

THE INTRINSIC AND ORGANIC BUILDING UP OF THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST, Week 3

The Intrinsic Building Up of the Church for Its Organic Function

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:11-16; Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28

- Ephesians 4:11 And He Himself gave some as **apostles** and some as **prophets** and some as **evangelists** and some as **shepherds** and **teachers**,
- Ephesians 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints **unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,**
- Ephesians 4:13 **Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,**
- Ephesians 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,
- Ephesians 4:15 But **holding to truth in love**, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- Ephesians 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, **being joined together and being knit together** through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, **causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.**
- Romance 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and **all the members do not have the same function,**
- Romance 12:5 So we who are many are one Body in Christ, and **individually members one of another.**
- Romance 12:6 And having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, whether prophecy, **let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;**
- Romance 12:7 Or service, let us be faithful in that service; or he who teaches, in that teaching;
- Romance 12:8 Or he who exhorts, in that exhortation; he who gives, in simplicity; he who leads, in diligence; he who shows mercy, in cheerfulness.
- 1 Corinthians 12:4 But there are distinctions of gifts, but the **same Spirit;**
- 1 Corinthians 12:5 And there are distinctions of ministries, yet the **same Lord;**
- 1 Corinthians 12:6 And there are distinctions of operations, but the **same God, who operates all things in all.**
- 1 Corinthians 12:7 But to each one is **given the manifestation of the Spirit for what is profitable.**
- 1 Corinthians 12:8 For to one through the Spirit a **word of wisdom** is given, and to another a **word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit;**
- 1 Corinthians 12:9 To a different one **faith in the same Spirit**, and to another **gifts of healing in the one Spirit,**
- 1 Corinthians 12:10 And to another **operations of works of power**, and to another **prophecy**, and to another **discerning of spirits**; to a different one **various kinds of tongues**, and to another **interpretation of tongues.**
- 1 Corinthians 12:11 But the **one and the same Spirit operates all these things**, distributing to each one respectively even as He purposes.
- 1 Corinthians 12:28 And God has placed some in the church: first **apostles**, second **prophets**, third **teachers**; then **works of power**, then **gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.**

A physical building is built by putting together and fitting together various materials. Such a building, however, is lifeless. It is not organic. **God's building is organic**, and the best example of such an organic building is a living person. **A living person is a real building.** God took a rib out of Adam's side and built that rib into a woman. This woman was a building. God created Adam, the husband, but God did not create a wife. God built up a wife for Adam. The man was created by God, and the woman was built by God. God's building work is finer than His creating work. Man, as the one created by God, is rougher than the female, who was built by God. Males are rough, and females are fine. A female's face, hands, voice, and actions are finer than the male's. The female is much finer, because she was built by God. God built up a woman.

The building up of the church is actually **the growth of the church**. Every full-grown person began as a small baby. The building up of that person over the years was accomplished by that person's growth. When he ate, he grew, and **this growth was his organic building up**. If we mean business to have the church built up, we must take care of our growth in the divine life. This means **that we must be those eating and drinking Christ**. We grow with what we eat, and what we eat becomes our very constitution. We are what we eat. (*The Organic Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ to be the Organism of the Processed and Dispensing Triune God, chapter 3*)

Day 1 & Day 2

Ephesians 4:11-12	And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,
1 Corinthians 12:28	And God has placed some in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then works of power, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.
Acts 13:1	Now there were in Antioch, in the local church, prophets and teachers: Barnabas and Simeon, who was called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen, the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

I. The intrinsic building up of the church is through all the perfected members of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:11-16:

