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God's Word gives us clear standards by which we can measure our words, deeds, and attitudes. Two such standards are listed in Romans 14:19.

Romans 14:19:

Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

In our relationships, we are to follow after or pursue (1) things which make for peace, and (2) things that edify others. Let's consider how to apply these standards so we can strengthen our relationships with others.

In Romans 14:19, "peace" denotes the absence of strife, or a state of untroubled, undisturbed well-being. What a worthy state to pursue in our relationships—freedom from strife, trouble, and disturbances! If God tells us to pursue these things, then it must be available to do.

How can we pursue peace? At times, pursuing peace involves resolving conflicts. Unresolved conflicts can lead to bitterness, and bitterness is never constructive. It prevents people from having a close relationship with God and with their brothers and sisters in Christ.

Hebrews 12:14,15:

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.

Instead of holding on to past hurts, disagreements, or disappointments, we can decide to forgive. We can decide to demonstrate the love of God toward others with long-suffering and kindness. Our relationships greatly benefit when we make these

choices according to God's Word. And resolving conflicts helps us claim the peace of God in our lives. It helps us live free from the past and focus on the more abundant life God has called us to today.

We are also to follow after or pursue "things wherewith one may edify another." To edify is to build up. The Greek word literally means "to build a house." Building a house is a big project that is completed one purposeful step at a time. Likewise, building up our brothers and sisters in Christ can be undertaken with purpose—one positive word or action at a time.

Ephesians 4:15,16:

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

God's love is what truly builds. To build up one another, we speak the truth of His Word with love at the right place and at the right time. This can bring comfort and encouragement to others. It can encourage them to elevate their thinking to the Word and to take action on it.

God's Word gives us clear standards by which we can measure our words, deeds, and attitudes. We looked at two great standards from Romans 14:19—pursuing peace and pursuing edification. These relationship-strengthening standards are also stated in Romans 12 and Romans 15.

Romans 12:18:

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Romans 15:2:

Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.

When we follow after peace, we can enjoy freedom from strife, trouble, and disturbances in our relationships with one another. Resolving conflicts when they arise helps us do the Word in this category.

We also pursue edification. We can edify our brothers and sisters in Christ with our words and actions. The world may tear people down. But as believers, we are in the

business of building up people by what we say and what we do. And we can choose to do this at any season of our lives, at any moment of the day.

Applying the standards of pursuing peace and pursuing to edify one another can help us strengthen our relationships. Let's build these standards into the fabric of our lives and enjoy the more abundant life God has called us to today!

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