

# Encourage Others When Building a Body

by Zac Poonen

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*To build a body, you must be committed to each other and to Christ, and every individual part must work properly.*

**Duration:** 49:29

**Scripture:** Ephesians 4:15

**Topics:** "Church Community", "Christian Relationships"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of building a body of believers through commitment, honesty, encouragement, and genuine relationships. It highlights the need for sincere interactions, avoiding hypocrisy, and focusing on blessing others rather than impressing them. The speaker encourages a culture of honesty, humility, and mutual support within the church to grow as a unified body in Christ.

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## Transcript

Okay, just to know how long it took, I think it's convenient for you to be here rather than go all the way to New Jersey. That's why I suggested that the New Jersey group be split up into two, which is much better. You see, a church with four or five families is ideal if you want to build a body.

Because too many people, it's very difficult if you're starting. I mean, as you grow, even if you grow to a large number, 100, 200, it's okay. But when you start, it's best to start with two or three really committed families and then you can build a body.

It's very, very important. So the important thing here is commitment. You know, when we think of building a body, your human body always as an example.

There are many titles given to the church. Bride of Christ. But in the Old Testament, Israel was also called the bride of Jehovah and the household of God.

Israel was called the household of God. The kingdom of God. Israel was called a kingdom.

But there was one title never given to Israel in the Old Testament. And that was body. And the reason was, when you talk about body, you see, there's a much more intimate connection between your head and your body than man and his wife.

So, when you say that the church is the bride of Christ, and you men think, your connection with your own physical head is definitely much closer than with your wife. So, if we are the bride of Christ, that connection is not as close as when we say the body of Christ. That's the closest relationship to Jesus.

We are called his bride. We are called his brothers. Even brother is not as close.

We are called his friends and his disciples, his followers. But all those things keep us apart from him. Like your wife is apart from you.

But when you say head and body, it's one. The connection is very intimate. And so, the body is the most intimate picture of the church to Christ that you can think of, more than bride, as you can see in your own physical body.

And so, that also applies to the members of the body. So, if you are interested, you can either gather together, whether it's two people or two thousand people. You can gather together to make a congregation or you can gather together to make a body.

A congregation is a group of people who have similar interests. They may like a club. You know, you may be coming together to play table tennis or you may be coming together to play golf.

Or you may be coming together to study the Bible. It's a club. And many, many so-called Bible study groups are really clubs.

It's correct if you call it a Bible study club. How do you make sure that a Bible study club, that you don't end up as a Bible study club but become a body? That requires commitment. You see, in a club, you come when you feel like, you don't come when you don't feel like, because you've got many interests.

Club is one of them. And there are other interests also. Club is not a priority.

I mean, a man won't join a tennis club and make that priority over other things in his life. When he has time, when it is convenient, he'll go to the tennis club to play tennis. But it's not a number one priority in his life.

So that's the mark of a club. It's not a very important part of my life. When it's convenient, I go.

And it's not convenient if I'm too tired or sleepy or I want to visit some friends or do something else that day. Then club takes lower down in my list of priorities. But it's not like that with the body.

If, for example, you have a serious injury on your hand, you've broken your hand or something, you will cancel going to work. You will even cancel important appointments at work. You will cancel so many things.

Because body is not like a club. Body is very important. So I've seen that many, many groups of people who sometimes will come to our CFC conferences and say, Hey, we want a church like CFC where we are.

They end up as violent study clubs. They talk about body, body, body, but it's all hypocrisy. Because they are not committed.

Then we might as well be honest. You know, hypocrisy means to pretend we are something which we are not. I mean, it's like a child saying, I'm in the 6th grade, but he's only in the 1st grade.

That's a lie. There's nothing wrong in being in the 1st grade. Just be honest and say, I'm in the 1st grade.

There's nothing wrong in being a Bible study club. No, not at all. But just say, hey, we're not building a body or anything here.

We're just a Bible study club. We like to come together and discuss the Bible. Maybe watch a video and have a discussion.

Once the discussion is over, we go away. And if convenient, we'll meet again in the club meeting next Sunday. You can be that.

It's perfectly all right. Just be honest about it. That's all I'm saying.

It would be hypocrisy for people who are coming on that basis to say we are building a body. We're not building a body. I'm not saying that you have to come every Sunday.

