

We must be concerned about whether our fellow Christians are growing

In predicting that Peter would deny Him three times on the night of His betrayal, the Lord said Peter would come through the ordeal with a strengthened faith. Then He instructed Peter: “But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers” (Lk. 22:32). Peter was to receive strength that he might impart that same strength to his fellow disciples — his strength was not merely for his own benefit.

In the Lord’s body, it is not enough for each of us to grow personally — *we must be concerned about whether our fellow Christians are growing*. The body grows and does what God intended it to do when the members of the body grow together, each helping the other to develop and mature in the work. We can’t afford to be unconcerned about this. Christianity is not a thing that is done “solo,” with each person having only a private relationship with God. We must take an active part in the spiritual progress of those to whom we are connected in the body. This has always been an important truth, but it is all the more so now. In our individualistic culture, many people’s concept of Christianity is such that they pay little attention to anyone else’s need for encouragement.

We probably underestimate how much influence we have on one another. For better or worse, we are constantly having an impact on our brethren, whether we realize it while it is happening or not. Our example probably does far more than we realize to either encourage or discourage those around us. We need to make sure our example is one that leads our fellow Christians on the upward path of growth. And beyond example, we need to engage in teaching, admonishing, and prayer on behalf of our brethren in the Lord.

As we go about our various activities this week, wouldn’t it be good for us to turn over in our minds the question of how we can edify one another? Wouldn’t it be good for our congregation if we spent time thinking specifically how we can contribute to the health and growth of our fellow Christians? Let’s make this a week of growth — not just growth personally, but the kind of growth that comes from genuine mutual concern and help. And let’s study with our children how the church is a relationship of mutual edification.

Monday: Proverbs 27:5,6; 28:23

Key Idea: If we are truly friends, we will help each other with our faults.

Questions for Family Growth: What does it mean that “the wounds of a friend” are “faithful”? What does it mean that he who “rebukes” a man will find more “favor” than the person who “flatters” with the tongue?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 19:19.

Tuesday: Luke 22:24-34

Key Idea: When God has strengthened us, He expects us to strengthen others.

Questions for Family Growth: What great trial of his faith was Peter going to have to undergo on the night of Jesus' betrayal? Did he deny the Lord as predicted? What was he to do after he regained the strength of his faith?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 19:20.**

Wednesday: Galatians 6:1,2

Key Idea: We should make a sincere effort to restore Christians who have fallen into sin.

Questions for Family Growth: What is a "transgression"? What does this verse say we should do for those who have been caught in a transgression? With what "spirit" is this to be done? What should we do with the "burdens" of others?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 19:21.**

Thursday: Romans 1:11,12

Key Idea: Sometimes even very strong Christians need to be encouraged by their brethren.

Questions for Family Growth: In **v.11**, why did Paul say he longed to see the Christians in Rome? What did he say in **v.12** about what he hoped to receive from them? How could a man who was as spiritually mature as Paul need this?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 19:22.**

Friday: Colossians 1:24-29

Key Idea: Our goal is to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (NKJV).

Questions for Family Growth: In **v.28**, how do you think the word "perfect" is used in the NKJV? What did Paul say he was doing in order to present every person "perfect" in Christ? Are there ways we can do that for each other today?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 19:23.**

Gary Henry — WordPoints.com