***Edification

Colossians 2:18-19

COL-459***

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Our subject is "The Error of Angelic Worship," number 16, in Colossians 2:18-19.

We've been talking about being Christlike. We've been talking about preserving our spiritual heritage as members of the body of Christ in the church age. The apostle Paul makes a perceptive statement, at one point, when he says, "Let him that thinks he stands, take heed, lest he fall." This should be observed by every Christian with regularity. And today, again, we get the shock of finding somebody solid in the Christian life, and in Christian service, all of a sudden, doing the unthinkable: “That person would not fall.” Yes, that person did step aside out of the plan of God, and out of the power system of grace. If you do not walk in the power system of grace, you expose yourself to the worst possible things that Satan can deliver against you.

So, this is a very big thing that we're talking about when Paul, in Colossians 2:18, says, "Don't let anybody defraud you of your heritage (of your prize). It's a command not to do it – to preserve our church age spiritual heritage of grace power. We Christians have to really be on our guard against disoriented teachers who are trying to lead us back down into the hopeless system of the Mosaic Law, or into the hopeless system of trying to be compatible with the devil's world: to be part of Satan's system; to have its values; to have our eyes only on things below, and not on the things above; and, not to have the capacity or the willingness to say, "If I do this here, the consequences will be out there."

What grief has come into the heart of believers? This is grief which often is irreversible. This is grief which often is deadly. A simple moment of thought would say this is against the law of God, and it is against the will of God, and therefore it is against the plan of God for my life. To do it is to deal with a deadly serpent. You cannot serve God and the world system both.

The primary objective of the Christian life, therefore, is not to do something, but to become spiritually mature in Christ Jesus. Before you run around trying to serve, the first thing is to grow up into spiritual strength, and to get that muscular capacity of spiritual maturity.

We all go through the stages spiritually of babyhood, youth, and adulthood as we mature spiritually. Spiritual maturity, as we have shown you, can be viewed as a pentagon which is built into one's soul as a basis for both our defense against Satan and the world, and our offense in the angelic warfare. And as always, refreshing our minds on some of the things we know in the Word of God is welcomed, as it should be. And I appreciate the many people who came up this morning and said, "Boy, this was something that's not new territory, but in a new light and a new context – it's just exactly what I needed.

**"Gnosis" – Knowledge**

The building materials to build a spiritual maturity structure in one's soul is the church-age doctrinal principles which are learned primarily in the local church services. That is described by the Greek word "gnosis." It works in this way. The Word of God is taught as it is being taught here. And it is instructing the people of God in the mind of God. And the result is that this "gnosis" knowledge is what we receive.

**The Mind**

Our mind works in two ways. It perceives things, and then it decides things. So, we put it together as perceptive mind and the directive mind. At this point, in the perceptive mind, we get information. Now, you have sat here this morning, and you have sat here tonight. You'll hear the Word of God explained to you, and you will hear some applications and some connections. And all along the line, you will be listening, and you will be learning. That's all that you have done. You haven't developed anything spiritually. You haven't lost anything spiritually. What you're doing is getting information into the "nous" (that's the Greek word) – up in the head. Now, you think this over – what you've heard from the Word of God. This is what God thinks on the basis of spiritual principles.

**"Epignosis" (Full Knowledge)**

One of our men was discussing the things that are taking place in the world now, out in the Gulf area, and the imminent combat there. He got into a discussion about what the Bible thinks about warfare. So, he handed over the doctrinal tapes on the doctrine of warfare. This will often open people's eyes up in an amazing way – how to fight a war, when that is the objective of God. But whatever the subject is, and here it is preserving your prize (your power system of spiritual life in the Holy Spirit, in the church age, you say "Amen. I believe that." So, by faith, that information is immediately changed from "gnosis" into "epignosis." That word pops up in our translation as "full knowledge," and they try to translate it in various ways to show that it's not just knowledge, but it is knowledge that now has been put into some compartment of your human spirit.