That's not the point. Commitment does not mean... There could be various factors why I cannot come sometimes. Maybe I work on a Sunday.

I can't come. Or I'm sick and I can't come. Or something important crops up and I can't come.

That's not the point. The point is commitment. A husband can be totally committed to his wife, 100%.

And yet, he may not be in his home every day while he is traveling. He may be away from home four days a week. It takes him away, traveling.

But his commitment doesn't change, even though he's not at home four days a week. He's totally committed. So, commitment means that... Commitment to a home means that's my priority.

My wife and my children are my priority. And commitment to your job, for example. You wouldn't think of not going to work because it's raining too much today or something like that.

No. I mean, you may not go and play tennis when it's raining, but your job, you'd go. Because, hey, that's a means of earning money.

There are certain things in life we have a commitment to. We may not think much about it, but there is a commitment. My family has a commitment to it.

I believe all of you should have a commitment to your family. It's very important that your wife and children know that you're committed to them. Your work, that's another thing we have to be committed to.

Your boss shouldn't think you come when you feel like it and when you don't feel like you don't come. You won't last long in a job like that. So to family and work, there must be a commitment.

And in the same way, there must be a commitment if you want to build a body and a family in all of us meeting together. That's the only type of fellowship, to tell you honestly, that I'm interested in. I'm absolutely not interested in running Bible study clubs.

I'm absolutely not interested in people who come together to hear some interesting story or new truths or new revelations. I have no time for that. I cut down all my travels to so many places.

If I go to a new place, sometimes I do go to a new place. It's like a probing. I'm probing, testing to see if there is a possibility here of building a body.

Are there two or three people here in this crowd of 300 in this church who have some interest in building a body? That's how we planted most of our churches in India. I'd go and speak in a church, maybe 300 people, and there may be three people interested in that. Fine.

We've got to hold those three people and start a body. And I stopped going to that 300-member church after that. That's not a new pattern.

If you read in the Acts of the Apostles, you read it carefully, slowly, with an unprejudiced mind. We often say that we Christians sometimes have prejudices in our mind because we have seen various types of Christian groups. That when we come to the New Testament, we've got a preconceived idea when you come to it.

But I would say sometimes try and read Acts of the Apostles as an exercise. Try and read Acts of the Apostles as if you are a Hindu convert who never been a Christian, knows nothing about Christianity. And you're a new Hindu convert, you've never read the Bible, you don't know anything about church or doctrine or anything.

And you read the Acts of the Apostles and you see there how they have built the church in those days in different places. And if you come with an open mind, you will see, hey, this is how they built the church in those days. The Apostle Paul would go to some place and he would always go to the synagogue first.

He wouldn't go and preach in the streets. He would do that once in a while. But he'd go to the synagogue because in the synagogue there were at least some people who accepted the Old Testament, which is the Bible.

The only Bible in those days. So he'd say, here are some people who've got a Bible, but none of them are born again, but I'll go there. Because at least I can start with the Bible.

I don't have to start with some other holy book of some other religion. So he would go there and then he would preach. And some people would be gripped.

And then over a period of time, a few people would be gripped, maybe 10, 9 or 10 people. And what would he do? He would then gather them separately and meet in somebody's house or something like that. The beginning of a church.

So that's how the church started in those days. So we see exactly what happened in those days. The church would go to a place where already some people had some faith.

But today we would say, we follow this pattern today. It's like going to a church where they have the Bible. And some people would be gripped by the truth.

And then we see exactly what Paul did. Gathered separately. That's exactly what we have done in the last 40 years here.

Trying to do them together into a body and not just into Bible study clubs. We don't always succeed because there are some people who never can get into this concept of a head and a body. It's because there is a certain price to be paid for it.

And they are not willing to pay that price. And so, in many places, a body doesn't get built. Even though we want it to be built, it remains a Bible study club for a long time.

It's okay. Let it continue like that and it's better than nothing. But always my hope is that at least some of those people there who are in that club would be gripped by what Jesus wants.

Jesus said, I've come to build my church. Jesus said very clearly, I will build my church, Matthew 16, 18, and the gates of hell will never prevail against it. Now, the gates of hell will prevail easily against Bible study groups and members of Bible study groups in their homes and everything.

They'll never be able to prevail against the church. So that's why it's, you know, to build a Bible study group, if I were to use an example, would be like Noah is building the ark to escape the flood. We build a small little toy boat or something, saying we're going to build a toy boat so that we escape the flood.

