

12:14-18

14 Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. You might remember this when you look at 13:1. **And I will not be burdensome to you;** It is good that he is saying this because his letter has been recently quite weighty. **for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.** As usual, Paul is seeing himself as a parent in the Lord (1 Corinthians 4:10-14; 2 Corinthians 11:2), and is as you might see in the next verse, expecting to be typically undervalued as a parent.

Moreover, he continually speaks about how he took nothing from them in 1 Corinthians 4:10 and 1 Corinthians 9, “working with his own hands.” Paul said, “I am after the prize, which is your souls.”

15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved. Here Paul continues his mourning that he feels so little love reciprocated from this church. Remember when he said, earlier in the book, “open your heart to me as you are restricted by your own affections” (6:12-13)?

16 But be that as it may, I did not burden you. Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you by cunning! This is seen in the original work he did among them in Acts 18. Other versions of the Bible say this is not the “skill of his original evangelism” but his sarcastic quote of the accusations against him. **17 Did I take advantage of you by any of those whom I sent to you? 18 I urged Titus, and sent our brother with him.** That unnamed brother of chapter 8 sent with Titus to help the Corinthian believers prepare their offering. **Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Did we not walk in the same steps?** Paul is being as careful to remind the Corinthian believers that he is not interested in misusing them—often, he fears, to the growth-stunting lack of demand from them for his needs (11:7-8).¹

12:19

Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. Paul is calling on God to bear witness to the truth of what he is saying again (as in 11:31). **But we do all things, beloved, for your edification.** What a weighty statement!

“Paul, everything you do is for their benefit?”

“Yes, everything I do is for their edification, and I even use my place of authority for their edification” (13:10).

Two very amazing things in this statement: **everything** and **for their edification**

“Now, then, Paul, why do you do **all things** for their **edification**?”

Edification is a noun that has been used 18 times in the New Testament and is often translated as “building.”² You can certainly see when one beholds a large structure—calling it an “edifice”—that it is a related word to “building.” So when Paul says **we do all things for your edification**, He is saying **we do all things for your “building”** or your “fortification” or for your “structuring” or for your “stature.”

“Even the gifts of an apostle?” (verse 12).

“Yes, those were not for your amazement. They were to make you a building.”

“Even in the way you displayed your sacrifice as a parent to us?” (verse 13).

¹Not to mention the long discourse in 1 Corinthians regarding his independent ministry among them—not requiring their financial assistance which he deserved (1st Corinthians 9th chapter).

²“G3619 - oikodomē - Strong's Greek Lexicon (KJV).” Blue Letter Bible. Web. 11 Jan, 2017.
<<https://www.blueletterbible.org//lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G3619&t=KJV>>.

“Yes, that was not for your convenience. It was for you to see what solidity and establishment looked like.”

The real issue here in our being able to relate this properly is to realize that “buildings” are inanimate objects, and don’t show “emotion.” We don’t know if it’s sad or mad or glad. Buildings do, however, show things like “relief” or “health” or “stress.”

So Paul does things for the functionality of a structure, not for the fun of the process. That is not to say that “joy is not a part of the process,” but that is not why Paul [**does**] **all things** for the Corinthian believers.

So the building or **edification** of a group of people is not only possibly separate from emotional glee, but it is also separate from immediate observation.

David McCullough, in his book, *The Great Bridge* relays the words of the chief engineer of the Brooklyn Bridge project:

“To such of the general public as might imagine that no work had been done on the New York tower, because they see no evidence of it above the water, I should simply remark that the amount of masonry and concrete laid on that foundation during the past winter, under water, is equal in quantity to the entire masonry of the Brooklyn tower visible today above the waterline.”³

The desired product of the body of believers seated here and separated from us due to malady or employment is that we become strong in our callings and in our identity, and that we become suitable to house the glory of God found within (as developed so well by Paul in chapter 3).

12:20-21

20 For I fear lest... Let us quickly realize that this apostle had a motive in all of this visiting and instruction and accountability—which he calls “edification.”

13:1-7

This will be the third time I am coming to you. “By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.” As quoted by Deuteronomy 19:15—usually in the context of capital punishment. This really should lead the reader to assume that we are about to get into a topic of eternal significance...**4For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you. Toward you** in what? **Toward you** in your “sin” (verse 2).

“Now, then, Paul, why do you do **all things** for their **edification**? Why do you go through such extents to get here a third time? Why do you put up with seemingly infantile behavior from some of the pockets of believers among the faithful in the Corinthian church?”

“Because, I am afraid many of them are not saved.” Read the next verse.

5 Examine a great, judicial term in light of verse 2. **yourselves as to whether you are in the faith.** 8:7 talks about being “in faith,” but here we have the quality of being **in the faith**. This means, then, that we are not dealing with a particular aspect of “trust” as in 8:7, but rather a state of being within a state of faith recognized by a community as a common standard: **the faith**. Paul wants these Corinthian believers who are struggling with prolonged sin in an unrepentant state to examine themselves whether they are “in their sin” or **in the faith**. There is, as you might expect, a difference. We know you are saved by **faith**, but not just any old **faith**. Rather, **the faith**. **Faith** in what? **Faith** in the Gospel (13:4).

*2:12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach **Christ’s gospel**, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, 13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia.*

³Gordon MacDonald *Building Below the Waterline, Shoring Up the Foundations of Leadership* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011), vii.

4:3 But even if our **gospel** is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of **the gospel** of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

5:14 For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if **One died for all**, then all died; 15 and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again....17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 18 Now all things are of God, **who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ**, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ **reconciling the world to Himself**, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes **He became poor**, that you through His poverty might become rich.

10:14 For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the **gospel of Christ**; 15 not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men's labors, but having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, 16 to preach the **gospel** in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment.

11:4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or **a different gospel** which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!

Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? “Remember, I spoke to you as a “temple of God” (2 Corinthians 6:16). You are a house for Jesus Christ on earth.”—**unless indeed you are disqualified.** “**Jesus Christ is in you**, and that is why we are making you a fine building. You are not being crafted because it feels good or because it can be observed. You are being **edified** because you house **Jesus Christ!**” —**unless you are actually disqualified.**” **6 But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified.** Paul says, “Check out our stability. Look at our foundation. See our squared walls and our plum stature, and you will find that **we are not disqualified.** He even goes on in verse 7 to say that his motive is not that he looks like a proper house for Jesus Christ, but that they would simply do what's right. Even if they do what's right, that is far more important to him than his validation as a true apostle and agent of Christ in their eyes.