

A 3-Week Bible Study in Building Others Up in the Lord

This past week, I was finally able to meet up with a friend from college I hadn't seen in years. It brought hope to my heart and understanding to my steps. Through talking with my friend, we were able to catch up, learn about what was going on in each other's lives, and after a certain conversation we had, I felt like I could relate to my friend in ways I could not before. After learning she also suffers from an autoimmune illness, I didn't feel as alone in my diagnosis.

Even though she didn't publicly talk about it or discuss it in larger groups, she was struggling, and she could relate to my pain just as I could relate to hers. This encouraged me and helped me know that there are others who are going through the same thing I am, and we can build others up during this time. Starting with prayer and adding on, we can truly be the source of support that our friends and family need.

Through this 3-week Bible study, we will be taking some time to truly learn what it means to build others up in the Lord. After completing this 3-week Bible study, we will be able to cultivate an encouraging and hopeful spirit toward others. Even if you have struggled with building others up in the past, know that change is possible because of the Lord. You are already showing great strides by wanting to learn more about Him and desiring to build others up in His Name.

Week One: Starting with the Basics

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing" (1 Thessalonians 5:11).



As the Apostle Paul tells us in this passage, we need to encourage one another and build each other up in the Lord. What this means is that we should build others up and never tear them down. Even some well-meaning thoughts, actions, and words can tear down our fellow believers in the Lord if we are not acting in true humility and kindness. If we are going to build one another up, we must prayerfully think before we speak.

Rather than pointing out flaws or faults, we need to start from ground zero. This means we need to take notice when they are doing something for the Lord, being kind to us, or making an effort to live in accordance with God's Word. We need to take a moment to pause and highlight what they are doing. Send them a text or comment on a social post to let them know that you see the good work they are doing.

It brings joy to the souls of others when we tell them they are walking with the Lord. Try to remember to be intentional and point out people in your church, ministry, or workplace who are taking part in the work of God. It can bring great encouragement into their hearts and help them continue to follow the Lord. The work of the Lord can be hard to understand, let alone obey; therefore, it is important that we continue to cultivate motivation and steadfastness in other believers' lives.

Challenge Questions:

- Who are you currently building up in the Lord? If you are not currently building anyone up in the Lord, who could you start encouraging this week?
- Have you ever had someone compliment your work for the Lord? How did this make you feel?
- Why do you think it is more important for us to build one another up rather than tearing each other down?



Prayer: "Dear God, help me to build up all believers in Your Name. I have the tendency to focus on the shortcomings of others, but I won't do this anymore. Help me to only focus on what will help my fellow believers and to build them up accordingly. Fix my eyes on Your teachings and help me to pay attention when I see Your teachings being followed. Thank You for everything, God. Amen."

Week Two: Implementing Only What Is Helpful

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen" (Ephesians 4:29).

Building others up in the Lord cannot be accomplished apart from following Paul's teachings in Ephesians 4:29. We need to restrain our tongues from saying anything unwholesome. Rather than speaking down to others, we need to only say what is helpful for building others up according to their needs. In this way, it will be beneficial to the listener and help them be encouraged. For example, instead of saying something hurtful with the intent of trying to make the person follow the Lord more closely, we need to only say things that are wholesome, right, true, kind, and encouraging.

Even if someone is struggling with a sin, we don't need to act as though we are some sort of judge. Only God is the judge (Isaiah 33:22). When we see fellow believers struggling with a sin, we should build them up and point them back to God in a loving way. This will help them return to the Lord and retain a good view of fellow Christians in general. Far too many people have a negative view of Jesus because of their encounters with thoughtless, judgmental Christians.

Rather than seeing the Lord, they are seeing individuals who are demonizing them and scrutinizing everything that comes out of their mouths. As believers in the Lord, this should bring us to repentance. God wants us to build others up with our words, not to tear them down. Each time we are mean, condescending, or rude to someone else, we are hurting someone made in the image of God. If we are truly following the Lord, we will refrain from making this mistake.

Challenge Questions:

- Are you allowing any unwholesome talk to come out of your mouth? How might you rewrite the script and only say things that are helpful to building others up?
- Do you feel you are a safe space for others? Or do they think you will say something derogatory if they are struggling with a certain sin?
- How can you model Christ rather than a false view of Him?

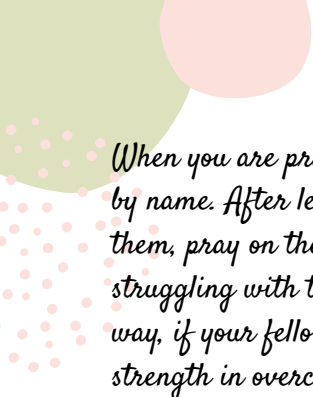
Prayer: "Dear Jesus, please help me allow no unwholesome talk to come out of my mouth. Help me to speak only words that are true, encouraging, and right. I only want to say things that are beneficial to those who are listening. Equip my very nature to be one that builds others up rather than tearing them down. I ask all of this in Your Name, Amen."

Week Three: Never Giving Up on Prayer

"Pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Believers need to actively pray for others to truly build them up in the Lord. Prayer is powerful and can change the course of history. If we fail to pray, we are telling the Lord that we don't need Him. Even if this is not what we are trying to convey, it is the message we are sending to the Lord. Rather than neglecting prayer, we need to be praying continually.





When you are praying for other believers, ensure you are praying for them by name. After learning about their needs and the best way to support them, pray on their behalf. For example, if your fellow believer is struggling with their health, pray for their health every day. In the same way, if your fellow believer is struggling with a specific sin, pray for their strength in overcoming this temptation.

Prayer should not be overlooked or downplayed. It is the true work of God in our lives. Jesus tells us, "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mark 11:24). Continue to pray for your friends, family, and other believers to ensure they are doing well in health, life, and their walk with the Lord. Others are praying for you; therefore, ensure you are also building others up in this way.

Challenge Questions:

- Are you currently praying for your fellow believers? Why or why not?*
- What day this week might you take some time to pray on behalf of the loved ones in your life?*
- Do you know of anyone who is praying for you? How have you seen this positively impact your life?*

Prayer: "Dear Lord, help me to start praying continually. I haven't always prayed for my fellow believers. I recognize now that this is not helping them to grow in You. Please forgive me and help me to start praying on their behalf daily. We all need Your encouragement, Lord, as well as the encouragement of others. Equip my heart and my mind to encourage those who need it most. Amen."

By: Vivian Bricker