That's so stupid. That toy boat or that 10-foot boat is not going to stand the flood when it comes. Sensible people would join up with Noah and say, that's the only thing that's going to last.

We better build the ark. And that's how it's going to be. All the Bible study groups will disappear one day.

And people have spent their life trying to build Bible study groups. They'll just find they've wasted their time. I don't want to be in that number.

I don't want to waste my time. I say, I only want to build what Jesus is building, the church, which is the body of Christ. And even if I succeed, if even 10%, 10% of the people in our church say in Bangalore, we've got about 500 people there now in our church here.

If only 50 of them are really committed to build a body and to have that type of commitment, I'm satisfied. Because there'll always be the riffraff who come along with other intentions. But I say, well, at least we made 50.

You know, Jesus worked with 12. And even in the midst of that, there was one hypocrite. So I want to encourage you to read the New Testament and see how, especially Ephesians.

Ephesians speaks a lot about building the body of Christ. With every part playing a part. So let's turn there to Ephesians in chapter 4. And verse 14.

Ephesians 4 and verse 14. So here it says, we must, as a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by their craftiness and deceitful scheming. So a number of things in this verse.

We must not allow ourselves to be tossed here and there. There are so many winds of doctrine blowing in Christendom today, particularly with television. So many winds from all these channels on television blowing this way, that way.

And I know people who sit and watch these Christian TV programs and they get pushed over one side by that wind. They say, yeah, this is the man of God. This is the right thing.

This guy is preaching. He quotes a few scriptures here and there. And then they hear something else somewhere or hear a YouTube message or something.

Then they get tossed the other way. Oh yeah, this is the truth. And Paul says here, how long are you going to be tossed about like this? Don't you want to come to some firmness and be gripped by that which is going to last forever? And that can come if you really study the scriptures.

The reason so many people are tossed about are because they just don't know the scriptures. I'm thankful that some of the things that gripped my heart 40 years ago when we started CFC. I've not changed one bit my position on all those things.

What I preach today is what I preached 40 years ago. I've never had to change it. In fact, I've become more firm in preaching it because I've seen the results from it.

So we must not be children tossed. Is this right? Is that right? Okay, if you were converted only one or two years ago, okay, you're a child. Some of you have been converted for many years.

You should not only be gripped by the truth. You should be in the place where you should be able to teach others. So we must not be children carried about by the trickery of men.

You know, there's a lot of trickery, craftiness and deceitful scheming mentioned in verse 14 in so much of Christendom today. The doctrines are right in many churches, but there's trickery by the pastors and leaders and craftiness, deceitful scheming. A lot of it even in the television preachers.

Now, if you're not able to discern that, it's because you don't have discernment. But it's there. But he says we must speak the truth in love.

It's always this balance between truth and love. We're not to just speak in love. You speak in love means you don't say anything hurting.

I don't believe that you really love a person if you don't speak the truth and love to that person. I mean, if you see your child doing something completely wrong that's going to harm him, how do you say you love him by allowing that child to do whatever he likes? You don't love that child. Supposing he's playing around, three-year-old, playing around with a razor blade.

And you know that he can injure himself. Or playing, he and another two-year-old playing with the blades. And you know one can hurt the other person so badly.

And you don't tell them that. Do you believe you love those children? I don't believe you love them at all. Because you don't want to hurt that child.

That three-year-old would start screaming if you take the blade out of his hand. So you keep it, let them destroy one another. You don't love them.

To speak the truth in love is to take the blade out of that child's hand and no matter how much it screams, you say, well, I love you too much to let you play with that blade, sorry. You can cry as much as you like. We need people like that, who love people enough to speak the truth in love.

There are very few. So much of being diplomatic and not hurting anybody. But you never grow that way.

It says speaking the truth in love, we grow up. You see that? Into the fullness of Christ. But if you don't speak the truth in love, you are not going to grow up.

You just always be that stunted. Think if you had a child that doesn't grow in height. Always two and a half feet.

Twenty years old and still two and a half feet. You are not going to be very happy with such a child. So if you want to grow up into Christ, the first thing is to speak the truth in love.

It's got to begin with love. I say if you don't have love in your heart, don't speak the truth. Even if you know something to be the truth, please do not speak it till there is enough love in your heart for that person.

