

Building Program

Some of the great cathedrals in Europe took hundreds of years to build. The Great Wall of China was built, added to and improved over the course of 21 centuries. And while the Great Pyramid at Giza took merely 20 years to build, it was the tallest man-made structure on earth for over 3800 years.

God has a building program going on that will put each of these to shame. He is building up something that is more than great; it is eternal. God is building his kingdom and he is doing it in and through the Body of Christ; which is made up of you, me and all believers in Jesus. In this week's study, we will see how important it is for us to follow his building plan, to build up our neighbors through the encouragement and endurance God provides us through his word, the Bible. We will see that it is all for one purpose - to glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Monday – Building Up

"If you plan to build a tall house of virtues, you must first lay deep foundations of humility."

Augustine of Hippo, 3rd-4th c. North African bishop and theologian

1. Please read Romans 15:1-6. What is the point of verses 1-2?
2. What is called for in Proverbs 3:27-29 and 14:20-21 regarding the welfare of those around you?
3. Read John 4:4-42. What did the woman do for her neighbors? How did this build them up? Why was she able to do it?

Making it Personal: What can you do for those around you today? Pray for God's guidance in building them up.

Tuesday – Insult and Injury

"Hath any wounded thee with injuries? Meet them with patience. Hasty words rankle the wound; soft language dresses it." Francis Quarles, 17th c. English poet

1. Please read Romans 15:3 (focusing on verse 3). What has Jesus done for us?
2. Psalm 69:1-16 describes some of the hardships Jesus faced (verse 9 is quoted in Romans 15:3). In your own words, write down some of the hardships Jesus went through. Have you ever felt similarly? When?

Digging Deeper: Isaiah 53:1-12 summarizes Jesus' ministry on earth, both as to his physical experiences and the spiritual importance of his sufferings. What is the conclusion in vs. 11-12? How does this encourage you?

Wednesday – Scripture Lessons

"The Holy Scriptures are our letters from home." Augustine of Hippo

1. Please read Romans 15:1-6 (focusing on vs. 4). What does this verse tell you about Scripture (the Bible)? What are the benefits to us of engaging with God's Word?
2. What does 2 Timothy 3:14-15 say about the effectiveness of scripture. What about 2 Timothy 3:16-17?
3. According to 1 Corinthians 2:11-14, what is the role of the Spirit in understanding God's word?

Making it Personal: As you spend time regularly engaging with God's Word, consider making it a habit to ask the Holy Spirit to lead you in understanding all God has for you in his word.

Thursday – Encouragement, Endurance, Unity

"One hundred religious persons knit into a unity by careful organization do not constitute a church any more than eleven dead men make a football team. The first requisite is life, always." A.W. Tozer

1. Please read Romans 15:1-6 (focusing on verses 4-5). Where does God provide the encouragement and endurance we need? What is his intended result?
2. What does Ephesians 4:2-3 and 11-13 say about unity? How can you play an integral role in this unity?
3. Now look at Ephesians 4:25-32. What practical advice does Paul offer for building up our neighbors?

Prayer Focus: Pray, asking God to build us all, every believer in Jesus, into the unified body he wants us to be.

Friday – Glorifying God

"The Scotch catechism says that man's chief end is 'to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.' But we shall then know that these are the same thing. Fully to enjoy is to glorify. In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him." C.S. Lewis, 20th c. English author and theologian

1. Please read Romans 15:1-6 (focusing on verse 6). What is the whole point of building up our neighbors and being unified in faith?
2. Giving glory to God is a decision we make not an emotion we respond to. How does Psalm 57:1-11 help you understand the value of giving glory to God even when you don't feel like it?
3. Take a look at 1 Corinthians 10:31-33. In what ways does this sum up Romans 15:1-6?

Digging Deeper (optional): Psalm 106 recites various events in which God's people chose not to glorify God. Pay particular attention to verses 19-20. What did the Israelites do? How does this relate to Romans 15:6?

For the Weekend: Re-read Romans 15:1-6 and consider the major insights you have learned this week. Consider how you can look to God for guidance in building up your neighbor in order to "glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."