We're not going to go into the details of the Scriptures that guide us to understanding, but it is the human spirit, which is the reservoir of God's truth. But it's there now. And it's located there for your future use. The result is, upon the filling of the Holy Spirit, in a situation of life that you must deal with, God the Holy Spirit comes in. He picks out the compartment of information. And He kicks it up here into the directive side of your mind. Now, this is what the Bible calls the "kardia" (the heart).

Now you have divine viewpoint up here. You have a frame of reference of right and wrong, and what is the will of God. And you have a conscience which is not seared. It is responsive to the Holy Spirit. Conscience is no good if it is not trained in God's point of view, and if it is not subject to His guidance.

So, here you are a Christian and you have been given God's information. Now you have the capacity to make a decision. You make that decision on temporal things. You decide what to do with your life. You decide what to do with your time. You decide to do with your with your money; with your business; and with family. All the decisions that have to do with the things below. You also have God's direction to spiritual things. And what you have is the emotional attitude that you should have toward temporal things, or the emotional attitude that you should have toward spiritual things. You do not have that by trying. It is because God the Holy Spirit has given that to you out of what you put here.

Pity the poor average Christian. He goes through his whole life with these compartments dead empty. He has one compartment always that overflows – that gospel. He gets that again and again in church, because the objective of the institution is not spiritual growth (development\_, but numerical growth.

You also have this information from the directive mine put down here into your volition. Positive volition is what the Holy Spirit does, and the result is divine good words; the right actions; the right decisions; and, godliness. It's the prime of life – the prime of your spiritual life.

You may also take this information, that God the Holy Spirit has given you, and He directs it here, and you can say, "No, I don't want to do that spiritually." You can have negative volition. This is temporal volition. So, what you do is your emotions go berserk. They're way out of your control. And pretty soon, you do things based upon how you feel about them, and you're emotionally dominated in your soul. And the sin nature is then free, and instead of the Holy Spirit giving you information, your negative bullishly gives you the sin nature to direct your mind. And the negative volition is kicked in from your mentality. Then what do you do? Your volition comes in here. And human good is produced (divine sins and human good). And the result is compassion, and all the things that society goes after.

This is a system that works every time. It is God's way. And it starts with the simple proposition of getting to know your Father in heaven. When you have this information, now you're ready to start building a spiritual maturity structure.

It is very shameful for a Christian, who has been around biblical instruction for some time, to not be grown up spiritually, so that the issues of life (intellectually, emotionally, and in his own volition) are not guided by God our Father. And why would we want to live like that?

So, the building materials of the spiritual maturity structure in our souls is this Word of God that begins the information, and ends up stored as permanent "gnosis" knowledge. With this, we are in a position to start building this pentagon that we looked at this morning. And, of course, we have a magnificent set of tapes on this. This is just a brief overview to give us a background for where we're going. But briefly, we are building this five-sided figure.

**The Spiritual Maturity Structure**

First of all is grace orientation – to live on the basis of the grace of God, not the bases of the Mosaic Law ritual system. Next is having a relaxed mental attitude toward life. Your desires (your emotional love) is directed and controlled in such a way that you are relaxed in terms of what happens and what people do.

You should have a mastery of details of life. Most Christians break down there. They never get very far in their maturity there, such that they you are able to control material things, and you are able to control all of the demands you have. How much time are you going to have tomorrow morning, and all day tomorrow, to be able to sit down, and read the Word of God? You should be able to sit down to go through the through the Pathway book – The Bible Pathway book that we have suggested that you use as a guide. How much time will you had to sit down and read it? Well, you're going to have a lot of time for all kinds of business, and all kinds of activities, and you'll be right on top of them, from the time you open your eyes. But where does your control over your life come, so that there's a place for God in it; that is, a place where you can even just sit and listen to Him?

Then there's the capacity to love. This is part of the fruit of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives you this kind of ability – "agape" love: the love that is sacrificial, and free of bitterness. Then we have inner happiness. Whatever happens on the outside, you know that you're in the hand of God. He'll never leave. He'll never forsake you. He'll always provide.