That's why I often say, if you have never encouraged a person, never correct him. The only person who has got the right to correct somebody is who at least sometime in the past has said some encouraging things to that person. So speaking the truth in love, we grow up into Christ from whom, verse 16, the whole body being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

So the proper working of each individual part, think of that little expression there, very important expression, the proper working of each individual part of that body. And in the light of that, what you need to ask yourself is, I'm an individual part of this body that's being built here. Am I working properly? That means am I contributing whatever I'm supposed to do? See, for example, a little finger, it can't speak like the tongue.

So some of us may not be gifted in preaching or sharing the word, it doesn't matter. The fingers and the hand are not supposed to speak, that's not their calling. But they've got something else that they can do.

Each part of this body has got something to do. If you say, well I'm not the little finger, I'm only the nail, even the nail has got some very important function. I've often said that.

If you feel scratchy somewhere, itchy, your tongue can't help, your eyes can't help, your legs can't help, the only thing that can help you relieve yourself from that itching is your nails. Nothing else. There are certain things one part of the body can do much better than others.

The nails can't speak, that's okay. But they can scratch. And it's a very important function.

So you must realize that however small you are, maybe you can't preach and speak like others, it doesn't matter. If you can... I call scratching encouraging. Can you speak a word of encouragement to somebody? You don't need to be a great scholar for that.

You don't even need to know the Bible to do that. Encourage someone who is probably discouraged is something you can easily do. And all of us can do that.

You guys are cold, but in Bangalore it's a bit hot. Let me just turn on the fan. Excuse me.

It gets a little hotter after a while. Sorry for that interruption. So what I'm saying is, if you say, well, I've got a part to play here.

And I want to fulfill it. Even if it's a very little part. For example, supposing you take a commitment like this.

Well, I can't preach. But I can encourage people. Maybe I don't even know some profound word of encouragement to give to somebody.

But Lord, I can encourage that little fellowship there. By just attending it. Even if I don't say much.

You know what? It can be an encouragement just by you coming and sitting there. And showing that you're interested enough. You don't know much about body and all that type of stuff.

It doesn't matter. But you're interested enough to do what you can. And you may not say something profound in the meeting.

But you can bless people just by sitting there. I've seen, you know, I'm always in the pulpit of speaking so often. And you may think that that's the only ministry that's important.

But I'll tell you as a preacher, it's just so encouraging to see that people are listening. Don't you think it's very discouraging for a preacher that people are looking here and there all the time? I don't mean occasionally. Or looking at their watch and saying, when is this going to stop? If you want to discourage a preacher, it's pretty easy.

I mean, they can't do it to me now. I've been preaching so long that even if all of them look at their watches, they can keep looking, I'm still going to be preaching. But what I mean is, there's an encouragement just by being present in a meeting.

So, unless there's some very important reason why you can't come, I would say, if you guys can commit yourself to say, well, brothers, as far as possible, I'm going to try and make it every Sunday. Sometimes it may not be possible. There could be sickness at home.

There could be some other emergency. There may be some work crops up. And always that type of thing happens in this world.

But otherwise, I'm going to make an effort to come and really be an encouragement here, at least by sitting here. And also, I believe the Lord can give me something to share, which can be a blessing to others. See, some of you have been believers for a number of years.

And I'm sure there are some things that the Lord has taught you, at least some things. And we must share it, even if the others are more mature. A really mature person would be excited to hear a very immature person saying something which he may already know.

I mean, for example, when my children are small, when my children are small, one day my three-year-old son comes in and says, hey, Dad, I discovered something today. I said, what is it? I discovered that C80 is cat. I said, wow, you really learned that? That's great.

I don't turn around and say, oh, well, I knew that 30 years ago. What are you trying to tell me? That's not how I react to a three-year-old saying. I'm excited because he learned something.

That's exactly how I feel when some brother tells me, hey, today I understood what it means to be justified. I'm declared righteous. I can stand before God without any fear.

And knowing that the Father accepts me just like he accepts Jesus Christ. Wow, I didn't know that until today. Well, I knew that for years.

But I'm so excited that somebody discovered that today. And, you know, that's how, even if you're a mature brother and you've known the Lord for some time, that's how you can encourage a young brother who has discovered something for the first time. So it's very easy to encourage, you know.

Very, very easy. It's difficult to preach and teach, but it's very easy to encourage. And by encouraging one another, we can keep people from getting hardened.

