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Building Your Life on Values That Empower
“Building Your Life with Edification”
(Part 3)

Intro: In our economy, one of the things you see a of are unfinished buildings...(explain)
Edification: Literally means “building up”. To build your life with this value it means we need to be committed to the process of being built up in our relationship with God. When we give our lives to Christ, this is just the beginning of a life long process transformation. The word edification describes the process each believer must be committed to.

Col. 2:6-7 “And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.”
(NLT) Notice the result of this process of building our lives on Christ? Grow strong.

- The process of edification results in spiritual strength. Edification empowers your life. Edification is not some optional value but an essential part of being a follower of Christ.
- So how do I build my life on edification? Let me give you 4 ways edification makes a difference in your life.

I. Edification Is God’s Will For Your Life

A. Spiritual development is expected

1 Peter 2:2 “Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation...” (NLT)

1. Growing into a fuller experience as a follower of Jesus is just expected. It God’s will for each believer that their relationship with God grows / develops / matures over time.
 2. Unfortunately, what I often see are believers in Christ who have stagnated over time rather than developed. The edification process / the growth process has stopped and they are missing out on the “full experience of their salvation”.
- What does this mean?
 3. Our relationship with God is experiential. It is an ongoing, developing relationship with God. If we don’t keep growing, we end up with a partial spiritual experience rather than a full experience. What do I mean?
 4. Lisa and I love to travel. One of the reasons why is that we love to fully experience

things. I don't want to just read about specific places, I want to experience them first hand. (Grand Canyon / Alaska fish runs / Mayan temples / Caribbean) We want the full experience!

5. There is also a the full experience of our salvation that we miss out on if we do not continue to grow. More fully experiencing His presence / His power / answered prayer / changed lives / miracles /
6. Why would we want to just read about the might / power / presence of God when we can experience these things ourselves? This is God's will for each of us! Why would God empower people who resist His will?

- Because this is God's will, He has done something to help the process

B. Provision for spiritual growth has been provided

Eph. 4:11-12 “Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.” (NLT)

1. This process of edification requires edifiers to help God's people grow. Therefore, because this is God's will for every follower of Christ, He places edifiers in the church. (the above list)
2. My job as your pastor is to edify you / to help build you up in your relationship with Christ. I am here to help you have a “full experience” with God. I am here to help you embrace God process of spiritual development.
3. My responsibility is to help you not get spiritually stagnant / complacent / become an observer / become satisfied. I am here to help you realize that there is always more to learn / more to embrace / more to experience in following Christ.
4. Pastors are NOT the ones who do all the work of the church. They are the equippers / the edifiers / the ones who build the church up so that it can become all God wants it to be.
5. Because this is God's will for His people, He put those in the church with a gifting and calling to accomplish this. My responsibility is to edify you. Your responsibility is to allow yourself to be edified! God will actually empower your life as you allow yourself to be edified by those God has placed there to help build you up.

II. Edification Requires Your Cooperation

Heb. 5:11-12 “There is much more we would like to say about this, but it is difficult to explain, especially since you are spiritually dull and don't seem to listen. You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food.” (NLT) They weren't cooperating very well. They had spiritually stalled out. They had stopped moving forward. Enough time had gone by where they should have been further down the spiritual road!

A. Cooperation requires effort

Phil. 2:12-13 “Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.” (NLT)

1. We need to understand that edification is hard work! Yes, God is the One at work within us, but we have a responsibility to cooperate with His work. Quite frankly, sometimes it's not easy.
 2. There is no easy path to fully experience your relationship with Christ. We need to quit looking for one. There is no microwavable version / no quick steps / no instant maturity. I'm here to tell you it doesn't exist!
- The rumor on the street is that the reason so many people are coming to Foothills is that I teach an easy message / I water down commitment / preach a soft Gospel.
 3. If we are going to be built up in Christ to all He desires us to be it will require cooperation that is hard work. Some of you may be thinking...Like what? What hard work are you talking about?
 4. It's hard work to get to know the word of God / to develop your prayer life / to let Jesus change your character / to forgive people / develop patience / let go of wrong thinking / allow God to heal old wounds / to love unlovable people / change your priorities / learn to be generous / to learn to die to yourself so Christ can live in you.
 5. None of these things happen without our cooperation and effort given to them. The result are glorious, but the process can be painful at times. Are you cooperating with God's edification process?
 - C3 commitment / Prayer books / April 7th / begin by asking God to show you where you need to grow. BUT, God empowers those who cooperate with Him!

B. Cooperation requires us to be selective

I Cor. 10:23 “All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.” (NASB)

1. Part of cooperating with God's process of edification is identifying things in my life that hinder my spiritual development and growth. Not all things edify my life. Not all things build me up.
2. Often we simply do things that hinder God's work in our life. For example: If you wanted to lose weight, buying a dozen Krispy Kreme donuts on your way home from work is probably not the way to go about it. You're doing something that will hinder your goal. (OR, going to an all-you-can-eat buffet)
3. We tend to do the same thing to ourselves spiritually. We involve ourselves in many things that do not edify our lives. In fact, some things cause us to go backwards spiritually.
4. If we are going to truly cooperate with God's work in us, we need to be willing to remove the things that are holding us back. We must learn to be selective. Like what?

