

Bringing Out The Best In Others

Most of the problems in the world today between people and nations are the result of bad relationships.

Fragmenting relationships between nations, races, religions or relatives causes hostility and a lack of peace in society.

When God created mankind He built in great variety on purpose, to force us, if we wanted a peaceful life, to seek to build good relationships between what is naturally diversified.

God did not leave us without help in this life-long task of building good relationships, but gave us guidelines in His handbook, the Christian Bible, the manufacturer's handbook that came with man – the most complex creation that God has made.

Where the Christian Bible is ignored or unknown people have no chance of living at peace.

Romans 3:10-18 [NIV] *“As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.” “Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit.” “The poison of vipers is on their lips.” “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.” “Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know.” “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”*”

Here we have a very vivid description of society as we see it today, a society which on a whole does not know God or His Word, the Christian Bible, therefore they do not know the way to peace.

Isaiah 9:6 [NIV] *“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”*

In this prophecy about the coming of Jesus Christ, He is given the title of “Prince of Peace”.

John 14:6 [NIV] *“Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

Jesus claims to be “the way”.

John 14:27 [NIV] *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

Christ is the One who brings peace, as the Prince of Peace and the way to peace.

1 John 4:8 [NIV] *“Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”*

Most of society today does not know real love, for this can only be known and experienced through a relationship with God, who is love!

1 Corinthians 13:4 [NIV] *“... love is kind ...”*

1 Corinthians 13:4 [Phillips Translation] *“... love looks for a way of being constructive ...”*

Kindness is love in action

Love is **not** an emotion, **love is an action.**

Love looks for a way to improve another person's life.

Romans 15:2 [Phillips Translation] *“Our actions should mean the good of others, **should help them to build up their character.**”*

Paul is encouraging us to become a “people-builder”.

How then do we become a “people builder” ?

All of us can learn from this study, for all of us have around us at work or in our family, people whom we would like to help build up. Help them live a more fulfilling life and bring out the best in themselves.

We build people up by kindness, not by criticism.

Kindness is giving people what they need, not what they deserve.

We can build up other people in many ways and all of them must be based on kindness.

Give the person you want to help build up a personal challenge

A challenge always brings out the best in a person.

Ephesians 4:1 [NIV] *“... I urge you to live your life worthy of the calling you have received.”*

The purpose of this statement is shown in

Ephesians 4:3 [NIV] *“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”*

Unity and peace, the fruits of good relationships.

The major goal of God through Paul was to unite two very diverse groups of people in the Church, the Jews and the Gentiles, who naturally only felt contempt for each other.

This could only be accomplished by a one-on-one aim to build good relationships.

Paul then shows that it is our personal example as a Christian that will bring about this unity and peace.

Our example should be the challenge we give to others to change, for real change in a person can only come from an inward desire to change, not pressure from the outside to change.

Ephesians 4:2 [NIV] *“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.”*

Paul gives us four ways in which we can be a shining example to challenge others to follow, all four as based on love.

Here in fact is practical, personal evangelism for every Christian.

Humility

This is first and foremost, for this is a virtue upon which all the other virtues depend and from which they come.

Humility is gendered by honest self-knowledge.

We only become aware of our own unworthiness through the words of our Creator.

To honestly face oneself in the “*spiritual mirror*” of God’s Word is the most humiliating experience in the world, [James 1:22-27].

Humility depends on our honesty to view ourselves without wearing the rose-tinted glasses of self-dramatisation, self-admiration and self love.

Christian humility comes from contrasting our life beside the lifestyle of Jesus Christ in the light of the demands of our Creator God.

God is perfection, a status that is impossible for us to attain.

Pride depends on the standard by which we judge ourselves.

2 Corinthians 10:12 [NIV] *“We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.”*

Foolish because it leads to pride, considering ourselves as superior to others.

Christian humility is based on seeing ourselves and comparing ourselves with Christ and His perfection.

Gentleness

The person who is indignant at the wrongs and sufferings of others but who is never moved to anger by the wrongs and insults they may have to bear.

A person who is gentle has their emotions completely under control.

