

This midweek study will explore the doctrine of edification. Use the following main points, Scriptures, teaching/discussion ideas, and questions to help students gain a better understanding of the essential doctrine for this session.

Essential Doctrine: Edification

Edification refers to the progressive growth and maturity of the church, both individually and collectively. The Bible talks about different ways maturity, or edification, may happen such as through the fellowship Christians share with one another (1 Cor. 12:26; Gal. 6:2). In addition, edification takes place through the church's preaching and teaching of Scripture (Eph. 4:11-12), helping people understand and internalize the whole counsel of God. In the end, edification is building up the body of Christ, equipping people to live on mission for the kingdom of God.

1 The ground of our edification is Jesus' work; we are becoming what we are (1 Cor. 5:7; Col. 3:1-3).

- ▶ Why do you think Christians pursue holiness? Why should Christians pursue holiness?
- ▶ Have you ever been part of a group such that made you want to be a better person? What was the group? Why did membership make you want to be better?

Read 1 Corinthians 5:7.

- ▶ What did Paul mean by removing leaven?
- ▶ What reason did Paul give for removing leaven? How does this reason appear paradoxical?
- ▶ How can we make sense of the paradox? How is it like being a member of the group you mentioned? How does already being holy make us want to grow in holiness?

Read Colossians 3:1-3.

- ▶ What is the command in this passage? What reason did Paul give for pursuing the command?
- ▶ Who ultimately makes us holy? How does Jesus' making us holy encourage us to pursue edification?
- ▶ Why should Christians pursue holiness?

2 The means of edification for the Christian are many, but they are all pursuits of Jesus by faith (Phil. 3:8-12).

- ▶ What are some common workout programs or diets you have heard of? What are some of the requirements of these programs?
- ▶ Imagine you created a "holiness" program. What kinds of activities would you call for people to do?
- ▶ Why would you choose these activities?

Read Philippians 3:8-12.

- ▶ Why does Paul do everything he does?
- ▶ How does he do everything he does? Hint: look at verse 9.
- ▶ Bonus question: look at verse 12. Why does Paul make every effort? How does this reason connect us back to the first point of the lesson?

3 The purpose of edification is to enjoy and put on display Jesus' excellency (Rom. 11:36; Phil. 2:11; 1 Pet. 4:10-11).

- ▶ What is the ground or root of pursuing edification (think back to point 1)?
- ▶ What is the means, or tree trunk, of pursuing edification (think back to point 2)?

Read Romans 11:36.

- ▶ According to this verse, what is the purpose of everything from pizza to pianos? What is the purpose of edification?

Read Philippians 2:11.

If you look earlier in chapter 2, this verse is the peak of Paul's plea for the Philippians to be humble like Jesus.

- ▶ According to this verse, what will be the final outcome of Jesus' exaltation?
- ▶ What would be the outcome of the Philippians' humility?

Read 1 Peter 4:10-11.

- ▶ What reason did Peter finally give for his readers to use their gifts to edify one another? How does this reason connect with Romans 11:36 and Philippians 2:11?
- ▶ Which looks more valuable: a goal you strive for or a goal you don't? How does our striving in edification, like Paul's, make Jesus look more glorious?
- ▶ Why is it a big deal to pursue edification?

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ How does knowing the root, the trunk, and the goal of edification motivate you to pursue growth this week? What specific ideas could you implement?