



Introduction

Just as a newborn baby requires nurture and care, so do those who are born again into the Kingdom of God. From their first day of faith through the rest of their life, each and every Christian is in a growth process. It is God's plan that we help one another toward maturity.

This study will explain the tools and the principles involved in building up the brethren. It will also offer some suggestions for how to begin helping those around you to grow in their relationship to the Lord Jesus.

Authority to Build

Jesus gave very clear instruction after His resurrection.

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20

- In verse 18, circle the amount of authority Jesus has.
- Underline what followers of Jesus are to make.
- Circle the two activities that are involved in making disciples.
- Underline what is to be taught.
- *Jesus is calling each believer to the task of making disciples. Based upon His authority, you are authorized to build in the life of another! It is not only an **authorization** but also an **obligation**.*

Every Christian starts at the same place: a newborn spiritual baby. Just like natural children, spiritual babies go through a growth process. God desires that every new believer grow into a mature person of faith.

¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Ephesians 4:12-16

- Underline why God prepares His people for works of service in verse 12.
- In verse 13, circle what we are to become.
- In verse 13 underline what we are to attain.
- In verse 15, circle into whom we will grow up.
- In verse 16, underline how the body grows.

Building...

Building is defined as *the art of assembling materials into a permanent structure*. In a Christian sense, we can think of each Christian as a building project. The "materials" that are "assembled" include...

- > Knowledge and information
- > Skills and habits
- > Convictions



A Combined Effort

No one becomes mature without assistance. Each of us needs other believers to help us grow into the man or woman God wants us to be.

So your growth is dependent upon others, and their growth is dependent upon you.

What happens when someone does not do his or her part in helping another grow?

Preparation

Building into the life of another person requires careful personal preparation. Paul told Timothy an important first step.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15

- Circle to whom you are to present yourself.
- Underline the intensity of effort you are to expend.
- Draw a box around how the workman is to handle the Bible.
- *The term "do your best" is a translation of the Greek word **spoudazoo**, which means "to hasten, make haste, to exert oneself or endeavor". So doing your best implies an urgency and conscious exertion of energy.*

Ezra, the Old Testament scribe understood the importance of preparation.

For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.

Ezra 7:10

- Circle the level of commitment Ezra made.
- Underline the three activities Ezra practiced concerning the Law of the Lord.
- *There is significance in the order in which Ezra prepared:*
First he studied
Then he observed (put into practice)
Then he taught

Paul used the example of an athlete to describe his approach to his personal preparation for ministering to others.

²⁵ *Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.* ²⁶ *Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air.* ²⁷ *No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.*

1 Corinthians 9:25-27

- Circle the kind of training that everyone undergoes who competes in the games.
- Underline why they endure such strenuous training.
- In verse 27, underline the actions Paul takes so that he will not be disqualified.
- *In what way is preparing to help someone with his or her spiritual life similar to preparing for an athletic event? What activities are involved in spiritual training?*

The Importance of God's Word

There is nothing more powerful or effective in building up another than the Bible. Paul said it like this:



"Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, **which can build you up** and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Acts 20:32

God's Word is the main ingredient that you need to be effective. Consider the value that Paul placed upon it:



¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be **thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

2 Timothy 3:16-17

At the end of his life, Paul used a similar analogy.



⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

⁸ Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day-and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

2 Timothy 4:7-8

A Desire To Help

It's not enough to simply be prepared to help another Christian. Paul had a deep desire to see believers become mature in their faith,

¹¹ I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong- ¹² that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. ... ¹⁴ I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. ¹⁵ That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome.

Romans 1:11-15

- In verse 11, circle the word that describes Paul's desire to help.
- In verse 14, underline the word that describes Paul's commitment to help.
- In verse 15, circle the word describing Paul's attitude about preaching the gospel.

Paul loved the people to whom he ministered. He was always looking for ways to help. He did that because he was under obligation. **What does it mean to be under obligation?**

The obligation that Paul felt resulted in his exerting all of his energy in helping others become mature.

²⁸ We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. ²⁹ To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

Colossians 1:28-29

- Circle the ones Paul admonished and taught.
- In verse 28, underline the purpose motivating Paul's activity.
- Underline in verse 29 how Paul went about the task of presenting everyone perfect in Christ.
- **What do you think motivated Paul to work so hard at helping everyone reach maturity?**

God is able to use you just as he used Paul. Consider the encouragement he gave to the Church at Rome.

I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.

Romans 15:14

- Circle the level of confidence Paul had in the brethren in Rome.
- Underline what they were competent to do.
- *The brethren in first century Rome are no more competent than you! You have access to much more information than they ever did.*

Look at these verses to get a glimpse of the love Paul had for those he helped.



