

Building Together

In my teen years I used to build model cars and airplanes. They were intricate, consisting of many tiny parts that needed to be carefully filed, painted, and eventually, glued together to form the final design. It took some planning, following directions, and devoting attention to detail to make the replica worth setting out for others to see and admire. Looking at the planes hanging from my bedroom ceiling or the cars displayed on my bookshelves gave me a sense of pride.

Israel and the city of Jerusalem were God's pride and joy. God states of His chosen people, "You are My Servant, Israel, **in whom I will show My glory**" (Isa 49:3, NASV). Regarding the city of Jerusalem God promises, "For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. **The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory** ... You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God" (Isa 62:1-3, ESV). Yet, in Nehemiah's day, both had become a "disgrace". Israel had neglected God and Jerusalem was left lying in ruins (Neh 2:17). So, for the sake of God's testimony to the nations, Nehemiah mobilized the people to consecrate themselves and rebuild the city. Israel and Jerusalem were again to become God's glory on display.

The New Testament "showpiece" that stands for God's glory and is to make Him known to the nations is the Church. She is described as the Bride, loved by Jesus. She is also described as the Body, guided by Jesus. Her beauty and vitality are to display God's love and unity (John 17:22-23) to a broken and dying world.

That means every part of the church must grow in Christlikeness and participate in building one another up. Similar to the cooperative effort that rebuilt the gates and the walls of Jerusalem, members of the church are called to work as one and for one another. Paul puts it this way as he writes to the believers in Corinth and Rome respectively:

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. (1 Cor 12:27)

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them ... (Romans 12:4-6)

Clearly, every believer is to participate in the life and ministry of the "showpiece" of God. It is not reserved for the professionals, for the seemingly-perfect, or for the

ultra-gifted. On the contrary, every part of the work is essential and sacred according to 1 Corinthians 10:31. All you need to be is faithful, available, and teachable. Dedicate and consecrate yourself today to make the Bride beautiful and the Body healthy. As a matter of fact, let me recommend taking someone along. Build together!

Ephesians 4:11-16 (ESV) - *“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to **grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.**”*