Do you know that? Turn to Hebrews in chapter 3. Hebrews chapter 3, verse 13. See where it says, encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still God today. I thought of it, what does it mean, as long as it is still God today? I think one meaning of it is, listen, one day you're going to drop dead.

And there won't be any more today in your life. That'll be the end. There'll be no more todays in your life, once you're in the grave.

So as long as you have a day called today, why not encourage somebody? Encourage one another as long as it is called today. Because in doing that, you'll help some of them not to be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Do you know that you can soften a person's heart by encouragement? A hard heart, you soften it up with a little encouragement.

Is that difficult for you to do, to encourage somebody? To say something positive and good about him? I mean, you can go to almost any man in the world and say this thing which is true. Do you know that God's got a plan for your life? I don't know whether you're fulfilling it, to say something like that. I can say that to a total stranger, because it's true.

I really believe, because I believe Jesus died on the cross for that total stranger, I've never met him before. He may be a non-Christian, he may be an atheist. But I can with all honesty tell him, do you know God's got a plan for your life? I want it to be fulfilled.

I want to tell you, fella, that this, brother, this is the best plan you can ever make. You can't make a better one than God's made for you. He may reject it, that's okay.

But some people may be encouraged to know that God Almighty has got a plan for their life. I'm just telling you how it's very easy to encourage people. Those of you who have children, ask yourself, how many times do you correct them and criticize them? And how many times do you encourage them, say something positive? So often we correct and correct and correct.

How many times have I told you not to do that and this, that and the other? And they still keep doing it. Okay, they're young, they're learning. But correction is necessary, I fully believe that.

If you don't correct your children, they go to hell. Proverbs 22 says that. That's why you're going to have to use a rod sometimes.

But encouragement is also essential. Because otherwise you keep on saying don't do this and don't do that and don't do that. Everything is don't.

There was a child, you know, his name was Johnny. He heard the word don't so many times that in school when he went, teacher asked him, what's your name? He said, my name is Johnny Don't. Because he thought that was his name.

Because his parents were always saying, Johnny don't do this and Johnny don't do that. That's not the way to bring up children. You must encourage them, love them, hug them.

I hope you guys hug your children now and then, even if they are grown up. I embrace my 40 year old sons. I'm not ashamed to do that.

They are my sons. Even though they are my brothers in Christ today. So, make your children know that there are good things in them.

Everybody needs encouragement. Don't you think your wife needs encouragement? Sure. Encourage one another daily.

Tell me the one person you see everyday. You don't see each other everyday. The one person you see everyday.

That's your wife. Or your husband. You think they don't need encouragement? I tell you, I am a servant of the Lord.

And I try my best for many years to be totally free from the opinions of men. I fought that battle in my mind that I will not care what people think about me. Because if I begin to care for their opinion, I cannot be a servant of God.

I have to speak the truth whether they think it's good or bad. Whether they think I was too hard. It doesn't matter to me.

But, even with that attitude, I find that when somebody says something encouraging, it helps me. Because there is no human being who doesn't need encouragement. Everybody needs it.

Some may have fought the battle so much that they are a little free from the need for it. But every one of us needs it. And it makes a lot of difference.

It lifts a person's spirit. So that's one way we can build the body of Christ. Because there is always something positive that you can say to people.

Always there is something good you can say about everybody. Which is true. You don't have to flatter.

I don't believe in flattery. But to have eyes that see something good. Think of a husband and wife in their relationship.

Always have eyes to see something good in your partner. There may be nine things that are wrong. But there is one good thing.

And we train our eyes to see that good thing and encourage that person without flattery. Saying, but here is a good thing in you. And there may be wrong things that people say.

But I want you to know this is something in you that I really appreciate. Think your wives are hard. Your husbands are to slog day and night to work, to earn money.

That's not easy in the world we live in. But you got to appreciate your husband to do that. Don't take it for granted.

And equally you got to appreciate wives who have such a problem bringing up children with their needs from childhood. And many of them are sick so often. We got to appreciate our wives for all that they do for our children when we are away from home.

We really need to encourage one another. That's how you can build up the body even in your own home. So really pursue this matter of encouragement.

And speaking words of encouragement to your children and to one another. And to think of that which is positive. I heard of a man, this is really a joke.

