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Building Up Others
15: 1-3

Building up others DIG: Why should the strong bear the shortcomings of the weak? Who is the example we are to follow? What can we do to please one another in view of these verses? What is the essential motivation for this life-style of putting others first?

REFLECT: As you've matured in the faith, how has your sensitivity to the consciences of other believers changed? Where do you draw the line on trying to please everyone? Do you admit your own mistakes or sin? How can confession be a powerful tool for reconciliation?

The basis for our fellowship is our relationship to God. We're family.



ADONAI has always been deeply concerned about the unity of **His people**. By salvation, He has affected real spiritual oneness. He has created a commonness based on sharing the same eternal life. This should be our motivation for practical unity.

So, we who are strong have a duty to bear the weaknesses of those who are not strong, rather than please ourselves (15:1). It doesn't mean to tolerate them; it means more than that. It means to make them your own. Identify with the **weak** believer and take his infirmities upon you. Scripture emphasizes both aspects. Speaking of the unified Body of **Messiah** in the Messianic Kingdom, **Zephaniah 3:9 NASB** says: **I will give to the peoples purified lips, that all of**

them may call on the name of the Lord, to serve Him shoulder to shoulder, that is side-by-side, as **brothers and sisters**.[376]

Courtesy is respecting our differences, being considerate of each other's feelings, and being patient with people who irritate us. The Bible says: **Each of us should please his neighbors and act for their good, thus building them up,** not to tear **them** down because of **their weakness (15:2).** The right use of our liberty in **Messiah**, which the **strong** believer understands and appreciates, often involves self-sacrifice. In every Messianic community and church there is always at least one "difficult" person (to be honest, usually more than one). These people may have emotional needs, deep insecurities, irritating mannerism, or poor social skills. But **ADONAI** put these people in our midst for both their benefit and ours. They are an opportunity for growth and a test of fellowship. Will we **love** them as **brothers and sisters**, and treat them with dignity?

In a family, acceptance isn't based on how smart or beautiful or talented we are. It's based on the fact that we belong to each other. We defend and protect family. A family member may be a little goofy, but he's one of us. In the same way, the Bible says: **Love each other devotedly and with brotherly [and sisterly] love; and set examples for each other in showing respect (12:10).** The truth is, we all have quirks and annoying traits. But community has nothing to do with compatibility. The basis for our fellowship is our relationship to **God**. We're family.[377]

*Dear Loving Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for **Your** infinity wise wisdom which not only rescued us from sin, but also gives everyone a family of love! How wonderful that when a person chooses to love and to follow **You** as their **Lord** and **Savior**, **You** make them **Your** child. **But whoever did receive Him, those trusting in his name, to these He gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).** Thank **You** for the great joy of a spiritual family!*

*It is such a wonderful blessing to have spiritual **brothers and sisters** with whom we can praise and worship **You**. Please give each new believer, a **brother/sister** to encourage them and a son/daughter that they can guide to grow deep roots in your loving care. Much love to **You**, my **Father**! **You** are so awesome that when we trust in **You** – we will never be put to shame. **For if you confess with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart it is believed for righteousness, and with the mouth it is confessed for salvation. For the Scripture says "Whoever trusts in Him will not be put to shame" (Romans***

10:9-11). *What a wonderful* ***Father You*** *are! Thank* ***You*** *for giving each one who trusts in you a family! In the Holy name of* ***Your son Yeshua*** *and the power of* ***His*** *resurrection. Amen*

It is a sacrifice to patiently absorb the anger of others, especially if it's unfounded. But remember, this is what **Yeshua** did for you. **He** endured unfounded, malicious anger in order to save you. **For even the Messiah did not please Himself.** The attitude of **Messia**h was **not to please Himself.** It is the attitude **Paul** goes on to explain in **his** letter to the **Philippian** church. During **Yeshua's** incarnation: **Though he was in the form of God, He did not regard equality with God something to be possessed by force. On the contrary, He emptied Himself, in that He took the form of a slave by becoming like human beings are. And when He appeared as a human being, He humbled Himself still more by becoming obedient even to death – death on a stake as a criminal (Philippians 2:6-8)!** Despite **His** perfectly righteous and sinless life, **Yeshua** could say with **David**, but with infinitely greater significance: **The insults of those insulting You** (God the Father) **fell on Me** (God the Son) **(Romans 15:3; Psalm 69:9).**