So, only divine viewpoint, which you have stored in your human spirit, is all you have in building materials. It's a bummer deal if you want to build a house, and that that lot, on which you're going to build, is not piled high with building materials. If it's not piled high with building materials, you're not going to build a house. You can talk about it, but it's not going to be a reality.

We have the same thing in spiritual things. There's nothing more important than building the spiritual maturity structure in your soul. And only what's stored as "epignosis" knowledge in the human spirit; that is, positive evolution information received, can be used to build that spiritual maturity, and take you to super-grace living. God builds this structure in a positive volition Christians by the method that we've talked about as a grace system of perception; that is, that no matter what your IQ is, a person who is given instruction in doctrine, and who is receptive to it, can learn it. There is no doctrine that is too deep for any believer to grasp. You can learn it, because you have the ability to grasp spiritual phenomena – this spiritual maturity structure.

**Edification**

Let's take a look at the concept of edification. Of course, that's what it ends up with. The concept that we're looking for is edification. What is edification? That means a built-up Christian. He's not a little baby who's being tossed around by every wind of doctrine that comes along. But he has certain characteristics of maturity.

This word "edification" is informative in itself. The word "edification" comes from two Greek words. First, it comes from this word "oikos," or "chaos." "Oikos" means "a house" or "a structure." So, here is the structure part of spiritual maturity structure. Secondly, it comes from the Greek word "domeo." "Domeo" means "to build." So, "edification" means "to erect a structure." And you will notice that the first part of edification is an "edifice." So, what happens is that a spiritual edifice is constructed. This isn't something we're dreaming up. It's right in the very key words of Scripture.

Now, in the Bible, there are three words that are related to this concept of edification (the concept of building). There is, first of all, this word "oikodome." "Oikodome" means "the act of building." It means "the process of constructing." So, this is what's involved in edification. You're building something in your soul. This is used in Ephesians 4:12 Ephesians. Paul says, "For the equipping of the saints." After the pastor-teacher has done his job: "It'll be for the equipping (the training) of the saints for the work of service (for their service) to the building up ("oikodome") of the body of Christ." This is to the building up of Christians, so, that they are mature. They are spiritually grown-up. And, therefore, they are ready for the process of enjoying a life which is at the prime of their spiritual lives.

Ephesians 4:16 says, "From whom the whole body (body of believers) be fitted and held together by that which every joint supplied, according to the proper working of each individual part." We are a group of believers. A body is a picture, and each part works a portion of that body: "Causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." Here you have "oikodome." This is, again, the act of constructing. So, how do you get a spiritual maturity structure? You build it just, like you put a building up it that you're going to live in, or work in.

Notice also Ephesians 4:29: "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification (for building up) according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace, grace to those who are hear it."

So, here, in all three of these verses in Ephesians 4, it is speaking about this "oikodome," which means the idea of construction (the building).

The second word that's involved in edification is the word "oikodomia." This refers to the result of the construction. This refers to the building that you have completed.

1 Timothy 1:4 illustrates this: "Nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies which give rise to mere speculation, rather than furthering the administration of God, which is by faith. Here, the concept of administration is the result of what you have done. So, you begin with "oikodome." There's a construction work. Then you have the consequence of that instruction, which is the building that evolves.

Then you have a third word that is involved in being an edified Christian. If you're interested in going on with your Heavenly Father, to the best He has for you, this is the way it happens. This, of course, is the builder. In Acts 4:11: "He is the stone (Christ) which was rejected by you by you builders ("oikodomos"), but which became the very corner."