This person has every passion, instinct, feeling and word under perfect control.

This person is God controlled, so that they are only angry at the right time for the right reason.

This person’s own desires have died, and their whole life is directed and controlled by God’s Holy Spirit.

Patience or long suffering

It describes the spirit that never gives up, enduring to the end seeking the desired outcome.

Christian patience is a spirit that never admits defeat, will not be defeated by any task, broken by a misfortune or suffering or deterred by any disappointment or discouragement.

Patience is a spirit that refuses to retaliate or take revenge, but bears anything that others may inflict on them.

Patience is a spirit that bears insult and injury without bitterness or complaint.

Patience is best illustrated by the attitude and approach God has towards mankind.

1 Timothy 1:16 [NIV] *“But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.”*

Christ the example of patience.

2 Peter 3:15 [NIV] *“Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him.”*

If God had the same nature as man in sheer irritation this world would have been destroyed because of its disobedience to its Creator.

Love

Christian love was a quality that was so new that New Testament writers had to invent a new word to describe it, or at least they had to take a Greek word which was very unusual, the word “agapé”, unconquerable benevolence.

Real Christian love means that nothing that the person can do or will ever do will make us seek anything but the highest good for that person's welfare.

Such love cannot be only emotional but is a product of will.

A quality of mind and heart that compels a Christian never to feel bitterness or the desire for revenge, no matter what others may do to them.

A person with such love always seeks nothing but the highest good for and of every person they meet.

To exhibit these four attitudes, humility, gentleness, patience and love, presents any recipient with the most powerful challenge in the universe to change from within themselves for the better.

This won't happen instantly, it could even take a lifetime, but its an irresistible power for good.

1 Peter 4:10 [Living Bible] *“God has given each of you some special abilities, be sure to use them to help [bring the best out of] each other, passing on to others God's many kinds of blessings.”*

Note that the four qualities above are God-given through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:23-23 [NIV] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”*

Fruit is the result of work being accomplished; only when we allow the Holy Spirit to be active in our lives, leading us, controlling our will and empowering us will these fruits grow.

How do we rate on a scale from 1-10 as a challenging example to others?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Give the person we want to build up complete confidence

1 Thessalonians 5:11 [NIV] *“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”*

The context of this verse indicates how we can encourage one another in times of trial, pain or disappointment.

We read the appropriate scriptures and discuss the positive promises of Christ’s return and our future eternal life with Him in the Kingdom of God, with them.

Romans 15:1-2 [Good News Bible] *“We who are strong in the faith ought to help the weak ... in order to build them up in the faith.”*

Confidence in God is the only confidence that is strong and lasting.

God is the Great Encourager, because of who He is, what He has done in the past and what He promises to do in the future.

To build up confidence in another person is to point them towards their Creator, to assist them to start and then build up a relationship with God and help them to realise the future God has for them personally.

Philippians 1:6 [NIV] *“...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”*

Tell people what they could be with God’s help – not what they are.

Whatever we “label” people, they become. “You’re lazy”, such a comment will only cause them to think this of themselves and gradually they become more and more lazy.

Whatever potential positive talent we see in a person, be sure to let them know of that talent, this will encourage them to exercise and build that talent.

When someone believes in us it can give us the confidence to develop our talents.

Christ did this with Peter.

Matthew 16:18 [Amplified Bible] *“And I tell you, you are Peter [“Petros” a pebble or piece of rock], and on this rock [“Petra” a huge rock like Gibraltar] I will build My Church...”*

Peter was anything but a “rock” at that time, he was impetuous “foot in mouth” type of person.

Christ was showing Peter what He could become if he allowed Christ [the Rock – **Deuteronomy 32:4**] to come into his life and become the director of his life.

There is the example of Gideon in the Old Testament.

Judges 6:12 [NIV] *“When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, “The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.”*

At that time Gideon was hiding from the invading Midianites and knew he was a member of the poorest family in the tribe of Manasseh and he the least in his family.

God was telling Gideon of the potential He could see in him, a man of courage. This is what it means to build people up by giving them confidence.

