

**Teamwork in the Local Church**  
**Lesson Four: Spiritual Strength through the Care of All**  
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**Introduction: Assessing the Spiritual Health of a Local Church.**

- A. Every church would like to believe that they are in “sound health” yet Christ will be the judge (e.g., **Rev. 2-3; John 12:48**).
- B. Assessing spiritual health requires examining *individual* members (**1 Cor. 12:12a; Rev. 3:4; cf. 2 Cor. 5:10**).
- C. To maintain our spiritual strength, we care for all, *both* the strong and weak.
  - 1. “A chain is only as strong as its weakest link” is true; Similar to what God said by Paul: “*a little leaven leavens the whole lump*” (**1 Cor. 5:6**).

**I. Spiritual Strength Requires Teamwork (Eph. 4:15-16).**

- A. The foundation of such teamwork is truth and love (**Eph. 4:15a**).
  - 1. By speaking the truth, we will grow and be built up (**cf. Acts 20:32**).
  - 2. The truth is *the means* by which we are made to grow in holiness (**John 17:17; cf. Eph. 2:19-22**); God’s word makes us holy as we follow it!
  - 3. The truth we speak to one another must be spoken in love (**cf. Col. 4:6**), we seek the *highest* good; we strive to meet one another’s spiritual needs.
- B. Every member does its share to strengthen others (**Eph. 4:16**).
  - 1. Like joints in the body, each member helps fasten or hold the church together, united strong as one body.
  - 2. Our heart’s desire to help one another be faithful, steadfast, and grow spiritually is demonstrated in prayer (e.g., **Phil. 1:9-10; Col. 1:9-11**).
- C. The goal is to help every member grow in Christ (**Eph. 4:15b**).
  - 1. Edification (i.e., building up) in itself is not the goal, but *the process* we take to achieve the goal: *What are we being built up into?*
  - 2. We may *feel* edified, yet that does not mean we are being built up *spiritually* (e.g., eating a meal together, “the ministry of recreation”).
  - 3. *The means* of building the body up is Christians speaking the truth in love to one another, supporting each other, and working together as one.
  - 4. *The result* we strive for is members growing in Christ, disciples becoming more and more like Jesus! (**Eph 2:19; 1 Pet 2:21; 2 Cor 13:5**).

**II. How Spiritual Care is given to One Another.**

- A. Exhort or encourage one another (**Heb. 3:12-14; cf. 1 Thes. 5:14**).
  - 1. To stay strong “until the end”, we need constant encouragement from one another to guard against sin and the falling away from God.
  - 2. Whenever we are together, we should make every effort to encourage one another (i.e. bring courage to the heart) by speaking truth in love.
- B. Admonish one another (**1 Thes. 5:14a; cf. Rom. 15:14**).
  - 1. We have a duty to admonish (warn) one another of the dangers of sin, especially the “unruly” (i.e. disorderly, deviating from the truth).
  - 2. We must not be timid or afraid to tell a brother or sister in Christ when he is “walking into sin trouble.” *To remain silent could be very costly.*
  - 3. We will be able to admonish when our hearts are filled with “goodness” (or love) and “knowledge” of the truth (**Rom. 15:14**).

C. Comfort one another (**1 Thes. 5:14b**).

1. Especially those who are “fainthearted” or despondent (feeling very sad, gloomy, discouraged, hopeless) need to be comforted (**e.g., John 11:19**).
2. When one of our members is “fainthearted” they do not need cold, harsh judgments against them, but words of comfort and hope!
3. Like a father showing love toward his children, we comfort one another so each member may be strengthened to walk by faith (**1 Thes. 2:11-12**).

D. Help (uphold, support) the weak (in knowledge) (**1 Thes. 5:14c**).

1. Instead of condemnation, we need to show patience and correct with gentleness those who oppose the truth (**2 Tim. 2:24-25; e.g., Acts 18:26**).
2. When brethren have conscientious scruples caused by weakness of their faith, the strong must bear this burden (**Rom. 15:1-4**).
3. Bearing or carrying such burdens involves showing much patience and taking the time to speak the truth in love (study the Scriptures with them).

E. Restore the erring (**Gal. 6:1-2**)

1. We need to be observant and take notice when someone has wandered away, even when it is only one among many members (**e.g., Luke 15:3-7**).
2. This requires courage and loving your brother enough to reprove him of his sin (**Mat. 18:15-16**) in order to help save his soul (**Jas. 5:19-20**).
3. Brethren should confess their sins to one another and pray (**Jas. 5:16**).

F. “Discipline” in love (**2 Thes. 3:6; cf. 1 Cor. 5:1-13**)

1. After sufficient attempts have been made to restore the member who persists in any sin, then the church *must* withdraw fellowship from him.
2. We cannot keep company with him, not even to eat with him (**2 Thes. 3:14; 1 Cor. 5:11; Mat. 18:17; cf. Tit. 3:10; Rom. 16:17; Eph. 5:11**).
3. This will not be effective unless the church is united in the effort to lead the erring brother to repentance (**2 Thes 3:14-15**).
4. “Church discipline” like the Father’s discipline is unpleasant, yet may result in the “fruit of righteousness” (getting right w/ God) (**Heb 12:5-11**).
5. If and when the erring brother repents, the church must forgive him, comfort him, and reaffirm their love for him (**2 Cor. 2:5-8**).

G. All of these measures (except for “discipline”) require spending time with one another and assembling together as much as possible (**Heb. 10:24-25**).

### III. Spiritual Care for the Church Also Requires Examining Yourself.

A. Examine yourself (**2 Cor. 13:5; cf. James 1:22-25**).

1. Each member must make certain that he or she is helping, not harming the spiritual strength of the church.

B. Ask yourself some self-examining questions:

**Examples:** Do I build up or tear down, encourage or discourage others? Do I promote pessimism or optimism, doubt or faith in the work? Am I reliable and involved in the work of the church? Do I love and accept all members of the church as valuable? Or do I gossip, slander, backbite, or complain against others? Am I committed to my own personal, spiritual growth?

**Conclusion: We Can Have a Strong Church When We Love One Another as Jesus Loves Us (John 15:12-13).**