So, being an edified Christian is not a matter of just feeling something. It is not a matter of emoting. That's not the way the spiritual life is accomplished. This includes a construction effort on your part. It results in a building, and it is the process of you as a builder. And what do you get? A spiritual maturity structure. And for that reason, this is the core (the key) of the Christian life as stated in Jude 20: "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit. Here, the Greek word means "to build up" on your faith. This is done through that system that people who are filled with the Spirit, and who are walking in fellowship with the Father – they'll understand spiritual things that are taught. And this process of edification (construction) resulting in a building (the spiritual maturity structure), which is built by God the Holy Spirit, on the basis of the Word of doctrine that you have learned.

This is a process. You can't do this at home. You can't do this generally by reading books. You can't do this by watching religious television programs. These are the deep things of the Spirit of God. There's nothing here that the youngest kids here tonight cannot understand. I want to grow up to be like Jesus Christ. I want to grow up to be a mature Christian, so that God cannot keep from blessing me, and cannot do all that He wants to do for me. He's pouring it out as fast as we are willing to receive it.

Remember what Psalm 23 says? "My cup runneth over." If you don't have a cup, it's not going to run over. This is another analogy here. The spiritual maturity structure is a cup, and what you are pouring in is the Word of God (the Word of doctrine). The result is that God pours back edification. He pours back spiritual maturity. This is the kind of thing we need when we get into places in life that are very hard to take – those times we did something in the past that we can't undo, and it has long-range, terrible consequences. God says that His grace will always be there to carry us through. But the grace of God will not give you the first best. This is what you need to know first, before you make these major decisions of life, because you cannot go back and have it the way it could have been. God will carry you through with His grace, but it will be second best.

The spiritual maturity structure, built in the soul, through this knowledge of the Word of God, stored in our human spirit, on the basis of our constructing work (learning the Word; building the spiritual maturity structure; and, God the Holy Spirit enabling us as the builder).

**The Purpose of Edification**

Here's the purpose of edification in the soul. First of all is the nature of an edified soul.

**Maturity**

First of all, an edified Christian is a mature Christian. All these five facets of the pentagon of his soul are in place. Jesus Christ Himself is for us the pattern, in His humanity, of developing a mature spiritual life. Please remember that the Lord Jesus Christ had to go through every one of these things we're talking about now, in hiss humanity. He did not carry His deity through in this. It was His humanity.

Ephesians 4:12-13 says that our objective in building up the body of Christ until: "We all attain to the unity of the faith (faith of Christian doctrine), and of the knowledge of the Son of God to a mature man." To the measure of what maturity? "To the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ – a spiritual maturity structure as mature as the Lord Jesus Christ. That's worth pursuing. That's worth taking the trouble to come out to an evening service for. That's worth taking the trouble to find someplace in your day for the Word of God, and for prayer.

**Growth**

This is the way the Lord Jesus did it, from the time of His infancy. Luke 2:40: "And the child (Jesus) continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him." This was the infant Jesus. He has been recognized in the temple by both Simeon and Anna as the Messiah Savior. And this child is human, but He is also God. He is deity: "And when they had gone through the ritual of the Mosaic Law required (the circumcision and so on, for a male child, under the Law of Moses), they went back home (to the city of Nazareth), and there this baby began to grow and mature. He became strong." He was a baby with strong muscles.

Do not go for this insult – pictures of the Lord Jesus Christ with girly hair. Look at some girl (some lady) next to you with long hair. He didn't look like that. In fact, in all of the pictures in the Roman catacombs, where the Christians hid from the persecuting Romans, they would draw on the side of the cave. You go there and see some of these. They would draw pictures, as they understood from tradition passed down to them, of what Jesus Christ looked like. And every time, He has the short hair of the style that was current in His day, that was characteristic of the Roman society. He did not have long, girly hair. But he didn't grow very strong.

In verse 40, "The child grew strong. He increased in intellectual understanding (wisdom), and the grace of God was upon Him. More specifically, look at verse 52. There were four ways that Jesus grew. There are the same four ways that your children will grow. And you should be aware of these as you rear them. Luke 2:52: "Jesus kept increasing in wisdom (intellectual development). They didn't send him over to the schools in Philistia for His training. They put Him under the rabbinical schools: "And He grew in stature." Jesus Christ was a viral, powerful man when He was grown. That's why he could walk in among all those money changers in the temple; crack His whip over them; kick their tables over then; and, say, "Get out." Nobody was about to take Him on.