Philippians 1:7-8
2 Timothy 1:4
2 Corinthians 11:27-29

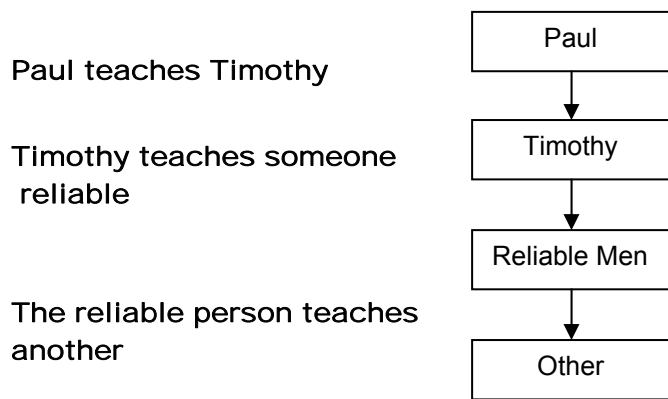
The materials in the **VDRC** website are especially designed to help Christians grow to maturity. You can take another believer through the materials one lesson at a time. There are many other resources available to help you help someone else. All you need is a willing heart.

Paul's Plan for Helping

Paul had a plan that he followed as he began new churches. He taught publicly, but he also spent time personally helping individuals. He taught Timothy the same technique in a letter to him.

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.
2 Timothy 2:2

Notice the method that Paul was encouraging Timothy to follow:



Paul might have taught Timothy individually (one on one) or he might have taught him as part of a group. Both approaches to teaching were used. But teaching was not only a lecture or classroom activity.

¹⁰ *You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance,* ¹¹ *persecutions, sufferings-what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them.*
2 Timothy 3:10-11

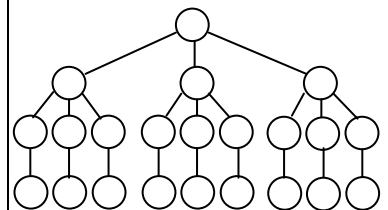
Timothy observed firsthand many different aspects of Paul's life. Place a checkmark (✓) on those items that you think are important for a teacher to communicate to his student.

- way of life
- purpose
- faith
- patience
- love
- endurance
- persecutions

Timothy learned about all of these qualities in Paul's life through observation and first hand involvement with him in ministry.

In actual practice, Paul taught more than just Timothy. He also taught Titus and Luke and Acquilla and others. Each one he taught found reliable men who could teach others also. It grew into a network:

Notice that by investing in just a few, many others could be taught. They key is that those that are taught pass it on to someone else who in turn will pass it on to another.



The Importance of Example

Paul’s approach to building was never simply instruction. Consider the following verses:

Therefore I urge you to imitate me.
1 Corinthians 4:16

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.
1 Corinthians 11:1

Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.
Philippians 3:17

⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, ⁸ nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. ⁹ We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow.
2 Thessalonians 3:7-9

- In each verse, circle the instruction that relates to Paul’s example.
- **Do you think that a personal example is an effective way of teaching? Why or why not?**

Paul’s example emulated the care of a mother and father toward their children.

⁷ but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. ⁸ We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. ⁹ Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. ¹⁰ You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. ¹¹ For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, ¹² encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.
1 Thessalonians 2:7-12

- Circle the activities that could be characterized as those of a mother.
- The Greek word that is translated “**mother**” really has the meaning of “**nurse**” or “**nursing mother**”. So the example is that of helping an infant or a really small child.
- Underline the activities that could be characterized as those of a father.
- Notice the terms Paul uses to describe his heart for the Thessalonians: “gentle among you”, “loved you so much” and “delighted”.

A Bad Example

A bad example can undo even the best teaching. Our actions must substantiate the words we say. Our actions validate our message.

Is your life the kind of life that you want others to imitate?

Would God be pleased if others follow your example?

Is the pattern of your life something that others want to follow?

You do not have to be perfect to invest in the life of another. But if you are consciously disobeying God, your actions will confuse and mislead the one you are helping.

“Disciples are not manufactured wholesale. They are produced one by one, because someone has taken the pains to discipline, to instruct and enlighten, to nurture and train one that is younger”

J. Oswald Sanders

Review

Authority to Build in the life of another comes directly from Jesus. He has authorized us to help others come to a place of maturity.

Preparation is a necessary first step. God's Word is to be studied, practiced and then taught. Preparation requires the same sort of discipline an athlete uses.

A Desire to Help is also essential. Paul felt obligated to help others. He used all of his energy to help people become mature. He encouraged others to help because he knew they were qualified to help.

Paul's plan for helping was simple. In the process of teaching many, he focused on a few who in turn taught others who also taught others. He did not simply teach precepts: he practiced what he preached and taught with his example.

The importance of Example cannot be over emphasized. Paul invited others to follow his example. He took on the characteristics of both a mother and a father as he labored to help others grow. He truly loved the people he was helping.

Application

What has God spoken to you about in this study?

What do you think your need is?

What is it that God wants you to do?

How are you going to check-up on yourself?

Don't Skip the Application
Applying God's Word to your life is the most important part of study.