/Singing** - Feb 23, March 29
- **Ladies Class** - 2nd & Last Sunday Each Month
- **Business Meeting** - Sun. Feb 24
- **GM** - Ron Daly, April 7-11, 2008 (Mon-Fri).
- **GM** - Lanny Smith, Oct.12-17, 2008.

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