So, He developed intellectually; He, developed physically; and, He developed spiritually, in favor with God, and he developed socially, in favor with man. And that's what spiritual maturity does. These four things is what is provided for you. So, an edified soul will become a mature Christian person.

In John 1:14, we have this added: "And the Word which is Jesus Christ became flesh (God incarnate). He dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory." Now, what do you think that is talking about? This is the glory. This is the light. This is the magnificence. This is the holiness. Do not make the mistake of thinking that this verse deals with His deity. This verse is talking about His humanity. This verse is talking about what could exactly be said of every person here tonight who has gone the full gamut of spiritual maturity. What they beheld was a human being who reflected the magnificence of the holiness of God, glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. He was the glory of Jesus Christ. His deity glory was hidden behind the incarnation. What was there was the glory in His humanity, reflecting the glory of God.

So, number one, you become a mature Christian when you're an edified Christian.

**Stability**

Number two: when you're and edified Christian, you become a stable Christian. Are you a very stable person? Are you a person that, when we meet you one time, you're in a certain very attractive attitude, but when we meet you the next time, we don't know what you're going to be like? You're down; you're up; and, everybody around you has to walk tiptoeing through the tulips to see how you will be. Consistency and control of yourself as a human being: in your mind; in your will; and, in in your emotions is the result of edification in your soul.

Most Christians are emotional yo-yos. They're very erratic. We will walk into this auditorium, and there are certain people that you know will be here. I will be here. Joyce will be here. Mr. Holt will be here. Sometimes we're the only three that are here at the start. The erratic Christian – we never know if he's going to walk in. No, there are a lot more of you. When I walk in here, I know I'm going to see you. You're going to be here. You're going to be in a place of duty. You're going to be in your place of ministry. You are not an erratic person. You are consistent in your service to God.

This is what makes church work so hard. There are some Christians such that, if you give them a job, boy, they will handle it. The will keep in touch with you. They will carry it through. And the work of the Lord gets done. That is a great and wonderful stability. One of the all-time great Christians was Stonewall Jackson. Thomas Jackson was given the name Stonewall at the first Battle of Manassas (the first Battle of Bull Run). As he stood at the top of the hill, the union forces were coming at them from all sides. And Stonewall Jackson was directing the battle up on the top of that hill, and repulsing the enemy at all sides, and someone looked up and said, "Look at Jackson, standing up there like a stone wall. That's where he got his name.

But there was another characteristic that he had, and this was why generally considered him his right hand? And that was that this was the one officer that he could say, "Here's what I want to do. I want to get out here, and I want this to be in place, and I want this to be in place. Take this unit, and proceed to do it. And Lee could count on the fact that it was going to be done. You had a stable officer here that was not going to be erratic. When you needed him, he was there. These are Christians who you could count on, that their spiritual gifts were going to be used. You don't have to wait and see. They're going to do the service. They're going to carry out their responsibility. That's very important in military terms.

In the first Gulf War, there was an area that needed to be secured. And General Schwarzkopf sent in the army. The army hit it, and they were repulsed. And they could not take the position. Finally, Schwarzkopf really got teed off, and he went to the colonel and said, "Now, by heaven, you go in there, and you secure that position for me. And then he said a terrible thing to the colonel, or I'm going to send the Marines in to do it. That's all it took. I'm not going to take that humiliation of putting those sea jockeys in there to take what the army could not do. And they went back and this time, they did it. They got it.

But General Schwarzkopf was, in fact, saying, "After all is said and done, I have one stable group of military people. And when I turn to them, they're still going to be stable, and they're going to be able to execute the mission. That is consistent control.