- A. Christ, the ascended Head, has given gifts—the **apostles**, **prophets**, **evangelists**, and **shepherds** and **teachers**—for the perfecting of the saints in the local churches—vv. 11-12; 1 Cor. 12:28; Acts 13:1.
- B. The perfecting of the saints is “**unto** the work of the ministry, **unto** the building up of the Body of Christ”—Eph. 4:12:
 1. The word unto in Ephesians 4:12 means “**resulting in**,” “**for the purpose of**,” or “**with a view to**.”
 2. The many gifted persons have only one ministry, that is, to **minister Christ for the building up** of the Body of Christ, the church; this is the unique ministry in the New Testament economy—2 Cor. 4:1; 1 Tim. 1:12.
 3. According to the grammatical construction of Ephesians 4:12, the building up of the Body of Christ is the work of the ministry:
 - a. Whatever the gifted persons do as the work of the ministry **must be for the building up of the Body of Christ**—vv. 12, 16.
 - b. This building up is not accomplished directly by the gifted ones but **by the saints who have been perfected by the gifted ones**; the work of the gifts is indirect, but the work of the saints is direct—vv. 11-12.
 - c. The gifts are **joined together in coordination** to perfect the saints in the church to bring out their function, each doing the work of the ministry—v. 12.
 - d. In this way, through the perfecting by the gifted ones, **all the saints will do the work of the ministry**, and in the end the Body of Christ will be built up—vv. 12, 16.

Day 3

Ephesians 4:3	Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:
Ephesians 4:13	Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

- C. Eventually, **all the members** of the Body of Christ will “arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man”—v. 13:
 1. The oneness of the Spirit in verse 3 is the **oneness of the divine life in reality**, and the oneness in verse 13 is the **oneness of our living in practicality**:
 - a. The oneness of reality needs to be **practiced** and thereby become the oneness in practicality—vv. 3, 13.
 - b. The word arrive in verse 13 indicates that a process is required for us to arrive at the oneness of our living in practicality; the **oneness of reality** is the **beginning**, and the **oneness in practicality** is the **destination**.
 2. The oneness in practicality is the **oneness of the faith**—v. 13:
 - a. The faith refers not to our act of believing but to the **things in which we believe**, such as the divine **person of Christ** and **His redemptive work** accomplished for our salvation—1 Tim. 1:19; 6:10, 12, 21; Jude 3.
 - b. In the church life we have only one thing that is special—the **faith**; to insist upon anything besides the faith for receiving the believers is to be divisive—Rom. 14:1; 15:7.

3. The oneness in practicality is also the **oneness of the full knowledge of the Son of God**—Eph. 4:13:
 - a. The full knowledge of the Son of God is the **apprehension of the revelation** concerning the Son of God as life for our experience—Matt. 16:16.
 - b. The oneness of the faith altogether **depends on the full knowledge of the Son of God**; only when we **take Christ as the center** and focus on Him can we arrive at the oneness of the faith, for only in the Son of God can our faith be one—John 20:31; Gal. 1:15-16; 2:20; 4:4, 6; 1 Cor. 2:2.
4. To arrive at “a full-grown man” is to **arrive at maturity in life**; maturity is needed for the practical oneness—Eph. 4:13.

Day 4

Ephesians 4:15-16 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ, Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

- D. For the building up of the Body of Christ we need to **hold to the truth in love** so that we may “grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ”—v. 15:
 1. To grow up into Christ is to have Christ increase in us in all things **until we attain to a full-grown man**.
 2. Head in Ephesians 4:15 indicates that our growth in life by the increase of Christ should be the **growth of the members in the Body under the Head**.
- E. To grow in life is to **grow into the Head**, Christ, but to operate in the Body is to **operate out from Him**—vv. 15-16:
 1. First, we grow up into the Head; then we have something that is out from the Head for the building up of the Body—v. 16.
 2. Through the growth in life and the development of the gifts, **each member of the Body of Christ has its own measure**, which operates for the growth of the Body.
 3. The growth of the Body of Christ is the **increase of Christ in the church**, which results in the building up of the Body by the Body itself—v. 16.