5. I want to be very careful here, because I never want to sound legalistic. I don't want to give you some list of non-edifying activities that you should stay away from. My guess, is that many of you already know what they are. These could be activities / behaviors / attitudes that are left over from your old life.
 6. You've already have excuses why these things are acceptable in your life. All things are lawful and I have a right to do these things. That may be true...but in your spirit you know they don't edify. They don't draw you closer to Christ. In fact, they get in the way.
- Just like we cut things out of our diet to be healthy, we do the same thing to grow spiritually.
 7. Cooperating with God's process of edification means that I remove whatever is getting in the way of what God wants to accomplish. This is often the reason we have no power in our lives. God's power is grounded out because of other things.

III. Edification Empowers Your Personal Life

A. Edification grows us from spiritual children to spiritual adults

Eph. 4:14-15 "Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ..."(NLT)

1. Children don't have much physical strength or power. They don't possess much insight or wisdom. That's just the reality of being a child. Adults though, are much stronger than children, and hopefully much wiser. This is true in the physical sense and it is true in our spiritual lives as well.
2. If we do not cooperate with God's process of edification, we remain spiritual children who are mentally and spiritually weak. We will be easily deceived and led astray by the influences of the world.
3. If we really want the full experience of our relationship with Christ then we must press on to spiritual adulthood. Once again, this requires our cooperation not merely time being a believer. Maturity has nothing to do with how long you've been a follower of Christ. It has everything to do with how long you've been cooperative!
4. With maturity comes a richness and depth in your relationship with God. I liken it to the developing way I have related to my girls over the years. (Describe the changing relationship and how so much more is experienced now)
5. Our experience with God works like this. We forfeit the benefits that result from maturity if we remain infants spiritually.

Gal. 2:20 "My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me..." (NLT) Spiritually mature people have learned to die to their old self and have allowed Christ to fill that void. The reality of Christ in them takes over their life. That's why there is power in maturity.

B. Edification grows us from inactive observers to active participants

Eph. 4:16 "He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work..." (NLT)

1. Serving is part of the edification process. Each part has its own special work from God to accomplish within the context of the local church. Spiritual maturity and serving go hand in hand. Immaturity and inactivity go hand in hand.
2. Part of the edifying process is realizing that God matures you so that you can participate in His Kingdom work. As you participate in His Kingdom work He matures you even more. Serving and maturity are connected!
3. It is our immaturity that keeps us from serving in the church. When we say things like; "I'm too busy / I can't do anything / I have nothing to offer / I'm too afraid" these excuses simply reveal immaturity.
4. People who are growing spiritually serve, and those who serve, grow spiritually. You see there is a reason why we continue to ask that you get involved serving in the ministries of this church. It is NOT just to fill a slot! It is so you can grow!!! It is so you can experience Christ's power flow through you in your serving.
5. If you really desire that "full experience with Christ", serving is part of the path to get there! This is what He empowers!

- So, I ask you...are you serving somewhere?

IV. Edification Empowers Your Church

A. The church is empowered as people grow

Eph. 4:16 "He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love." (NLT)

1. Who doesn't want to belong to a church that is healthy / growing and full of love? This is the result of the edification process. As each follower of Christ allows God to build him / her up, the church becomes a strong / healthy / vibrant place to be.
2. God empowers spiritually healthy people and spiritually healthy churches. These are the churches that God uses to bring about His Kingdom work of transformation. The more built up in our faith and healthy we become as a church, the more God will use us and the more we will see His power in our community.
3. The vision of Foothills rests on the fact of whether or not we will continue to allow God to grow us into the church He wants us to be. How can God entrust more to us as a people (more of the vision / resources / people) if we are not mature enough to handle it.
4. If we want to live to see the day when God reaches the 1000s of unchurched people in our geographic area, then we must be mature enough for God to give us this! If we are going to reach these levels of maturity, then we must understand that I alone cannot be responsible for the edification of the entire church.

B. Each person is responsible for the edification of the church

I Cor. 12:4 "... seek to abound for the edification of the church." (NASB) This wasn't written to just the pastors, but to everyone.

I Thess. 5:11 "So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing." (NLT) Build up (edify) each other.

1. We are responsible to edify each other; to help each other grow; to encourage each other to press on spiritually. Being a follower of Jesus is not just an individual experience; it has its fullest expression in the context of relationships.
- It's like the difference between an individual sport and a team sport.
 2. Who was the last person you edified? Encouraged / Built up / gave a good word to / encouraged them to hang in there, not quit, they make a difference. We are called to build up each other NEVER tear down.
 3. Edifying others sometimes mean we confront. Always in love / grace / humility. If we see someone straying / wavering / walking close to the edge / example not being consistent / see them negatively affect another person / we need to edify.
 4. Many followers of Christ don't think this is their place, but it is! God empowers churches who embrace this type of accountability. This behavior is not about control, it's about growth...edification...it's about loving each other. (next week)
 - Are you building your life being committed to God's edification process?
 - Do you realize this is God's will / are you fully cooperating? / Do you desire God's power in your life? / Do you want to see God's power in your church? Then we must build our lives with this value. Where is God asking you to make some changes?