But a man, he got a reputation that he would always say something good about somebody. He almost never could get him to say something bad which is not a good thing for a preacher. Because a preacher must sometimes rebuke like Jesus who called people a generation of vipers and all.

But it's also, this man is not a preacher. But he always said, well, I want to find something good that I can always say in somebody. And he had a reputation for that.

No matter who it was, he would talk about something good. So somebody tried to test him one day. And said, what do you think of that devil? He said, he is a really hard worker.

He found something good in them also. I am not encouraging you to go around saying that. Because he is an evil hard worker.

But my point is that, if I train my eyes and my mind to think, especially in marriage relationships, you see the difference it will make in your marriage if you just train your eyes and your mind to think a little more positively of something good that you see in your partner and to express it. I find we Indian people are very slow in expressing something good. We are very hesitant.

We think, oh, he will get puffed up or she will get puffed up. Jesus never felt like that. Have you read the places in the Bible where Jesus would look at a Roman military man, centurion, who had killed so many people.

And Jesus looks at him and says, I have never found faith so great like in this man in all of Israel. You read that in Matthew chapter 8? Don't you know that place, Matthew 8? I have never found faith like this in this man. And that guy was a Roman soldier who had probably killed hundreds of people in battle.

But the Lord didn't say, oh, this guy has killed so many people in battle, I better not say anything good about him. When there was something good, he said it. And he didn't think, oh, this guy will get all puffed up, his head will swell up if I say that.

No, not at all. He told Peter once, blessed are you, Simon. You didn't understand that I am the Christ by flesh and blood.

My father in heaven revealed this to you. He told another woman who said, Lord, if I can't eat the children's bread, at least if I am like a dog, please give me the crumbs that fall from the table. And he said, great is your faith, woman, your daughter is healed.

Can you imagine how these people were encouraged? Jesus was never afraid of saying something good to people. For example, there was an unbeliever, unbelieving Jew called Nathaniel. You read about him in John chapter 1. And Philip found him and told him, hey, Nathaniel, we finally found the Messiah.

We've been waiting 1500 years, we found him. And Nathaniel says, where is he from? Philip says, from Nazareth. Ah, he says, Nazareth.

Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? That is Nathaniel. And do you know what Jesus said about him? When Nathaniel came, Jesus knew this man had said this. About his hometown.

Imagine if somebody told you about your hometown. Ah, nothing good can come from your hometown. And Jesus looks at this man and says to his disciples, there is a man in whom there is no hypocrisy.

What a testimony. About a man who had just insulted him. By saying nothing good can come out of Nazareth.

But Jesus saw, Nathaniel was completely wrong in what he said. Nothing good can come out of Nazareth. But he was honest.

He said, I don't believe anything good can come out of Nazareth. And Jesus said, wow, you read that in the end of John chapter 1. It's really amazing. To see something good, even when a man made a negative comment.

At least he was truthful. I love that. Jesus was like that.

And let's learn to be like that with one another. That's one way we can build the body of Christ. Encourage one another.

And if you find something wrong, if it's in your child, of course you must correct it immediately. If it's in a brother and you haven't yet built up a good relationship with him, just pray about it. Don't tell him yet.

Unless it's something serious. See, there are brothers I have in our own church in Bangalore. There are some people who have come more newly.

I don't know them too well. And I see things which need to be corrected, but I don't tell them anything. Because I say, I haven't built up a relationship with him yet to speak the truth in love.

He'll get offended if I speak what I know he needs to hear. But there are others whom I've known for some years in CFC Bangalore whom I can speak more directly. And I know they don't get offended because they've known through the years that I'm not trying to tear them down, I'm trying to build them up.

So we must build such a relationship, dear brothers and sisters, with one another, where people have confidence in us that I'm nothing against you, my brother, my sister. I really love you in Christ. And between you and me there's always Jesus Christ.

I don't see you directly. I see Christ between me and you. Through him I see you.

There's always that. And therefore, I'm not going to say anything to hurt you, but I'm going to speak the truth. I hope it will be in love.

If we can build that type of confidence in one another among, because many of you have not known each other earlier or for a long time, I tell you, you can build an amazing palace there, even if you're small, that the Lord himself will see and say, Hey, there's a group, I'd like to add more people to that group. And the Lord himself will send people to you. We've seen that happen again and again and again in India.