If we want to be a “people builder” we need to be good at encouraging others.

Catch people doing something right and tell them, for we all need encouragement.

I have a file in which I keep all the cards and letters that I have been sent that are of the slightest encouragement and when I’m feeling “down” I get them out and read all of them. I keep these notes, even if they are only mildly encouraging, like “*better luck next time*” or “*you tried in that presentation but ... well, you tried*”.

Then when on one of those days when I’m feeling low I get out this encouragement file and read through all the letters and cards I’ve collected over the last 30 years and I want you to know that I read both of these cards over and over and over and it is lovely to know that both my sister and my mother both thought that at one time in my life I was of some value to society.

Only kidding!

I’m truly grateful for all the letters and cards of encouragement I receive time and again.

Philippians 1:6 [Good News Bible] “*I am sure of this, that God, who began this good work in you, will carry it on until it is finished...*”

When you give encouragement it needs to be **real**, from the heart, not some fake manipulation.

Encouragement needs to be **regular**.

Don’t be stingy with encouragement, do it all the time whenever we see people doing a good job of making a sacrifice for others.

Encouragement needs to be **recognisable** by being precise.

For example, instead of just saying “*that was a lovely meal you prepared*” say “*I really enjoyed that meal. It was professional the way you blended the herbs and sauce to bring out the full flavour of the meat and vegetables and the choice of wine to accompany the meal.*”

Or when a child comes to you with a picture they have just painted, don’t just say “*what a pretty picture*”, comment on the good choice of colours and how they make the picture come alive and make you really enjoy looking at it.

The more specific we are with our encouragement the more impact it will have on others.

Have you ever had a compliment and you didn’t know if it was a compliment or not?

I wonder what was meant by some with their remarks after a meeting where I’ve given a presentation.

Such as:-

“*You were full of it today.*” Well I suppose I was!

“*When you speak I think he is never going to get better.*” Well, perhaps I’m not going to!

“*I want you to know I think you are the model pastor.*” **That sounded encouraging until I looked up the word “model” in the dictionary and it said “a cheap plastic small imitation of the real thing.”**

“*Your presentations are like water to a drowning man.*” I hope not!

Another person sitting near the front who was falling asleep during the presentation after the meeting came up to me and said “*you may have noticed that my eyes were closed during your presentation, but let me assure you that I didn’t miss a thing.*” Well, perhaps they didn’t!

When was the last time you wrote a note to your spouse to tell them how much you love them and appreciate all they do to bring you happiness in your life?

Well, we were dating in 1954 and I used to send her love letters then!

When was the last time you sent a note to a friend thanking them for their friendship and tell them of the good impact knowing them has had on your life?

Have you ever sent a note of encouragement to a teacher who is doing a good job guiding your child at school, taking a real personal interest in them? Teachers get plenty of notes telling them that they are doing a bad job if they do something that upsets a parent.

We need to write these things down and be specific. A note tells the person that we have taken the time to care.

I’ve heard people say “*whenever there is something wrong I hear it from my boss.*”

There is something wrong; it is the boss who is wrong; it is poor leadership if you only hear from your boss when something is wrong.

Encouraging others builds them up and strengthens the relationship bond we have with them.

Time taken encouraging others is “*quality time*” well spent.

How do you rate on a scale of 1-10 as one who is constantly giving others encouragement?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Give the person you want to build up honest counsel

There is no progress in life without learning, and there is no learning without feedback: we all need honest feedback.

None of us are perfect, we all make mistakes and we need others to give us honest counsel to bring us back onto the wise path.

Proverbs 27:17 [Good News Bible] “*People learn from one another, just as iron sharpens iron.*”

Honest counsel brings out the best in others when it is done in love, wishing to build up the other person.

Proverbs 24:26 [Good News Bible] “*An honest answer is the sign of a true friendship.*”

A real friend will “*level with us*”; they care enough to correct us when they see us going wrong and doing something that will harm us in the end.

A real friend cares enough to confront us with the facts to help us avoid a problem or trial in our lives, even when they find it painful to tell us the truth.