The edified believer has this. The Lord Jesus Christ demonstrated this under a variety of tremendous pressures, but He always had great stability, and He always had great happiness, even under great stress. When He was on the cross: bleeding horribly; beaten up; disfigured; in great physical agony; crying out to His Heavenly Father; and, in his mind, Psalm 22 tells us he was going through Scripture. The Scripture that he was going through was that: “After all this was over, and His death will have paid for the moral guilt of all mankind,” said God, “now as a grace gift could give salvation to those who would accept the gift." He was remembering how it was going to be after His death and his resurrection, and all this terrible payment was made. And how much glory would come to the Father with the magnificent salvation that would now be available to all mankind. He was stable even under that agony.

For that reason, Hebrews 13:8 said: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday; today; and, forever. He is immutable. We Christians, if we are edified (oriented to God's word), and if we have our human spirits filled with doctrine to guide us, we're going to be the same. We're going to be stable. Those are the people that you can have in your ministry, and you'll accomplish great things.

Now, Satan is not going to try to make the Lord Jesus Christ unstable. He doesn't hit Him, because the Lord Jesus Christ is in heaven. He is going to hit us – we who represent Him. We are the ones that are going to be called to instability. We're the ones who have a place of ministry, and especially a ministry where, if you're absent, it really hurts us in some part of the organization. And it's humbling to me to see how often Christians who don't particularly feel – yet, they're there with that ministry. Why are they doing this? Because they're stable, edified believers. And therefore, they enjoy doing the things that God has provided for them. You can enjoy the things you have, but remember that they don't last forever.

**Light**

So, first of all, if you're an edified our, so you become a mature Christian, you get grown up spiritually. Secondly, you become a stable Christian in your daily life. And thirdly, you become a Christian who reflects the glory of God to all the world. Another synonym for spiritual maturity is the word "light." John 8:12 says, "And again, therefore, Jesus spoke to them saying, I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but you'll have the light of life." Light is another word for spiritual maturity. Light is another word for being edified.

Can we say this as Jesus did in His humanity? He wasn't talking about God. He was saying, "I, as a human being (as a man), you can follow Me in My guidance spiritually, and I will not mislead you. Not only will you receive guidance, but it'll be right – the guidance that comes from Christ. What kind of signals (very often, we must ask ourselves) do people pick up from us? How often would you say, "Boy, I don't want them to act like I did? I don't want them to have the lack of responsibility and dependability. I just reflected that that's not the glory of God. Do you know what the word "glory" means? Honor. It's not to the honor of God.

1 John 1:5-7: "And this is the message we have heard from Him (from God), and announce to you that God is light. And in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and yet walk in the darkness (sin), we lie. We do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light of the Word of God, and the Spirit of God, and in temple fellowship – if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sins."

One of the reasons you don't have such happy times with your relatives is because they're not in the light spiritually. The closer you are to the side of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the light that He imbues upon us, the more you're going to find that people who do not walk in that light are not folks that you're very comfortable with. You're going to find your fellowship with people who walk in the light, and with people who love the same Lord, and who love Him with the same reality of Who He is. As such, when we are walking in the light, then the Lord Jesus Christ is the glory of God that we share.

In John 1:14, we read, "The Word (again) became flesh and dwelt among us. We beheld Christ's glory – the glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

So, when we talk about edification, another word is light. Christians also are to glorify God. 1 Corinthians 6:20 points out that we are to glorify, as edified believers, God our father, and in a very specific way. 1 Corinthians 6:20 Corinthians: "For you have been bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body." I don't have to tell you what kind of an un-glorified reflection there is with people in their physical bodies in the entertainment world, and in entertainers and people in all kinds of institutions of life portrayed on television – people who, in a previous generation would have been humiliated and removed with complete disgust, but now they are honored and esteemed in all of their corruption. The result is that it is very difficult for a Christian to watch a lot of TV, and to not be completely disgusted by what people are doing with their bodies, including their mouths.