And nobody can take credit for it. It's not that we went out and did a lot of outreach and brought people. The Lord, look at the last verse of Acts chapter 2. The Lord added to the church.

It's a great verse. Those who should be saved. That's how Acts chapter 2 ends.

It begins with, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. But do you know how that chapter ends? Acts chapter 2. The Lord added to the church those who should be saved. And so it's the Lord who adds to the church.

And the Lord must add to your church. But he will add to your church only if he sees that there's such a relationship of goodness and encouragement and fellowship there. We used to pray this prayer and we still pray it.

We started praying it 40 years ago. Lord, if there's anybody in this area, around this area where we are meeting, in Bangalore, who is seeking for a godly life, please bring him to us. Or bring us in touch with him, maybe somewhere in a store or a bank or somewhere else on a bus stop.

Either bring him to us or make us bring us in touch with him. And if you don't do both of them, our third request is, show us what's wrong with us. Why can't you add people who are seeking godly life to our church? Is there something wrong with us? And the Lord began to show us.

You people are too stiff. You people are too legalistic. Okay, Lord, we'll set it right.

We want to be a type of church whom the Lord can recommend and add people to. You know, like, people recommend cars and different gadgets. The Lord can recommend our church to needy people around us.

Don't you think there are needy people around you? And it would be wonderful if the Lord can recommend, add to you those, not for increase in numbers. No. For 40 years, I've never been interested in increasing the numbers in any of our churches.

But I'm interested in helping needy people. Helping needy people. That's my burden.

So when I say we want to get someone to our church, it's because we can help somebody who's needy, who's spiritually dead, or doesn't know the right direction. Not because we want to add to our number and find some satisfaction. So many people have come to our church or something like that.

We're not interested in that. We're interested in being of help to those who are in need. And there are many people like that in the world around.

So let me encourage you, my brothers and sisters, to really seek to function as a body. It'll take time. It's not going to happen overnight.

You know, it takes nine months in a womb for even the parts to come together. But if you could look inside a mother's womb when a baby is being formed, so many parts are coming together slowly and gradually functioning together. And that's how the Lord slowly builds a body in that place.

And I pray that that'll be true in your place as well. And he doesn't need great scholars. He needs honest people.

If you determine to the Lord, Lord, I'll never be a hypocrite. I'll be honest. Honest doesn't mean you confess your sins.

Sins you confess only to God. But honest means you don't pretend to be more spiritual than you really are. You don't pretend to be in 6th grade when you're in 1st grade.

You don't have to be ashamed of being in 1st grade. Children say, I'm in the 1st grade. Sure, great.

Or I'm in the 2nd grade. Fine. So that's the meaning of honesty.

That means I'm not pretending to be more spiritual than I am. I'm not trying to share something to show what a clever scholar of the Bible I am. That's all garbage.

That's for Bible study groups. We're coming here to build a body. And as we build a body, we're not trying to impress anybody.

You know, if you try to impress people in the church, you're going to be a hindrance. I'll tell you that. All of you must determine, I'm not here to impress anybody.

I'm here to bless people. I'm not here to judge anybody. I'm not here to impress anybody.

But I'm here to bless them. And share what little I have with them. You know, some have little.

Think if you have a potluck dinner. And some rich person in your church brings some expensive food and all. And very poor brother.

He says, I want to bring something for this potluck dinner. And he buys a bag, a packet of potato chips. And that's what he brings.

Do you despise him for that? No. He can't bring a rich food like that rich brother. But he didn't come empty handed.

He spent a little bit of his money and bought some potato chips. And bought it. I would value such a brother.

Like the widow who dropped in two mites. And that's how it is even when we share together. We don't just appreciate the profound sharing that some mature brother gave.

A small little thing that somebody gave. You know, I got a birthday card. It was my birthday a few days ago.

I got a birthday card from a small boy who wrote from our church only. Who said, Uncle Zack, I'm so encouraged by this little thing, this little story that you said the other day. And I said, wow, you paid attention to that? I'm so happy to hear it.

I wrote a note to him encouraging me. He's only about eight or ten years old. And I said, I'm so happy that you're paying attention.

I'm so blessed to hear your... That really encouraged me. To hear an eight or ten year old write and say that he remembered something I said that it helped him and encouraged him. So, nothing that you share is useless.

Everything is valuable. God bless you all. Thank you for listening.

And I hope you have a wonderful time as you continue to meet together in the coming days.

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