Real “*people builders*” don’t allow people to waste their lives doing what will not be best for them in the end.

Proverbs 27:6 [Good News Bible] *“A friend means well, even when he hurts you...”*

A friend means well when they correct us because they love us and say it for our benefit.

Correction is a very dangerous and powerful action to take.

Correction given the right way can build people up, but given with the wrong motive can scar a person for life.

When we correct a person we are taking a very serious action, so we need to do it in a positive way.

What is the difference between the right and wrong way to correct others?

Our attitude or motive behind the correction!

If our motive for correcting another is just to point out this weakness in their life, then don't do it for it is wrong, it will not be building them up.

They are more than likely very aware of that weakness and don't need to have it reinforced in their minds by our comments.

The purpose behind our comments must be to correct not condemn the other person.

To help them make the needed change in their behaviour must be our goal.

We need first, before we say anything, to ask *“what is my motive behind what I am about to say or write?”*

Am I correcting them for my benefit? Or am I correcting them for their benefit?

Very often we correct others because they are being inconsiderate about our needs and making life more difficult for us.

This is the wrong motive, we correct them as an honest friend, for their benefit.

How do we do this?

Ephesians 4:15 [NIV] *“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.”*

Love means giving the person what they need, not what they deserve.

Motive must be not to condemn but to correct.

We speak the truth in love when we affirm the person and correct the behaviour.

For example, just as most children do at some point of their young life engage in some petty theft, perhaps they steal a packet of sweets from a shop.

If we say to them *“now we know what you are, you're a thief. We will be watching you from now on.”*

It is quite likely they will steal more, graduating on to stealing cars.

But if we react with both firmness and love by saying *“this is not like you, now we must go back to the shop and pay for the sweets, saying that we are sorry and it won't happen again. What you did was wrong and you know it was wrong, and I'm sure you will never do it again.”*

After that reaction for most children stealing will come to an end.

Focus on affirming the person and correcting the behaviour.

Speak the truth in love.

Now rate ourselves on this from 1-10.

How good am I at correcting without condemning?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Give the person we want to build up full credit

Praise the growth and changes that we see in others.

Romans 12:10 [Phillips Translation] *“Let us have real warm affection for one another, as between brothers, and a willingness to **let the other man have the credit.**”*

God can do great things through a person who doesn’t mind who gets the credit.

How quickly do I share the credit?

Usually we want to share the blame and keep the credit to ourselves. God tells us that **the mark of maturity is to accept the blame and share the credit.**

How do we rate ourselves on this from 1-10?

Accepting the blame, giving away the credit?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Now when we consider these four things we realise that there is a lot of thought and effort involved in being a *“people builder”*.

Kindness costs, there is a price tag for being a *“people builder”*!

It requires time ... effort ... money ... energy ... a lack of privacy.

It always costs to be kind.

Most of all, it costs unselfishness.

Usually we are so caught up in our own lives that we don’t find time to be kind and make the sacrifice that it takes to become a *“people builder”*.

Why should we sacrifice our lives in such a way to become a *“people builder”*?

Hebrews 10:24 [Living Bible] *“In response to all that He has done for us, let us outdo each other in being helpful and kind to each other and in doing good.”*

God has been kind to us and we owe it to others He has created for us to have a loving relationship with.

During the time of the early church, the Roman soldiers used to mix up Latin words *“christos”* and *“chrestos”*.

“*Christos*” meaning Christ [the anointed one] and “*chrestos*” meaning kindness.

What a great mix up Christians and kindness should go together.

The mark of a Christian should be kindness, for love is kind.

What does it mean to be kind?

We give others personal challenges.

We give others complete confidence.

We give others honest counsel.

We give others full credit.

We become “*people builders*”.

Imagine what a tremendous change we could, and should, make in our own community if we become “*people builders*” by applying the above to all we come in contact with.

How do you and I rate as a “*people builder*”?

How many people would say of us that we are a “*people builder*”?

Becoming a “*people builder*” is the perfect way to introduce others to the Great People Builder our Creator God!