

## 9.18.22 / Build Up / Ephesians 4:11-16

Eph 4:11-16 - Body building

Body building as we typically think of it is *often* a self-promoting pursuit.

As I've listened to the passage we'll study together this morning, I've become convinced that **body building is for humble people.**

Ephesians 4:11-16 / **Context:**

Eph 1-3 Gospel of Christ

Eph 4:1-2 As prisoner for the Lord – one captivated, allegiance – be humble.

4:4 one body – those who place faith in Jesus are one body.

4:7 gave gifts to men & women – Did he give gifts to men & women to share with others? Or did he give **us as** gifts to be shared with others? I think it's both.

If I see myself primarily as the one with gifts to give, I can develop an inflated sense of my charge over my gifts. Eyes can get fixed on me – the gift giver

If I see myself primarily as the gift that God is giving to someone, I'm reminded that He has charge over the gifts He extends. Eyes get fixed on Him – the gift giver.

So, in a way – **we've been given gifts** to share with each other and in a way **we are a gift** being given by God to each other.

Ephesians 4:11-16

**V11** - God gives these "word of Christ proclaimers" to the family of God for a purpose.

**V12** – Purpose – body building. But it's not the individualistic self-promoting version of body building. It's **completely** the opposite! This body building is body of Christ building.

Those who place faith in Jesus are (as verse 4 said) **one body**. Local church is a particular expression of the body of Christ.

**We've been given to each other to build each other up - to build up the body of Christ.**

Consider the beauty in the design of our all knowing all powerful God.

- We all have needs.
- We all have gifts.
- We have been given to each other in such a way that our gifts would meet each other's needs - that our works of service would build this body up – strong and healthy.

**We've been given to each other to build each other up.**

What does it feel like to have a need? ([Haircut & other](#))

It's humbling to have a need. Its bond forming to receive the gift of a need met.

What does it feel like to meet a need? (ride, meal, check, word – it feels good; it feels right. Josiah comment also...)

It's usually costly to meet a need **but** it's also it's life-giving.

**V13** - The body is to be built up... until we reach the spiritual formation that God has intended for us. Spiritual formation for the Glory of God is the ultimate goal. Works of service contribute to my individual spiritual formation *and* the spiritual formation of those being served. **Spiritual formation is the process by which we are formed into the image of Christ for the sake of others. (Moreland)**

This is a process. It's God's work in us... *and* it involves work on our part. God uses the work on our part for our own spiritual formation as well as the spiritual formation of others.

Therefore, **we are a part of each other's spiritual formation.** That's a pretty intimate place that we have in each other's life. But then again, the **family** metaphors and **body** metaphors that are used in the New Testament are pretty intimate. Scripture teaches that we are one family; we are one body.

Are we serving each other like two family members would serve one another? (a grandmother with child care)

Am I building you up as if you are actually a part of my body?

To be honest, I believe that every one of us longs to have someone meet needs for us. Think about it. Perhaps I could even say that every one of us longs to have someone **in this room** meet needs for us. Don't you want that?

And (here's the kicker)... every one of us, in many moments, does not want to get so vulnerable with each other such that others would know the extent of our need and be able to step in and meet it.

We are a complex bunch aren't we?!

**Paul says that as we** give ourselves to the building up of each other out of obedience to Christ we will... **v14-16. Repeat 16.**

**When (all) the parts of the body serve to build up the body, the body gets stronger.**

Not all illustrations are perfect and all metaphors break down at some point... yet I want to share this illustration:

Recently I saw a friend deadlift and then clean and press 225 lbs. That's a lot of weight. His body parts had be serving each other to build each other up over the course of some time. The result is that his body is strong. His body can lift 225 lbs over his head.

I want to contrast that with a friend who recently had surgery and after the surgery he was told that he should not lift more than 10 lbs. Most of his body parts were working quite well but because **a few** of his body parts were **not working** he could not lift more than 10 lbs.

One body – all parts serving each other lifts 225lbs.

Another body – a few parts not serving, lifts no more than 10 lbs.

Which one are we? As a local expression of the body of Christ, which one are we?

You're probably inclined to answer, "I think we're somewhere in the middle." That's probably true. I believe there are many ways in which we are **building up** this body well. Yet, I wouldn't say we can lift 225 lbs yet.

So perhaps the more important question is, how do we get stronger? Paul tells us in this letter to the church that we get stronger by each part doing the work of serving each other to build up the body.

Remember verse 16 says... "as each part does it's work."

If we have really big biceps but a weak lower back, we will not be able to deadlift 225 lbs. It doesn't matter how big our biceps are. We need each part to do it's work.

**When the parts of the body serve to build up the body, the body gets stronger.**

I'd like to get real practical and tell you about some parts of this Covenant body that need to be served so that they can be built up.

Our Kids ministry has 53 men and women serving regularly, but they won't be lifting 225lbs until they get 18 more.

Our Student ministry has 9 people serving regularly, but they won't be lifting 225lbs until they get 2 more male small group leaders.

Travis and Rob could give you similar numbers related to Worship Arts Ministries and Congregational Care if you asked them.

In regards to money. We are a generous church family offering up over two million dollars in tithes and offerings each year, yet... can you even imagine how much we'd be giving if all of us tithed a 10<sup>th</sup> of our income?! I'd say, we'd be lifting even more than 225lbs!

**When the parts of the body serve the body the body gets stronger.**

As you consider what it could mean to serve this local expression of the body of Christ – this particular church family - I want to walk you through a really practical next step. I'd like you to take out your smart phone and pull up our website and click on "Serve". [\(run video\)](#)

If you are willing to have a conversation with our leadership about how you could further build up this body, please fill out the serving form. If you don't have a smart phone on you or you just don't feel like using it now – no worries; we'll have volunteers in the welcome area after the service who would love to pull up the form on an ipad and walk you through it.

**Body building is for humble people – who are passionate about following Jesus by using their gifts to build up the body of Christ.**

Our culture says...

Build career

Build reputation/image

Build security

Build recreational opportunities

God invites us to build up the body of Christ.