Had **Yeshua** wanted to **please Himself** instead of **His Father**, **He** would not have divested **Himself** of **His** Sh'khinah **glory** and become **a man**, certainly not **a bond-Servant**. Yet, with great longing **He** prayed: **Now, Father, glorify Me along with Yourself. Give Me the same** Sh'khinah **glory I had with You before the world existed (John 17:5).** Moments before **He** was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, **He** pleaded: **My Father, if possible, let this cup pass from Me,** referring to **His** taking the sins of the world upon **Himself** by **His** crucifixion. But **He** had not come to the earth to **please Himself,** and therefore **He** added: **Yet – not what I want, but what You want (Matthew 26:39)!**

Psalm 69:9, cited above, is also prophetic and Messianic throughout. It is the third most frequently quoted **Psalm** in the B'rit Chadashah **(Matthew 27:34** and **48; Mark 15:35; Luke 23:36; John 2:17** and **15:25; Acts 1:20; Revelation 3:5** and **16:1).** In the original, a persecuted servant of **YHVH** is addressing **YHVH**; in the present context that **Servant** is seen as **Yeshua the Messiah. Because zeal for Your house is eating Me up; and on Me are falling the insults of those insulting You (Psalm 69:9).** Here, **Paul** sees a hint about **Yeshua**. This shows one of the ways in which **everything written in the past was written to teach us (15:4)**, where **"us"** notably includes Gentile believers, even though the Torah was not originally written for them **(First Corinthians 10:5-11** and **First Timothy**

3:16).

Christian seminarians sometimes joke about “sermons based on **Leviticus**,” implying that they consider much of the TaNaKh boring, with little to say to Christians. If more Christians were familiar with Jewish literature, they would recognize how rich **Leviticus** is for everyone. Also, many Christians go even further and simply discard the entire TaNaKh in favor of the New Covenant. They are not overt about it. Instead, they acknowledge verbally that the “Old Testament” is inspired by **God**, but in practice, they ignore it. Is this statement to harsh? When was the last time your pastor did a sermon series on the TaNaKh? No wonder Jews often regard the TaNaKh as “the Jewish Bible,” and the New Covenant as “the Christian Bible.” Christians have fostered that impression by their own attitudes and behavior!

Christians who value the B’rit Chadashah more than the TaNaKh not only show unstated disdain for **Paul’s** teaching and ignore the example of **himself**, the other authors of the B’rit Chadashah and **Yeshua**; but they also deprive themselves of the encouragement, comfort and good counsel that the TaNaKh offers in helping believers **patiently to hold on to** their **hope** of complete salvation as spelled out earlier in **Romans 8:17-30**. Also, they are the ones most likely to fall prey to antisemitism in the Church (Replacement Theology), since they remove themselves from three-quarters of **God’s** inspired Word, which give the fundamental and unshakable ground for their identifying with **the Jews as God’s people**. Gentile believers’ identification with, and service to, **the Jews, the pupil of His eye (Deuteronomy 32:10; Psalm 17:8; Proverbs 7:2; Zechariah 2:8),** which is a major theme of this section **(15:7-33)**.[378]

But in addition to the prophetic application, these verses also have a personal application for us today. If you are serious about restoring a relationship, you should begin with admitting your own mistakes or sin. **Messiah** said it’s the way to see things more clearly: **First, take the splinter out of your own eye; then you will see clearly, so that you can remove the splinter from your brother’s eye (Matthew 7:5).** Since we all have blind spots, you may need to ask a third party to help you evaluate your own actions before meeting with the person with whom you have a conflict. Also ask **God** to show you how much of the problem is your fault.

Confession is a powerful tool for reconciliation. Often the way we handle a conflict creates a bigger hurt than the original problem itself. When you begin by humbly

admitting your mistakes, it defuses the other person’s anger and disarms their attack because they were probably expecting you to be defensive. Don’t make excuses or shift the blame; just honestly own up any part you have played in the conflict. Accept responsibility for your mistakes and ask for forgiveness.[379]