In the Body some are **joints**, like the **apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers**. Others are **parts, who operate according to their measure**. Through these two categories of members, the Body grows, and this growth is unto the building up of itself in love. If we are not a joint, we must be a part. None of us can escape from being either a joint or a part. We should not think that only the joints are useful. **Every part in the Body is also useful**. The thighs in our physical body are not joints, but they are great parts. We need our thighs to stand because they bear our weight. No member of the Body of Christ should despise himself. **We all should praise the Lord that we are either joints or parts in the organic Body of Christ**.

If you are a **joint**, you **should supply the Body with the riches of Christ**. Through your contact with the Lord, you have become a joint, so you have the riches of Christ with which you can supply the Body. If you are a **part**, you should **operate**. The Body is supplied by the joints and enjoys the operation in the measure of each one part for its growth. Through the joints supplying and the parts operating, **all the Body causes the growth of the Body**, and the growth of the Body results in the **building up of itself in love**. (*The Organic Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ to be the Organism of the Processed and Dispensing Triune God, chapter 3*)

Day 5

Romance 12:4-8

For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, So we who are many are one Body in Christ, and individually members one of another. And having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or service, let us be faithful in that service; or he who teaches, in that teaching; Or he who exhorts, in that exhortation; he who gives, in simplicity; he who leads, in diligence; he who shows mercy, in cheerfulness.

II. The **organic function** of the church is in the **organic Body of Christ** and in the **local expressions** of the organic Body of Christ—1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27-28; Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11:

- A. Because we are this organic Body, **we should be organic and function organically** in the church life—Rom. 12:4-5:
1. When the grace of God in Christ as the divine element comes into our being to be our life for our enjoyment, it brings with it the element of certain spiritual skills and abilities, which, accompanying our growth in life, develop into the gifts in life that we may be able to function in the Body of Christ—vv. 6-8.
 2. When the entire Body is operating, the **Body causes the growth of itself**, resulting in the Body being built up in love—Eph. 4:16.

Day 6

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

But there are distinctions of gifts, but the same Spirit; And there are distinctions of ministries, yet the same Lord; And there are distinctions of operations, but the same God, who operates all things in all.

- B. The organic function of the organic Body of Christ is in the local expressions of the Body and by the **move of the Triune God** in the operations of God, through the **ministries of the Lord**, and through the **gifts of the Spirit** in His manifestations to the members of the organic Body of Christ—1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28:
1. In 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 there are God the Father's **operations**, God the Son's **ministries**, and God the Spirit's **gifts**.
 2. The gifts of the Spirit are to carry out the ministries of the Lord, and the ministries of the Lord are to **accomplish the operations of God the Father**—vv. 4-6.
 3. While we are functioning organically, the Triune God, who is within us, **moves together with us**.
 4. The Triune God does not move apart from us; **when we move, He moves**—Eph. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Cor. 12:4-6.
- C. The organic function of the church is for the **building up of the church as the organic Body of Christ**, the fullness of the all-inclusive One who fills all in all—Eph. 1:23.

In the Local Expressions of the Organic Body of Christ by the Move of the Triune God

The **organic function** of the church is in the **local expressions of the organic Body of Christ** and **by the move of the Triune God in the operations of God**, through the ministries of the Lord, and with the gifts of the Spirit in His manifestations to the members of the organic Body of Christ. While we are functioning either as supplying joints or as operating parts, the Triune God, who is within us, **moves together with us**. In 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, the Triune God is mentioned. There are God the Father's operations, God the Son's ministries, and God the Spirit's gifts. The gifts of the Spirit are to carry out the ministries of the Lord, and the ministries of the Lord are to accomplish the operations of God the Father. The Triune God does not move apart from us. He is waiting for us. **When we move, He moves. When we speak, He speaks**. If we do not speak in a meeting, God cannot speak. The Spirit exercises His gifts, the Lord carries out His ministries, and God operates while we are functioning. The organic function of the church by the move of the Triune God is for the building up of the church as the organic Body of Christ, the fullness of the all-inclusive One who fills all in all. (*The Organic Building Up of the Church as the Body of Christ to be the Organism of the Processed and Dispensing Triune God, chapter 3*)