

Toward Unity

As Christians, we don't do the best job of building each other up but that is exactly what Jesus wants. It must be front and center after we lead someone to Christ. The next thing must be building that individual up, helping him or her learn what the Christian life is all about.

This was Paul's main message to the Christians at Rome. He wanted them to make building each other up a main priority so they could grow together in unity. He did this by pointing out what their strengths were, sharing some possible pitfalls, giving them warnings about those who are in the process of tearing down all they have built and encouraging them to always turn to God for strength, endurance, peace, joy and comfort.

Don't Walk Alone

In Romans 15 and 16, Paul covered a lot of ground to make sure those in the church at Rome had everything they needed to go forward until he came to see them again in person.

He was teaching them and us how to build each other up. This is critical to any forward motion. We don't do our journeys alone; we do them in a community of faith.

First he does something he is a master at. He encourages mature Christians while at the same time warning them. "We who are strong [in our convictions and faith] ought to [patiently] put up with the weaknesses of those who are not strong, and not please ourselves," (Rom. 15:1, AMP).

Don't Just Please Yourself

When we please ourselves, we are focusing on what we want. This is exactly what the enemy wants us to do when he encourages us to focus on things we think we have to have or

have to indulge in.

There is always a downside to not putting Jesus first in our lives. This is one of things Paul is saying. On one hand he is encouraging the mature believers and on the other hand he is warning them.

It's easy when we think we know a thing or two about God and His Word to become lax in other areas of our Christian walk. Patiently putting up with the weaknesses of others is another thing we don't do well.

Mentor Others

It is so important that we be mentors to those who are coming up behind us and growing in their faith. In Romans 15:2 (TPT), Paul adds, "Our goal must be to empower others to do what is right and good for them, and to bring them into spiritual maturity."

It's a balancing act to both build someone up and help them do what is right and good for them when you see they are headed down a treacherous path. This was my main concern when God called me to coach those with weight issues. How do I challenge them while loving them at the same time?

I had lost 250 pounds. I knew I could tell others how to do that same thing but my concern was that at that time in my life, I had little to no compassion for those who wanted to stop a bad habit and yet kept doing it. Which is crazy because for 30 years, I did that exact, same thing.

Compassion and Patience

I wasn't a compassionate or patient person before God called me to coach. However when I began coaching, God gifted me with both. Since then, I've had many tell me they appreciate my compassion and patience when working with them.

Somehow in some way God also gave me both of these gifts. I

can see that every issue I've gone through in my life has led me to be more compassionate and patient with the cares and concerns of others.

It's all about others; it's never about us. God wants us strong and mature so we can help others. We can't help anyone else if we are tired, sluggish, have no stamina, have brain fog and have no concern for our own well-being. That is a recipe for disaster. I know; I've been there too!

Holy Spirit Power

We have to draw from God's strength. "May God who gives patience, steadiness, and encouragement help you to live in complete harmony with each other—each with the attitude of Christ toward the other," (Rom. 15:5, TLB).

In order to live in harmony or unity, God gives us patience, steadiness and encouragement. The Passion Translation says God gives us "great endurance and comfort." All of these are necessary ingredients to live in harmony with each other.

I don't have patience, endurance and steadiness on my own. I have to draw on the Holy Spirit for all of that. He is also the Comforter and He is the one who empowers us in every situation. We can't love others if we are impatient and angry.

Soften Our Hearts

We need to pray for God to open our understanding and soften our hearts toward others. We must ask that the Holy Spirit give us the spirit of love so that God may be glorified.

When there is unity, then, "with a unanimous rush of passion, you will with one voice glorify God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," (Rom. 15:6, TPT). This is really what the Father longs for.

For us, we need the appropriate tools to work with God to facilitate the unity of believers. When unity occurs, peace

and harmony reign supreme.

Thank God for Hope

Paul knows this and gives us the hints of what we need when He prays for us in Romans 15:13: "Now may God, the fountain of hope, fill you to overflowing with uncontainable joy and perfect peace as you trust in him. And may the power of the Holy Spirit continually surround your life with his super-abundance until you radiate with hope!"

One of the tools God gives us is hope. Because of His hope, we can trust in Him. Trust is another tool He gives us and the last He mentions is the power of the Holy Spirit.

As we use these tools, God will fill us with overflowing and uncontainable joy and perfect peace. Remember Romans 14:17 telling us about what the kingdom of God is all about and what it isn't about? It's good to remember that again. "The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking [what one likes], but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit," (Rom. 14:17, AMP).

Admit Your Weakness

The peace and joy only comes when we admit our weakness to God and ask for the power of the Holy Spirit to invade every part of our being.

When He surrounds our lives with His super-abundance, which actually goes beyond any definition we have of strength, then we will radiate with hope. In other words, nothing can stop us when we are fully connected to the power of the Holy Spirit!

We concentrate on learning how to be led by the Holy Spirit in all that we do in Overcomers Christian Weight loss Academy. For the first time, I've decided to offer my recent book, Sweet Surrender: Breaking Strongholds, as a free gift when you join us.

Spirit-led Transformation

Doors are open now, but this is a limited time offer, so be sure to take advantage of it now by joining us at:

In closing, I want to echo Paul's final words in the book of Romans: "To the only wise God, be glory forever through Jesus Christ," (Rom. 16:27, NIV).

This is the last of our podcast episodes on Romans. All of these, along with transcripts and additional action steps, are available in the Spirit-led Transformation course available when you join Overcomers.

For more on this topic, check out Sweet Grace for Your Journey podcast episode 106: Build Each Other Up. {eoa}

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