We have been bought with the price of the death of Christ. Therefore, glorify God in your body. That's what an edified Christian does. Furthermore, we shine forth the glory of God in this world. In Matthew 5:14, Jesus says, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden."

Verse 16: "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father, Who is in heaven." A completed spiritual maturity structure is the image of the glory of God in the Christian. And it brings honor to our Heavenly Father.

So, edification – that's the thing we pursue. In all these ways of learning what God thinks, that gives us, in our human spirits, the material to build this kind of a structure. 1 Corinthians 11:7 says, "For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God. But the woman is the glory of the man." An edified woman wants to be the glory of her husband, to honor him, so that he looks upon her with great admiration and esteem, because of how he is elevated and ennobled by her. And the man in church should not be wearing a hat, because it covers his glory before God. He is the image, and he should have the glory of God shining forth.

So, the edified soul is a reflector of God the Father.

Now, there are a number of other synonyms that you will run into in the Scripture. We won't take time to look them up in the passages and read them tonight, but I will read them. And they are synonyms for an edified person, and the spiritual maturity structure.

We've seen that light is one. An edified person acts to the glory of God. And edified person is described as Christ in you (Christ formed in you). An edified person – Christ may dwell in your hearts (Ephesians 3:17). And he's there by faith. Also, the expression "the fullness of God, in Ephesians 3:19, refers to all the facets of the spiritual maturity structure. Ephesians 4:24 speaks about the new self – spiritual maturity in the image of the new self, which is Jesus Christ. We talked about being perfect. That means mature (James 1:4). And then Ephesians 5:1 ties up this concept of the edified Christian. Ephesians 5:1 says, "Therefore, be imitators of God as a beloved Christian."

So, we're back to where we started. We're talking about being Christlike. Being Christlike is not some emotional jag that you go on. It is the Word of God in your human spirit, where you are positive to the guidance that God the Holy Spirit gives you with that information. The believer's testimony is affected, as the ambassador of God. God our Father wants us to show His glory by this spiritual structure that He builds in us. Pressures and suffering that we may go through will reveal the glory of God in us.

In 1 Peter 1:7, Peter says, "That the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold, which is perishable, even though tested by fire (that is, by problems and suffering), may be found to result in the praise and glory and honor of the revelation of Jesus Christ." It's a wonderful concept. But it's not so easy when you get hit with something bad in your life, to take it in stride, so that you show your edification and spiritual maturity, and honor your Father, when you're going through the valley.

The spiritual maturity structure at super-grace level in our souls, people will see a stable Christian who reflects the glory of God. 2 Corinthians 6:4-10: "But in everything, commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in affliction, in hardship, in distresses, in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness and hunger (this is the lifestyle of Paul as a servant of God), in purity, in knowledge, and patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, in the word of truth, in the power of God, by the weapons of righteousness, for the right hand and the left, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report, regarded as deceivers and yet true, misrepresented as a Christian, as unknown, nobody knows us, and yet we are well-known to God, as dying, yet behold, we live (we die here, but we go alive into heaven), as punished, yet not put to death, as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, yet possessing all things."

You may not have anything much on a material level, but if you have become an edified Christian, you have gone to spiritual maturity. You have it all. You have got real riches, because do you know what? You take the spiritual maturity structure to heaven with you. Some Christians are going to look very, very bad up there. The spiritual maturity structure brought about by edification in the Word of God goes with you to heaven. It becomes your garment – your characteristic.

The book of the Revelation says, "Where we stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and receive our awards, we will then go to the marriage ceremony, where we will be joined to Christ as His bride. And then we will go to the marriage supper of the Lamb, which will be throughout the whole millennial (1,000-year) kingdom. The church, which is going to be the bride, we all make our own garments. And we make them out of our spiritual maturity structure edification.

Have you ever tried to make a dress that you wear, and you didn't have enough material? Did you ever try to make a dress for a party when you didn't have any material? That's the way it's going to be. Edification is a great thing to have. That is where we are headed for as believers. And that reflects to the glory of our Heavenly Father.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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